

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS — *Contd.*****The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2015 (Amendment of Article 324)<sup>†</sup>**

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA (Tamil Nadu): Sir, my Bill is to further amend the Constitution of India. Why it is needed, I have to elucidate first. Article 324 of the Constitution says, "The superintendence, direction and control of elections... shall be vested in the Election Commission." In Article 324 (6), it says, "The President, or the Governor of a State, shall, when so requested by the Election Commission, make available to the Election Commission or to a Regional Commissioner such staff as may be necessary for the discharge of the functions conferred on the Election Commission by clause (1)." Sir, my Amendment is that, here, alongwith 'such staff as may be necessary', 'excluding the teachers' may be inserted. Because of the appointment of teachers as electoral officers, there is a lot of absenteeism of teachers in schools and a lot of repercussion has been felt. Many people belonging to the teacher community approached me and expressed their concerns. Because of being employed for election duty, they undergo a lot of strain, and because of that their concentration on studies is affected. Sir, the American Commission on Teachers' Education very rightly observes that the quality of a nation depends upon the quality of its citizens. The quality of citizens depend, though not exclusively but in critical measure, upon the quality of their education. The education, undoubtedly, depends upon a single factor, that is, the quality of teachers. Sir, the importance of teachers is no secret. Schools and societies seek out for the best teachers they could get because of the belief that the success of the students depends only on teachers. A teacher not only imparts education but also inspires and motivates the students to grow and develop as good citizens. The quality and accent of learner achievement is certainly determined, primarily, by teachers' competence, sensitivity and teachers' motivation. A true democracy is one where education is universal. But in our country, after many decades of Independence, that is, in the dawn of the 21st Century only, the children aged 6 to 14 of our nation gained the Fundamental Right to Education under Article 21 (A). It says that the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 6 to 14 years in such a manner as the State may by law determine. Sir, India's educational report card leaves ample room for improvement. In 2016, the World Economic Forum's Human Capital Index, which takes into account educational quality in addition to access, ranked India at 105 out of 130 countries. It is a very sorry State of affairs. A developing country, rather a developed country, which is expected to be number one at the global level on many grounds, whereas in education, it is placed at the 105th place among 130 countries. Further, as per the Annual Status of Education Report Survey 2016, which is administered by the

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<sup>†</sup> Further Consideration of the notion moved on 5th August, 2016.

Indian NGO, PRATHAM, it was found that learning of mathematics is a serious and major source of concern. As per all-India figures, rural figures especially, for basic arithmetic in 2016, only 27 per cent of Class 3 students could do a basic two-digit subtraction. For Class 5 students, the proportion of students who could do a basic two-digit subtraction is, in fact, lower at 26.1 per cent. The reading levels of students is not much better either. As per the ASER Report, 46 per cent of Class 1 students could not even recognize the letters of their preferred language. For Class 3 students, only 25 per cent of the students were able to read a Standard 2 level text. In another independent survey commissioned in 2014 by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, 60.64 lakh students were estimated to be out of school in the age group of 6-13 years. Again, the Ministry of HRD also commissioned two studies for the attendance assessment rate of students and teachers in 2006-07 and 2012-13. As per the study, 15.2 per cent of the teachers at primary schools were absent during 2012-13. The figure was worse for the upper primary schools, with teacher absenteeism at 16.9 per cent during 2012-13.

Sir, the importance of the role played by the Election Commission which is a constitutional body cannot be undermined. While the Parliament is empowered to frame law as regards conduct of elections, the 'superintendence, direction and control of holding the elections' is the sole responsibility of the Election Commission. Sir, recently, we got an information or a statistic that in Madhya Pradesh 4,000 schools don't have even one teacher. In this situation, when there are so many vacancies employment or appointment of teachers as Election Officers...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Why is there no teacher in 4,000 schools?

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Yes. That has to be gone ...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are there no teachers, no qualified teachers?

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Sir, schools don't have teachers at all.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We can get any number of teachers.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: It is very alarming, Sir, to receive that. And which are the States? I should say that, given that a total of 9,07,585 posts of teachers are vacant in the country. Already when so many vacancies are there, they are leaving the students without proper coaching. Even the teachers who are employed are sent to an election duty and they are being trained. Teachers, especially lady teachers, who go there, undergo a lot of sufferings. Any person who is employed or deputed for election duty is taken care of by other people whereas these teachers are not taken care of. They don't have any place to go and settle; they don't have any

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**3.00 P.M.**

place of convenience for lady teachers for two or three days and they undergo a lot of mental strain during that period, and they are also stamped with some political affinity whatever may happen there. And when they come back, their concentration on teaching the students come down. It is alarming, Sir. You yourself said this; 9,07,585 posts are vacant.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: How is that possible? That is what I am thinking. Is it? How can it be?

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Day-before-yesterday also, a question came that even in the Central Universities, posts of some 6,000 professors are vacant. ...(*Interruptions*)... Yesterday only, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: For university professors, there may be shortage of qualified ranks.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: No, Sir. They are in abundance. Qualified candidates are available much in the country. It is only because of the recruitment process. It is the administrative mistake only, Sir. It is not because of lack of candidates. Why? They are, of course, qualified. But the recruitment process is not proper in this country. The Delhi University itself has got 3,000 and odd vacancies. It is very, very sad. We say that we are bothered about the standard of education whereas the universities are lying vacant without professors and the schools are having an alarming vacancy of 9,00,000 and all. See, I don't go into evasive collection of reports. Even the Ministry of HRD in 2014 titled 'Education for all towards Quality with Equity' says which are the vacancies lying in the States. I will say it very, very, shortly. In Uttar Pradesh, vacancies against sanctioned SSA, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Posts, are 1,24,196.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: My God! How can it be?

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Vacancies against total posts sanctioned under State Programme, 1,45,334. On the whole, Sir, in U.P. only, 2,69,539 vacancies are there. In Bihar, it is 2,19,066; in West Bengal, it is 1,05,200.

SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY (West Bengal): Sir, I would like to support him on this. That was so earlier, but recently, in this week, more than 50,000 Primary Teachers are being recruited.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: It has to be appreciated that the State Government is taking the initiative.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: But this is a serious matter.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: In Jharkhand, it is 69,163.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Is there anybody from the HRD Ministry? Nobody is here from the HRD Ministry. Then who would help me? ...*(Interruptions)*... The Parliamentary Affairs Minister is also not there. So, I would request Mr. M. J. Akbar to convey to the HRD Minister this very important point that in some States – if the numbers given here are correct – there are vacancies of more than a lakh teachers in Uttar Pradesh and a similar large number in Madhya Pradesh. If it is about the shortage of qualified teachers, there is no problem; we can have them from Kerala and Tamil Nadu that have enough number of qualified teachers. Fill up the vacancies. Otherwise, what is the point of education? Please convey the concern.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI M. J. AKBAR): Sir, we shall do that.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Sir, I have doubts about that. Many students pass out with the necessary qualifications and they are well-trained to become teachers, but they are not being employed.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: All right. You may proceed further.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: So many people come to us who have completed M.Phil. and B.Ed. degrees. They say, “Give us a job paying ₹ 5,000; we are ready to do any work.” So, it is not as if there is a lack of qualified teachers.

Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, on behalf of the teachers’ community, I express my thanks to the Chair, as you have instructed the Minister to take note of the issue.

Sir, given the large number of vacant posts of teachers, the absence of teachers from their regular teaching duties is adding to the distress of students. It has a major impact on students as it leads to non-completion of syllabi on time as well as low levels of learning.

Sir, the hon. Supreme Court, in its 2001 judgement on the *Election Commission of India versus St. Mary School and Others*, stated that ‘holding of an election is, no doubt, of paramount importance, but the education of children cannot be neglected for this purpose’. The Supreme Court has observed, “With the advent of technology, the requisitioning of a large number of people may not be necessary. We notice that the Election Commission has different roles to play. The Election Commission, in our opinion, can formulate an effective scheme to see that the service of a large number of teachers is not required.”

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Sir, this is an observation made by the Supreme Court, not me. Some of my colleagues here, when we had a discussion aside, said, “If teachers are not appointed, where else can we go?” There are alternate arrangements. There are retired teachers who are already trained. There are so many unemployed youth whom you could recruit, give training to and use for election duty, which is a short-term duty. As it is, these teachers are working for hours lesser than that prescribed under the RTE Act. In this situation, if they are taken away from their regular duty in schools and their strain distracts them from teaching the students in a proper manner, it is much worrisome.

Sir, the hon. Supreme Court further noted in its judgement, “The State of primary education in India is deplorable. There is a heavy dropout from the schools, particularly from amongst the girls.” Sir, it would be important to note here that there is a huge pool of nonteaching staff and retired teachers who have experience in discharging election duties. It has been learnt recently that the Democratic Teachers Front had made a complaint to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights and asked them to take stringent action against officials who had deputed teachers for non-educational duties. According to the DTF, the State of Punjab has 3,65,473 employees other than teachers who can carry out non-educational duties. Further, under the current structure, teachers are already putting in less than 45 hours of work and teachers in the State of Punjab taught only for 167 days as against the minimum of 220 days required for Class VIII.

Sir, in another judgement given by the Rajasthan High Court in May, 2015, in the *Syed Shahid Ali versus Director, Secondary Education and others*, the Court ordered that assigning additional non-teaching responsibilities to teachers needs to be seriously considered as it affects the primary responsibility of teaching, and the students are the worst sufferers because of such diversion of responsibilities. The Board results of the school in question showed a sharp decline in its performance, with the results of the students in Class X Mathematics Examination – Sir, this is, again, an alarming statistics – showing a decline from 77.41 per cent in 2010-11 to 41.17 per cent in 2011-12 and further, to a shocking low of 20.73 per cent in 2012-13. This is the result of the mathematics examination. When already much concentration has been diverted, it brings much worse situation when the teachers are diverted. This shows that teaching has been a casual duty when this additional responsibility is bestowed upon teachers. Sir, in the light of the Supreme Court’s judgment, again I say, Sir, the Ministry of HRD issued guidelines on 13th of September, 2010. This clarified that Section 27 was placed to free teachers from deployment for non-educational duties other than those which are considered to be essential. Sadly, the guidelines

given by the Ministry have failed to ensure that the Election Commission does not appoint teachers for election duty during teaching hours. This has not only resulted in students losing several days of classroom study, but also in their lower grades and inadequate learning. This lack of attention not only hampers their learning, but, in the long run, might also result in their 'unemployability', not unemployment but 'unemployability'. Recently, the ISRO has given a statement that out of the passed-out engineering graduates in this country, Sir, only 26 per cent are employable. It is the ISRO's statement. Out of the total number of passed-out engineering graduates, only 26 per cent are 'employable'. In this case when the students are deprived of this sort of lack of teaching by the teachers, for they are deputed for some other non-teaching duties, unemployability will increase. It is not 'unemployment', again I say 'unemployability'. In addition to affecting the performance of students, deployment of teachers on non-teaching duties such as elections further reflects in the schools. Schools are institutes where democratic ideals such as equality, freedom and justice are instilled in individuals. For democracy to continue to thrive, students must be taught to value it as a way of life. Qualities such as tolerance, acceptance, global awareness, etc., in addition to the academic skills of mathematics, science and social science, rest within the teachers, in all possible ways, to shape the child to face this competitive world that exists today. Teachers' beliefs, thoughts, decisions and determination and all these things should be communicated to students. Educational matters occupy a major part of the psychological context of the teaching process. Sir, children, up to the age of 14, mostly at the time of working, are at school than at home. So, the responsibility of bringing up the children rests mostly with the teachers than the parents. In this case, when already there are a larger number of vacancies, the teachers who are already employed are diverted. This causes very serious and worrisome problem for the future. More educated and better educated citizens will also result in better governance and improved health outcome. Sir, the report I am quoting is a very, very good answer to the question when some people raise a question who else will be deputed. In the United States of America, local citizens above the age of 18 may volunteer to serve as election officers at a local polling station. These volunteers are given special training which would enable them to discharge their duties efficiently. According to a report 'Innovations in Election Administration', released by the Federal Election Commission of USA, 'One of the most surprising aspects of the volunteer programme is that requesting volunteer support actually appeals to people who otherwise may not consider working at a polling place. This opens up a whole new population of potential election workers, far beyond the limited resource base of retired senior citizens.' In Australia, the Australian Election Commission employs around 80,000 Australians on a short term temporary basis for electoral events and duties, and they are remunerated accordingly. Citizens of

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Australia, above the age of 18, can register with the Election Commission, and are thus deployed on election duties. Why can't our country follow the same? I think this is not wrong. It is a very good precedent. Those who are willing to serve as election officers can enroll themselves in the nearby ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: What is the control over them if they misbehave? What will you do? What is the control over them if they do something hanky-panky? What will you do?

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Sir, no one can be assured of that. No one can be assured how they will behave there. I don't want to degrade anyone. Whoever you may depute, we have only a trust on them that they will not act prejudicially. The same confidence or trust we have to have in the youth in this country. In fact, we should have more trust on them when they are offering their services themselves. Moreover, Sir, apart from the unemployed youth, the retired teachers also can be employed. Those who are already experienced in the election duties could be employed. This is the position, Sir.

Recently, in a press note, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Shri Katheria, said, "The Government is planning to relieve the teachers from the poll duties."

So, Sir, in my introductory speech, I would urge that keeping in view the interest of the nation, the future of the children who are in schools, and, the pain and suffering, which the teachers are undergoing while they are engaged in other non-teaching duties, this Bill should be passed. Due to these duties, teachers are not able to concentrate on teaching the students, thereby diminishing the already-declining standard of education in our nation. Apart from the vacancy position, which is very alarming, if this thing also continues, it will not help the education sector to grow. So, I urge the House to adopt this Bill.

Sir, since Mr. Katheria has already given a statement that the Government is planning to relieve the teachers from the poll duties, I sincerely hope that the Ministry will take necessary steps not to appoint teachers for election duties and it would suggest the Election Commission accordingly. For this, I have brought this Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2015 (Amendment of Article 324). Sir, addition of "such step excluding the teachers may be..." is my Amendment, Sir.

With these words, I move the Bill for consideration. Thank you very much.

*The question was proposed.*



**श्रीमती विप्लव ठाकुर** (हिमाचल प्रदेश): माननीय उपसभापति जी, मैं आपका धन्यवाद करती हूँ कि आपने इस बिल पर मुझे बोलने का अवसर दिया है, जो प्राइवेट मेम्बर्स बिल तिरुची शिवा जी लेकर आए हैं।

महोदय, यह एक बहुत महत्वपूर्ण बिल है, जोकि अमेंडमेंट बिल है, क्योंकि जो शिक्षा है, वह हमारे बच्चों के फ्यूचर बनाने का, आने वाली पीढ़ियों का एक आधार है। अगर उसी में ही कमी है, अगर उसी में कमजोरी रह जाती है, तो हमारी जो आने वाली पीढ़ी है, आने वाली जो जेनरेशन है, वह आगे नहीं बढ़ सकती। यही नहीं, टीचर्स को केवल चुनाव के समय ही नहीं लगाया जाता, अध्यापकों की जमात ऐसी जमात है, जिसको आलू की तरह सब जगह फिट कर दिया जाता है। जैसे कहते हैं कि आलू को कहीं भी डाल दीजिए, किसी भी सब्जी में डाल दीजिए, वैसे ही यह अध्यापकों की जमात है। अगर आपको सेंसस का काम करवाना है, तब अध्यापकों को भेज दो, अगर आपको बिलो पॉवर्टी लाइन का सर्वे करवाना है, तब अध्यापकों को भेज दो, मतलब अध्यापक हो गये कि क्या हो गया! यह नहीं सोचा जाता कि जिन अध्यापकों के नीचे बच्चे पढ़ रहे हैं, उनका भविष्य क्या होगा? अभी जैसे इन्होंने बताया कि अध्यापकों की कितनी कमी है और विशेष करके जो प्राइमरी स्कूल्स हैं, जो पहली से पांचवीं तक की क्लासेज होती हैं, जहां बच्चों को 'ए', 'बी', 'सी' सिखानी है, '1', '2', '3' सिखाना है और 'क', 'ख', 'ग' सिखाना है, अगर वहां ही अध्यापक नहीं रहेंगे, तो हम नींव कैसे डालेंगे? हम इतने-इतने बड़े टेक्निकल कॉलेजेज, मेडिकल कॉलेजेज, आईआईएम्स, एमबीए आदि सब कुछ खोल रहे हैं, लेकिन उन बच्चों की नींव नहीं बन रही है, क्योंकि वहां पर अध्यापक नहीं हैं। चुनाव के समय, जिस तरह से सुप्रीम कोर्ट की observation है, खास करके गांवों में ऐसा होता है कि जो टीचर है, वह पहले एक्सरसाइज के लिए जाएगा, उसको सिखाया जाएगा कि आपको किस तरह से वोटिंग मशीन हैंडल करनी है, वहां उसको तीन दिन लग जाते हैं। फिर चार दिन पहले वह पोलिंग बूथ पर पहुँच जाता है। अब बताइए कि बच्चों का कितना नुकसान होता है, उसकी भरपाई कौन करेगा और इसके लिए कौन जिम्मेदार है? इसलिए मैं कहना चाहूँगी कि इसमें अमेंडमेंट होना चाहिए। टीचर्स की ड्यूटी न केवल चुनाव के लिए बल्कि और किसी भी काम के लिए नहीं लगानी चाहिए, क्योंकि टीचर्स या अध्यापक हमारे बच्चों के कर्णधार हैं। अगर वे स्कूल में नहीं रहेंगे, तो बच्चे क्या पढ़ेंगे? विशेष करके गांवों के स्कूलों में जहां पर टीचर्स का होना बहुत जरूरी है, जहां पर पांचवीं क्लास तक के स्कूल के लिए या दसवीं या बारहवीं तक के स्कूल के लिए वैसे ही बहुत मुश्किल से अध्यापक मिलते हैं। जिन स्कूलों में टीचर्स की कमी होती है, वहां से भी उन टीचर्स को ऐसे कामों में लगा दिया जाता है। आप यह बताइए कि अगर हम अपने बच्चों के लिए अध्यापकों की कमी को दूर नहीं करेंगे और जो अध्यापक हैं, उनको ऐसे कामों में लगाएंगे, तो ऐसे में किस तरह से शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में उन्नति हो सकती है या उसको आगे बढ़ाया जा सकता है या उसमें इंप्रूवमेंट हो सकती है? देश में ऐसे ही टीचर्स की कमी है और इस तरह के कामों में टीचर्स की ड्यूटी लगाने से इसमें और कमी आ जाती है। इस संबंध में चुनाव आयोग को भी चाहिए कि वह सरकार को ऐसी instructions दें कि माइनस टीचर किया जाए यानी टीचर्स को इस काम में नहीं लगाया जाए। इसके अलावा बहुत सारे स्टाफ हैं, गवर्नमेंट के सारे ऑफिसोज़ भरे पड़े हैं, वे employees से overburdened हैं, उनको क्यों नहीं ऐसे कामों के लिए इस्तेमाल किया जाता है? क्लर्क्स हैं, superintendents हैं, supervisors हैं, कई विभाग हैं, जहां पर employees हैं, उन्हें क्यों नहीं ऐसे कामों में लगाया जाता है? कहीं प्रिंसिपल जाएगा, कहीं हेडमास्टर जाएगा, कहीं कोई और



[श्रीमती विप्लव ठाकुर]

टीचर जाएगा, ऐसा क्यों होता है? हम टीचर्स को इस तरह से क्यों देखते हैं? हम उनकी रिस्पेक्ट को क्यों नहीं देखते हैं कि वही हमारे बच्चों का भविष्य बनाने वाले हैं? इस संबंध में मैं चाहूंगी और कहूंगी कि इस अमेंडमेंट को माना जाना चाहिए और यह बिल्कुल किया जाना चाहिए ताकि अध्यापकों की छूटी चुनाव में नहीं लगे। मैं तो यह भी कहना चाहती हूँ कि अध्यापकों की छूटी किसी भी काम के लिए नहीं लगनी चाहिए। अंत में मैं तिरुची शिवा जी द्वारा प्रस्तुत किए गए इस बिल का समर्थन करती हूँ, बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद।

SHRI LA. GANESAN (Madhya Pradesh): Respected Mr. Deputy Chairman, I am very happy to have the opportunity to speak on this occasion. I have come here as a Member of the Rajya Sabha for the first time; as a Member of Parliament for the first time; and this is the first time that I have got a chance to speak. If you permit me, it may be a maiden speech. इस विषय पर बोलने के लिए इतना समय भी नहीं चाहिए, फिर भी तिरुची शिवा जी द्वारा प्रस्तुत किए गए अमेंडमेंट पर मैं अपने मन में जो सोच रहा हूँ, उसको मैं संक्षेप में रखना चाहता हूँ। I just want to briefly make two or three points on this.

I support him and I agree with the concern expressed by my good friend, Shri Tiruchi Siva. Nobody can object to that. Everybody agrees that this kind of treatment or work cannot be given at the cost of education. But the alternative has not been mentioned specifically. The alternative suggested here is that you pick up some people from outside. It is more dangerous today because the political situation or politics is not that much clean in our country. I am very sorry to say this. The Government servants and teachers are afraid of the Ruling Party in the States. Something happens in the polling booth and they are not able to prevent it. In that case, what can we expect from the people who will be picked up from outside? That leaves a question mark on it. That is why I say that we have to think about the alternative. Otherwise, the remedy will be more dangerous than the disease. That is the only point that I want to make. My objection is only to that.

As far as the suggestion or the concern expressed by him for the teachers, who are given the election duty, is concerned, I agree with him. But elections are a serious affair. Even hon. President of India mentioned in his speech about conducting the Lok Sabha and the Assembly elections simultaneously. So, that is also being considered on the other side. Instead of piecemeal amendments, holistic approach must be there. Let the Government at the Centre appoint a group of people or experts. Let them discuss. Let them even take into consideration the suggestion given by Mr. Siva and whatever laws and election rules we want to change. Once and for all, we will do it. This is the right time to do it. I have got my own suggestions. Where are the teachers employed in election work? In the beginning, they are employed for preparing the

electoral list. Unfortunately, after Independence, even now, the Election Commission is not able to prepare a perfect voter list. It is not so even today. Many names are left; many dead people are somehow voting even today; photos are changed; male becomes female and female becomes male; addresses are changed. Even today, this is happening. Even then, I appreciate our Election Commission. In a country like India, where we have got a large population and the only country in the whole world where such a large number of people is voting, we are efficiently conducting the elections. I accept it. But, even then, it is not perfect. That is why teachers are involved. My suggestion is this. Nowadays, people are not writing letters. Gradually the post office is losing its relevance because the *tapals* are not coming. Nobody is normally writing it. Everything has come into cell phone or internet. Fortunately, I have to really appreciate that our Government is making use of post office and now passport will be issued by post offices. Post Office becomes a banking system. So, it is a good thing. They are engaged. But, my suggestion is, involve the post office and involve the postman. He is the only person who is visiting every house not only for one programme as a duty, but almost daily, he is visiting the houses. He knows each and everybody in the house. By name, he can recognise everybody. Involve the post office and involve the postmen. Then, you can prepare the voter list almost *pucca*. This is my suggestion. So, teachers need not be involved at that time. This is one aspect I want to put forward.

Sir, the second thing is that percentage of voting is not increasing in spite of our efforts. I was very happy about the Election Commission last time. Even from the Election Commission, they made a propaganda that 100 per cent or at least 80 to 90 per cent voting should be there. Even then, in a city like Chennai, moreover in a constituency like South Madras, where more educated people are there, the percentage of voting is hardly 60 per cent. What is the reason for that? We have to take this into consideration. Whether we can give some incentives for voting or otherwise, negatively, we can award some punishment. That should also be thought of. While we are thinking about the whole election reforms, we have to take up all the aspects of it. These are all the aspects that we have to discuss in detail. Then, who will manage the election? There is a question mark. One small suggestion I can give. If it is a State election, naturally, the employees under the State Government are helping the State Government. I am sharing my experience of Tamil Nadu. This is the experience of Tamil Nadu. So, only Central Government employees should be involved in Assembly election. To a certain extent, that can solve the problem. ...*(Interruptions)*... Allow me to complete. ...*(Interruptions)*... Madam, I am not yielding to you. ...*(Interruptions)*... Allow me to continue. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI VIJILA SATHYANANTH (Tamil Nadu): For both Parliamentary as well as Assembly elections, the same teachers are there. Why are they concerned about the State Government? Whether it is AIADMK or DMK, it has nothing to do with that. It is not of that sort. You only make teachers accountable. *...(Interruptions)...*

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Sir, I think his views are based on his experience. *...(Interruptions)...*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He did not speak about any party. *...(Interruptions)...* Vijilaji, he did not mention any party. *...(Interruptions)...* He didn't blame your party or any party. He only said it generally. *...(Interruptions)...* All right. Now, you sit down. *...(Interruptions)...* Your name is next. At that time, you can speak. Sit down. *...(Interruptions)...* Your name is next. *...(Interruptions)...* Then, you can speak. *...(Interruptions)...*

SHRI LA. GANESAN: Though I have not mentioned any political party. *...(Interruptions)...* but dear friend, Mr. Siva, is silent. *...(Interruptions)...* Madam has. *....(Interruptions)...*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: She felt it. *...(Interruptions)...* Even though you did not mention any party, she felt it. *...(Interruptions)...* Sit down. *...(Interruptions)...* Sit down. *...(Interruptions)...*

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: I align with the.....*...(Interruptions)...* I support him. *...(Interruptions)...*

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: All right. Sit down. *...(Interruptions)...*

SHRI LA. GANESAN: Sir, you have well understood about what I have not told publically. *...(Interruptions)...* As far as conducting simultaneous elections is concerned, I am one with that. There may be so many problems, as I already told you, experts should sit and discuss about it.

I would give you an example. Our very famous and able Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, visited Tamil Nadu. I was State General Secretary, Organisation In-charge of Tamil Nadu, I accompanied him. That was the time when BJP failed in the elections. We lost the rule. Mr. Shekhawat was the Chief Minister. I asked him, as I was told that he was a very able and efficient Chief Minister of Rajasthan, as to how it is that he could not win the election. That was the time when the Central Government had dismissed some three or four State Governments over December 6th incident at Ayodhya. In the by-election, BJP got defeated in Rajasthan. So, Mr. Shekhawat told me his experience. This is a very interesting experience which is relevant about conducting the simultaneous elections of

both Lok Sabha and Assemblies. He said, "You know what we will do. Just before the election, the State Government will announce all freebies and all concessions and no taxes. We will get elected. In the first year Budget, we will not tax the people. It will be very soft Budget. Anyhow, to run the Government we want money. The second year of the Budget will be a little harsh. The third year, whatever money we want, we will be very harsh and we will tax more. Unfortunately, just when we presented the Budget in the third year, my Government got dismissed and the people were angry with me. Again, in the fourth year it would be less and in fifth year, practically, there will be no taxes. So, what happens you know, the problem is with the Central Government". Now, today, the Election Commission has said that in the Budget you should not say anything which is favourable to the election-facing States. During the next year Budget time what is the guarantee that there will be no elections in other States of India? Every year there are some elections somewhere in India. Then, what will the Central Government do? The same thing happens with the State Governments also. Every time, it is there somewhere or other. So, the Central Government, only to persuade the voters, thinking about getting more votes, will not prepare a realistic Budget. That is the problem. That is why once in five years only the election should be there. That will solve all the problems of the Government. Not only that, the people have given mandate for a party. Allow them to work for four or five years and let them face the election. So, these are all the things, especially, about the national parties like BJP and the Congress Party, they may fail. And, so, everywhere, every year there will be some election in some State.

Yesterday, one of my colleagues has told about criticizing the Prime Minister going around on election campaigns. The Prime Minister does not want it. Allow him to work as Prime Minister. Allow the Ministers to work as Ministers. So, if it is once in five years, the Ministers can also concentrate on their respective responsibility. All these things should be put together.

Another point is about counting system nowadays. Why this much time? Recently, two years ago, there was an election in Sri Lanka. I was really surprised, the counting was over by the night and the results were declared early morning. Next day morning at 10 o' clock the Prime Minister took office. I was really surprised. Why can't we do it? So, all those things put together, I have mentioned only three-four points about the election. The points raised by Mr. Siva are very much relevant, but do not make amendment in the rules piecemeal. Let us all sit together. The entire election issue will be discussed by experts and then permanently there will be some solution about elections whatever it is. This is my point. Thank you very much for giving me the time.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Shri Ganesan. Now, Shrimati Vijila Sathyananth.

SHRIMATI VIJILA SATHYANANTH: Sir, can I participate in both the discussions?  
...(Interruptions)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes; you can participate in this and in the next also.

SHRIMATI VIJILA SATHYANANTH: Sir, now I have taken up my career in politics but earlier as I had served as a teacher, I could get the views of the teachers. Now several teachers remain engaged in non-academic activities, which include works related to the school funds, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rashtriya Madhyam Shiksha Abhiyan, thereby impacting the studies at the schools and violating Section 27 of the Right to Education Act, 2009, which clearly prohibits such duties. That allows only three duties — census, disaster and election duties, only on polling and counting days. But despite orders, I know that the teachers are made to do such other duties as the school heads don't relegate the work to the clerks. Now, in most of the schools, the Juniors/Assistants and the people who are used to do these jobs are very, very limited. It is a policy matter.

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY) *in the Chair*.]

Even if they do, the clerks mostly refuse to carry out all the duties, thereby forcing the teachers to multitask. So the teachers have to teach as well as do all these works in addition. According to the document assessed by HT, the then DPI in 2007 had sent a letter to the then DEO, addressing some of the concerns which I read out in an article. The works not being done by the ministerial staff at the schools has been seriously noted by the officials. I would like to raise here many concerns including somewhere some teachers had very unfortunate happenings when they go to very remote villages for their election duties, for doing census and otherwise. But I also have another view in this. How could the Election Commission then conduct the elections? Who will be accountable for that? Only the teachers! The post office staff can also be involved. But how far can they be involved? We need a great volume of people. Every constituency needs about lakhs of people to be engaged in this task. So in this operation, the Election Commission of India needs accountable people. All the officials like the officials from the local bodies are involved in this duty. But they are not sufficient for this work. So, our Election Commission engages teachers in these three duties, *i.e.*, census, disaster and election duties. The point which I just want to add here is, just concentrate on academic work for teachers and bestow these activities during the vacation time. Likewise, we can have the Assembly elections and the Parliamentary elections together so that both

will be conducted at the same time and at a stretch, these people can be engaged during their summer holidays where their normal work will not get interrupted. That is what I wanted to put forth here. As I have been an academician, I want to support my people, the teachers.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY): Now, Dr. K. V. P. Ramachandra Rao.

DR. K. V. P. RAMACHANDRA RAO (Telangana): Thank you very much, Sir, for giving me an opportunity to support hon. Tiruchi Siva's Bill. In regard to deployment of teachers on election duties, recently the Election Commission has modernized the system of elections itself. Nowadays, it is not like olden days where you need to do a lot of paper work and need to do a lot of explaining to the voters. Sir, generation after generation, the voters are becoming wise. The teachers need not be there to teach them how to cast their vote. Sir, in this regard the damage is being done to primary and secondary teachers by deploying them on election duties. Students who are supposed to have a good foundation are getting disturbed because of the absence of teachers, and because of the tensions that teachers go through and training that they go through during election time. If the teachers are not deployed, we have to look at what the alternatives are. After modernization of the election procedure, the Election Commission can find people from various other sectors to conduct elections peacefully. I am very sure that they can come out with the alternatives with the help of the experts.

Once again, I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to support Mr. Siva's Bill. Though he belongs to a party which doesn't believe in God but his name is Siva, still, I wholeheartedly support his Bill. Thank you.

SHRI ANANDA BHASKAR RAPOLU (Telangana): Respected Vice- Chairman, Sir, by moving the Bill to highlight the issue of teachers' involvement in the electoral process, my elder hon. colleague, Mr. Tiruchi Siva is seeking to focus on the quality of education and to yield psychologically to the teaching fraternity so that the foundations for the future generation would be safe in their hands.

In 2007, the Supreme Court had concretely observed that the primary and secondary school teachers should not be deployed on electoral assignments to save them from discharging their educational responsibilities.

My concern is two-fold. Though the Government has looked at the issue of electoral conduction, it has deployed the Union Minister of Law to take note of the debate and reply to the points raised by the hon. Members. Here the Minister of Human Resource Development is having a larger responsibility to hear the

[Shri Ananda Bhaskar Rapolu]

observations on this Bill because in schools we need to look at the non-teaching responsibilities of the teachers. Their non-teaching assignments include not only elections duties, Census duties, canvassing duties on certain national events. Not only that, they are made to attend to certain clerical duties also. They also carry out sort of watch and ward duties in the mid-day meal programmes in their schools. And because of all this, their concentration on teaching becomes much less with the result that ultimately the quality of education, particularly in Government schools, is rendered very poor, which is also one of the reasons why most of the parents do not show much interest in sending their children to Government schools. Teachers in Government schools are assigned duties to serve mid-day meals to school children. Everybody knows that each teacher foregoes at least a minimum of two periods of 45 minutes each daily for attending to mid-day meal duties and to ensure that the meals are prepared on time and served properly. In this backdrop of teachers attending to Census duties, election duties, and not only Lok Sabha elections but even Assembly elections, cooperative societies' elections, panchayat elections and so on, and also in the backdrop of school teachers being utilised as campaigners for certain national events, and keeping in mind the huge human resource available, with so huge unemployment, why should we not think on the lines the United States thinks, or on the lines the Australians think? In the United States, Sir, teachers are never deployed for election duties; they are never sent to polling booths or counting centres. In Australia, they have a practice of engaging volunteers for short periods for organising and conducting elections as and when they are held. This has to be the basis for our electoral reforms. I appreciate the initiatives taken by the Election Commission. Now, they give voter slips on their own to each and every registered voter. They also give acknowledgement slips whenever certain doubts are expressed regarding the utility of EVMs and their functioning. Certain improvements are giving confidence to voters now that they can vote properly and the fairness of results is also ensured. When the Election Commission is taking extra interest, why should the Union Government not come forward and think of having a para-voluntary force comprising able, registered, unemployed, educated and even qualified retired persons? With this voluntary force, we can conduct free and fair elections; we can have them on Census duties, in rescue and rehabilitation work, etc. We can use these volunteers even to take care of the mid-day meal programmes in schools and similarly student-related and community-related programmes. These two aspects fall under two different Ministries. I hope the Union Minister of Law would communicate the concerns of this House over the deployment of teachers for electoral duties to the Election Commission. But also we expect that the Ministry of Human Resource Development will take note of the necessity of keeping the teachers psychologically



free to enhance the quality of education and to give them only teaching and learning practices and keeping them away from the non-teaching roles. With this, we can ensure the students to have the confidence in the educational system and the parents will definitely be happy to send their children to the Government schools in large numbers. This is the requirement of the day to improve the quality of education and to improve the electoral process, and for that, let us think of para voluntary force to utilize and achieve the targeted goal. Thank you very much.

SHRI A. NAVANEETHAKRISHNAN (Tamil Nadu): Thank you, hon. Vice-Chairman. This is a Constitutional Amendment based upon the decision of the hon. High Court, which has been moved by our hon. Member. In the Statement of Objects and Reasons also, it is very clearly mentioned that accordingly, teachers are supposed to be assigned election duties only on Sundays and other holidays. The Supreme Court has held that the election work should not be entrusted to the teachers for fourteen days, that is, their work shall not be affected because of the election work. I may be permitted to read the relevant portion. I quote: "We, however, notice that Election Commission before us also categorically stated that as far as possible, teachers should be put on electoral rolls revision works on holidays, non-teaching days, non-teaching hours, whereas, non-teaching staff be put on duty any time. We, therefore, direct that all teaching staff shall be put on the duties of roll revisions and election works on holidays and non-teaching days. Teachers should not ordinarily be put on duty on teaching days and within teaching hours. Non-teaching staff, however, may be put on such duties on any day, at any time, if permissible in law." Again, for the sake of repetition, I read it. "We, therefore, direct all the teaching staff shall be put on duties of roll revisions and election works on holidays and non-teaching days." So, the direction of the hon. Supreme Court is that the teaching staff shall be put on duties of roll revisions and election works on holidays and non-teaching days. So, the entire teaching community is not excluded. This is my humble submission. So, they shall be put duties of roll revisions and election works on holidays and non-teaching days. This is what the Supreme Court judgment says. So, on working days, if it is affecting their classes, then, they shall not carry on with the work. My humble view is, subject to correction and approval by the hon. Members of this House, this Amendment is not at all required in pursuance of the directions of the hon. Supreme Court judgment. Article 324 of the Constitution of India vests the power of superintendence, direction and control of elections on the Election Commission. But, two very vital enactments were passed by our Parliament, namely, Representation of the People Act, 1950 and Representation of the People Act, 1951. These two enactments deal with requisitioning of officers for the purpose of election duties. So, I think, Section 159 is most important—staff of certain authorities

[Shri A. Navaneethakrishnan]

to be made available for election work, which include every local authority; every university established or incorporated by or under a Central, Provincial or State Act; a Government company defined; any other institution, concern or undertaking which is established by or under a Central, Provincial or State Act or which is controlled, or financed wholly or substantially by funds provided, directly or indirectly, by the Central Government or a State Government. So, if at all, the Government wants to take a policy-decision, the stakeholders may be consulted because now the people have more awareness. The law can't be passed without consulting the stakeholders. The persons going to be affected must be given an opportunity. So, the teachers' community may be given an opportunity to express what their views are. My interpretation, subject to correction and approval, is that the teaching community can't be employed during the teaching hours.

The Supreme Court further says that the teachers should not ordinarily be put on duties when they are on teaching duties. They are not totally excluded. Also, I am of the humble opinion that the teaching community is still maintaining an impartial and clean image about itself. They are the group of officials available in our governance who are discharging their duties while maintaining their impartiality. They are the real role-models for the students. They are the future of India. Being role-models for students, they act independently, judiciously and impartially. There could be one or two complaints, which could be the subject-matter for inquiry.

My humble submission, first of all, would be that the Constitutional Amendment is not at all required. If at all required, it should be done only after consultation with all the stakeholders. Only the necessary amendments may be made in these two enactments.

I thank Mr. Vice-Chairman and conclude.

SHRI V. VIJAYASAI REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, thank you for the opportunity given to me though I had not given my name earlier. Sir, the Private Member's Bill introduced by Shri Tiruchi Siva has a rationale. In fact, the teachers, as of today, are all deployed not only during elections but also for census duties which are detrimental to the interests of students. It is a well-known fact. In fact, there is a Supreme Court judgment, though not directly on this. I can bring it to your notice the essence of the Supreme Court judgment. It has categorically stated that to engage teachers as personal assistants, for which they are entitled, by the Ministers or Members of Parliament or Members of Assemblies is prohibited under law. There is no way that the teachers can be deployed either for political purposes or for electoral purposes. For that matter, it is so even for calculation of

the census. Therefore, the Private Member's Bill has got a rationale. There is no way that the apex court judgment can be deviated or violated.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY): Do you have the citation?

SHRI V. VIJAYASAI REDDY: I don't have the citation, but I can produce it to you tomorrow. If you permit me, I can take a copy of the Supreme Court judgment and I can produce it to you. There is a specific prohibition imposed by the Supreme Court; by its verdict the deployment of teachers is specifically prohibited in this case. Therefore, I request this august House to adopt this Private Member's Bill and pass it so that the interests of the students are protected. Thank you very much, Sir.

**डा. भूषण लाल जांगडे** (छत्तीसगढ़): उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, जो चुनाव की प्रक्रिया है, उसमें काफी तादाद में हमारे कर्मचारियों की जरूरत पड़ती है। हमारे शिक्षक बंधुओं की इसमें बहुत संख्या रहती है और उनके माध्यम से ही चुनाव हो पाता है। शुरू से ही यह स्थिति हमारी चुनाव प्रक्रिया में रही है। हमारी चुनाव प्रक्रिया जब शुरू हुई थी, तो उस समय अलग-अलग पेटियां रहती थीं, उन अलग-अलग पेटियों में वोट डालना पड़ता था। उस समय जब हमारी यह चुनाव प्रक्रिया चली थी, तो उसमें केवल शिक्षक बंधु ही सहयोग दे पाते थे। अन्य कर्मचारियों की कमी के कारण से उस काम के लिए केवल शिक्षकों को ही लगाया जाता था, परन्तु धीरे-धीरे परिवर्तन होता रहा है। चूंकि आज मीडिया के कारण, इसके संचालन को लेकर बहुत सारे नए-नए उपकरण आने लगे हैं, इससे कुछ दिनों के बाद, जो हमारे तिरुची शिवा जी ने यह विधेयक रखा है, वह लागू हो सकता है, लेकिन अभी नहीं हो सकता है। उसका कारण यह है कि हमारे शिक्षकों की जो तादाद है, उसका उपयोग करना हमारे लिए जरूरी रहता है। यदि हम उसको अलग कर दें, तो आम नागरिकों से यह चुनाव की प्रक्रिया पूरी नहीं हो सकती है। दूसरी सबसे बड़ी बात यह है कि इन शिक्षकों के पास एक तरह से समय है, क्योंकि अन्य कर्मचारियों की ड्यूटी पूरे बारह के बारह महीने रहती है, शिक्षकों के शिक्षकीय कार्य में कम से कम कुछ महीनों का गैप रहता है। अगर उस गैप में चुनाव की प्रक्रिया चले, तो आपत्ति नहीं होनी चाहिए। हमारा चुनाव का जो तरीका है, उसमें धीरे-धीरे परिवर्तन होने लगा है। जब चुनाव की प्रक्रिया में इस तरह सुधार होने लगेगा, तो निश्चित रूप से हमें चुनाव के कार्य में शिक्षकों की जरूरत नहीं पड़ेगी, ऐसा मैं महसूस करता हूँ।

महोदय, हम दूसरे देशों का अनुकरण करते हैं। दूसरे देशों में आम नागरिकों से इस तरह चुनाव की प्रक्रिया पूरी करने का मौका मिलता है, लेकिन हमारे यहां हम केवल सरकारी कर्मचारियों से ही चुनाव करवा सकते हैं और इसलिए सरकारी कर्मचारियों के नाम से हमें शिक्षकों का उपयोग करने के लिए बाध्य होना पड़ता है। आज हमारे देश में बहुत सी चीजों में सुधार होने की नौबत आई है। उस सुधार से मैं सोचता हूँ कि हमारे देश में जिस तरह से टेक्नीकल उपयोग बढ़ रहा है, उससे भविष्य में हमें इसका लाभ मिलेगा, ऐसा मैं महसूस करता हूँ। इसलिए मेरा खुद का और मेरे हिसाब से हमारे देश का मत है कि केवल शिक्षकों के द्वारा ही हमारे देश के चुनाव की प्रक्रिया पूरी हो सकेगी। इतना कहते हुए मैं अपनी बात समाप्त करता हूँ।

**4.00 P.M.**

**श्री शंकरभाई एन. वेगड़** (गुजरात): माननीय उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, हमारे यहां पहले बैलेट पेपर से चुनाव होता था और उस बैलेट पेपर से चुनाव होने के बाद जब उसकी गिनती होती थी, तब एक दिन, दो दिन, तीन-तीन दिन तक गिनती का काम चलता था, लेकिन जब से हमारे चुनाव आयोग ने वोटिंग मशीन से चुनाव कराना शुरू किया, तब से तो दोपहर से शाम तक रिजल्ट आ जाता है। इस काम में जितना समय पहले शिक्षकों का बरबाद होता था, अब वह कम बरबाद हो रहा है। यह बात सही है कि छुट्टियों के दौरान बच्चों की पढ़ाई नहीं होती है, लेकिन पूरे विश्व में हमारा देश सबसे बड़ा लोकतांत्रिक देश है, इसलिए मेरे हिसाब से शिक्षकों का उपयोग अभी इसमें जरूरी है। इसका एक ही इलाज है, अगर समय बचाना है, टाइम बचाना है, हिन्दुस्तान की धनराशि बचानी है, तो जैसा हमारे प्रधान मंत्री जी ने आश्वान किया है, एक ही साथ चुनाव हों, लोक सभा के और हर स्टेट की विधान सभा के चुनाव एक ही साथ हो जाएं। इससे हिन्दुस्तान के सभी कर्मचारियों का समय भी बचेगा, धनराशि भी बचेगी और अच्छी तरह से चुनाव भी हो सकता है। इसलिए मेरा यह कहना है कि अभी ऐसा संशोधन, सुधार लाने की कोई जरूरत नहीं है। मैं इसको सपोर्ट नहीं करता हूँ, धन्यवाद।

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE, AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI P. P. CHAUDHARY): Thank you, Sir, for permitting me. The Bill was moved by Shri Tiruchi Siva. This is in respect to the Amendment of Article 324 of the Constitution of India where he has suggested that the present provision may be substituted by the provision that the teacher should not be involved in the process of election and he has suggested that “the President, or the Governor of a State, shall, when so requested by the Election Commission, make available to the Election Commission or to a Regional Commissioner such staff, excluding school teachers, as may be necessary for the discharge of the functions.” So, what is suggested by the hon. Member is that the school teacher may be excluded from participating in the process of election and in the Statement of Objects and Reasons the Supreme Court judgment has also been cited. And apart from it, it is stated that as per Article 21A of the Constitution of India, education is a fundamental right of children and that education of children is being affected. Therefore, teachers should not be deployed in the process of election and a reference to the provision of Section 27 of the Act of 2009 was also made. Now, Sir, apart from the Statement of Objects and Reasons, a reference of the Supreme Court judgment has been made, but a reference to the other direction of the Supreme Court has not been made. The Supreme Court direction is that the teacher should not be employed in the process of election, but the reference has not been made in the Statement of Objects and Reasons to the other direction that the teacher can be employed in the process of election in non-teaching hours, when holidays are there. Sir, as per Article 139 of the Representation of People’s Act, it is provided specifically. So, this Bill has not been moved for amendment of Section 159 of

the Representation of the People Act, 1951. In that Section a provision has been made that the Election Commission can requisite any staff and it includes teachers, Government servants and various authorities from various Departments because it is clearly mentioned that under this provision — kindly see, the Representation of the People Act where the provision has been made — that not only the teachers but the Election Commission can also requisite staff from the local authorities, staff from the universities, staff from Government companies as defined under the Companies Act and any other institution, concern or undertaking of the Government. So, not only the teachers from various streams and from various authorities, the other staff are also being requisited for conducting elections. For this purpose, no such amendment has been moved and this is a requirement of the law. Under the statute, the Election Commission can requisite the teachers and other staff from various other institutions. Now, so far as Article 21A of the Constitution is concerned, it speaks about the Fundamental Right of Education, but in no way the Fundamental Right of Education of the students is being interfered. And as far as Section 27 of the Act of 2009 is concerned, it specifically provides that the services of the teachers can be taken. Although the Act of 2009 came into effect after the Supreme Court judgment, but under this provision a specific provision has been made that the services of the teachers can be taken. Section 27 of the Act of 2009 says “prohibits deployment of teachers for non-educational purposes, other than decennial population census, disaster relief duties or duties relating to elections to local authority, State Legislatures and Parliament, as the case may be.”

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Is this the RTE Act?

SHRI P. P. CHAUDHARY: Yes, The Right to Education Act. So, even under the RTE Act where the Fundamental Right of Education is prescribed, a provision has been made by Parliament that services of teachers can be requisitioned for the purpose of election of State Legislature, Parliament and election of local authorities and local bodies. Therefore, there is a specific provision. So, apart from Article 324 of the Constitution, there is also a provision under Section 159 of the Representation of the People Act. There is also a provision under Section 27 of the Right to Education Act. But, no such suggestion has been made by the hon. Member that amendment should also be carried out to these provisions since these are still in force. So, Sir, this provision was made under Section 27 after the judgment of the Supreme Court and it specifically provides that services of teachers can be requisitioned and teachers can be deployed in the process of election.

Coming to the judgment of the Supreme Court, there is no blanket order as mentioned by the hon. Member. Hon. Member has mentioned as if Supreme Court has directed that deployment of teachers is prohibited.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY): No, no. The hon. Member said that it is an observation of the Supreme Court.

SHRI P. P. CHAUDHARY: Sir, now, kindly see the observation of the Supreme Court. It is at para 32. It says, 'We would, however, notice that the Election Commission before us also categorically stated that as far as possible teacher would be put in electoral role, revision works on holidays, non-teaching days and non-teaching hours. Whereas, non-teaching staff be put on duty any time. We, therefore, direct that all the teaching staff shall be put on duty of roll revisions and election works on holidays and non-teaching days. Teachers should not ordinarily be put on duty on teaching days and within teaching hours.' So, in pursuance of this, the Election Commission, from time to time, issued orders and one such order was issued way back in 2008, making it clear to all the concerned and respective authorities that teachers should not be deployed in view of the Supreme Court judgment. The order was issued by the Election Commission on 28th January, 2008. Sir, with your permission, I wish to read it. It says, "As of now, a holiday is declared on poll day. The Commission desired that if the day of dispatch of polling party happen to be the teaching day for schools then that day should also be declared a local holiday for school, wherever necessary. The Commission further directed whether teachers are appointed as Presiding Officer or other Polling Officer, the training session for them shall be conducted, as far as practical, on holidays." So, this is the orders. There is not a single order. But, there are so many orders.

In view of the order of the hon. Supreme Court, the Election Commission has directed the following:

"Whenever teaching staff is put on duty of poll revision, the DEOs, EROs shall prescribe holiday and non-teaching days and non-teaching hours as the duty period of this work. Such appointees may be asked to avoid teaching hours and for undertaking roll revision work during roll revision wherever teachers are appointed as designated officers to make."

In view of the above, it is clear that even the Election Commission has taken precaution. So, the Bill moved by the hon. Member is devoid of any force and it lacks merit. The question is, in pursuance of the order of the hon. Supreme Court, the Election Commission has issued necessary orders and those orders are being followed.

Besides, we have to look at Article 51A of the Constitution which specifically provides the Fundamental Duties. It says, 'It shall be the duty of every citizen of India; (d) to defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so.' Conducting election is basically a sovereign function. It cannot be conducted through the outsourced staff of various agencies of the private people because it is a

question of accountability. It is a national service. Participation in democratic process is a national duty. It is not just a fundamental duty, but the process of democracy is the basic foundation of the Constitution of India. Apart from the constitutional provisions and apart from statutory provisions, the conduct of elections is just like a celebration. As per the basic structure of our Constitution, it is above Fundamental Rights. In case of a conflict between Fundamental Rights and the basic structure of the Constitution, the basic structure will have an overriding effect. So, the democracy is the essence of the Preamble of our Constitution, which is the basic structure of Constitution. Not only this, not only our students, even the foreign students visit India to see how elections are conducted in the biggest democracy of the world. They stay here for months together and study the election process. So, it is basically an education. It is not wastage of time. In other words, it is wrong to say that it is waste of teachers' time and wastage of teaching time. To my mind, not only the teachers, there must also be a participation of the students in the process of elections. So, I suggest Mr. Tiruchi Siva to move another Bill for making a provision that not only teachers, but students should also participate in the process of democracy because it is the cardinal principle of the Constitution of India and the Preamble of the Constitution of India. ...(Interruptions)... We are, now, in a digital world. ...(Interruptions)...

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: He is provoking me. ...(Interruptions)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY): No; no. Please be cool.

SHRI P. P. CHAUDHARY: Time is not far away, when we can have a 3-D animation form of education in all the schools all over the country. There are almost four lakh senior secondary schools in the country. So, the need of the teachers will be less. So, the participation of the teachers should be there in the election process. Participation of the students should be there in the election process, so that they can learn. It is a part of the education. We cannot say that it is not a part of the education. It is a part of the democratic process and helps us to learn about the strength of the democracy of our country. ...(Interruptions)... It has also been raised that there is a paucity of teachers. ...(Interruptions)... I have come to understand that the matter of the paucity of teachers is pending before the Supreme Court of India. So, I would not like to comment on that count. Moreover, it is not under the domain of our Ministry.

As I have said, the elections are democratic process and conducting elections is a sovereign function. We cannot outsource the staff from private bodies for this purpose. This duty has to be performed by the people who can be held accountable



[Shri P. P. Chaudhary]

and responsible. As I have already said, under section 159 of the Representation of People Act, 1959, not only teachers, the Election Commission takes staff not only from various Government departments, but also from the local authorities and even from the Government companies also. It is our duty to conduct free and fair elections. And, for this purpose, we need a large number of personnel to conduct the elections. It is only the schools that are spread in every part of the country. Their employees are spread all over the country. They are better equipped to participate in conduct of free and fair elections. Therefore, participation of teachers and also the participation of students should be made mandatory for a healthy democratic process. It is an experience which is gained by the teachers. It is an experience which can also be gained by the students. If participation of students is not there, then, participation of teachers could be there. More experience about how our democracy is functioning will be gained by the teachers, which can, in turn, be taught by them to students in the schools.

Coming to the number of booths, now, approximately, 10,00,000 polling booths are there in our country. Approximately, 8,00,000 polling personnel are employed. Therefore, teachers alone are not enough. Requisitions are sent by the Election Commission for conducting of elections. That is why, Sir, our hon. Prime Minister has suggested that there must be a deliberation on the issue of conducting of simultaneous elections of Parliament, (Lok Sabha) and the State Legislature. Sir, I thank all the Members who participated in the discussion — Shrimati Viplove Thakur, Shri La. Ganesan who suggested use of technology in education, Shrimati Vijila Sathyananth, Dr. K. V. P. Ramachandra Rao, Shri Ananda Bhaskar Rapolu, Shri A. Navaneethakrishnan and Shri Shankarbhai Vegad. Sir, now, I request Shri Tiruchi Siva to kindly withdraw his Bill. Thank you very much, Sir.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, actually, I was in a mood to withdraw the Bill after having heard the Minister's reply. But his reply was not convincing to me. He spoke as a Law Minister and not as a people's representative. He should represent all sections of the society. When the Minister of HRD has gone out to say deliberations are on to find out the solutions so that teachers are not occupied in such non-academic work which adversely affects the education of children', the Law Minister is speaking controversial. Two Ministers in the same Government are contradicting themselves. Sir, my intention to move this Bill was with a concern about two sections — one is the student community and the other is the teacher community. The students are deprived of having their education with

the absenteeism of their school teachers. Already, I have said in my introductory speech — I think the hon. Law Minister was not here then — that there are about 9,00,000 posts vacant in this country. Even in his own State, — he knows very well — the number is not less than a lakh. For UP and all, I have cited statistics also; I don't want to repeat that. So, already, there are vacancies and the teachers who are presently employed are being deployed for non-educational duties! I don't disagree with you that every one should have a responsibility in conducting elections, in holding elections, or, to be a part of that. But who are you deploying? In what type of job are they involved in? For example, I would say that in Tamil Nadu, when we were the ruling party, when our Leader, Dr. Kalaignar, was the Chief Minister, he engaged only lady teachers up to the level of fifth standard, because only they know how to deal with the students of that age. So, students, who are our future, need more attention of the teachers. As I rightly pointed out at the very outset itself, the quality of a nation depends upon its citizens, the citizens' quality is determined in a way, at least, by way of education and education is, undoubtedly, determined by the quality of the teachers. You were suggesting that they could be used during holidays. So, the teachers don't require rest at all! Whole day, they will be at school, teaching students of different ages and of different temperaments, taking too much of pain; they have got their own families also; and, at the same time, you will also deploy them for noneducational duties, which means that teachers are not at all considered with some concern. So, the Minister, I think, spoke with a closed mind. He was not even able to convince me or say that it will be considered. The other Minister, who is related with the teachers and the students, ...(Interruptions)... — let me complete — has said that. I am glad that some people got themselves committed. They are against the teachers' community. Sir, the agony and the pain through which the teachers are undergoing when they are deployed for election duty, only they know that. I think, if opportunity warrants, some of the people would have listened to this debate. See, I have nothing personal with this. But a section of the society who is responsible for the future generation's upcoming, to bring them up, when they are in distress, when they are undergoing mental strain, when they are not able to take care of their family because the whole day, they will be in the school ...(Interruptions)... Let me complete.

SHRI P. P. CHAUDHARY: Just a minute.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Let me complete. ...(Interruptions)... No, no. Please. I am not yielding. ...(Interruptions)... I will just conclude.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY): Please continue.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: They spend the whole of the day at school with the students, teaching them, preparing themselves also. When they go to the school next day, they have to prepare themselves what to teach, how to teach. Other than the academic syllabus, they also have to teach them the value of life, the moral values of life, ethics of life. All these responsibilities are vested with the teachers and they have got their own family also, whereas, you will deploy them even during holidays for the election or non-academic duties. I think, it means there is no concern for the teachers' community. So, in that respect, you could at least consider it. What I suggested, in USA and in Australia, they have some voluntary programme. When I said that some people who can offer themselves to work for election duty could be deployed for this purpose, some apprehension were raised even by my esteemed colleague, Mr. La. Ganesan, that they are not accountable. Who is accountable, who is not accountable, no one can be assured of. Everyone will be inclined to some political party or the other. A Judge in the court who is expected to be impartial, he also goes to a polling booth to vote. It doesn't mean that the party to which he is voting, he is associated with that. In a democratic country, every person has got a right to vote and that doesn't mean that they are inclined to that. So, the youth community, whom I said the 'unemployed youth', could be deployed for election duty after giving some proper training. You can deploy retired teachers. When you are re-recruiting teachers for teaching in the universities, why don't you recruit them or appoint them as electoral officer? So, I suggested some other alternates. You can find some other alternates if that doesn't work or if you have some apprehensions or you are doubtful about the sincerity and credibility of the youth community who are unemployed. They are going to become police officers, they are going to become teachers, and they are going to occupy many other positions. They are going to come here as lawmakers. How can you doubt them that if they go to polling booth, they will have some inclination? No. We cannot distrust anyone and we cannot undermine the sincerity or credibility of anyone. So, my basic intention is one that teachers must be relieved of this. Think of the lady teachers who go to these election booths. These polling booths will be in a remote corner somewhere where there will be no commodity. They don't have travelling facility. They will engage someone to go there. Where to stay at night? Who will take care of them? Who will provide them food? And those lady teachers don't have any place in a remotest village. In Bihar — the hon. Minister, Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, will agree — in some polling booths, even those polling boxes are taken by way of boats. They don't have roads even. In such places, if some teachers are deployed, do we realize the pains that they undergo? Why don't we realize that? First of all, a politician or a law-maker should have a human approach. Then only law, then only everything

else comes. When you are citing Supreme Court and some people are telling that this amendment is not necessary, I am happy that you confirm yourself that you are against the teaching community, you don't have any soft corner towards them. I quote it again. The Supreme Court has rightly observed, 'Holding of an election is no doubt of paramount importance but the education of children cannot be neglected for this purpose! With an advent of technology, the requisitioning of a large number of people may not be necessary. We notice that the Election Commission has different roles to play. The Election Commission in our opinion can formulate an effective scheme to see that the services of a large number of teachers is not required. The state of primary education in India is in a deplorable condition. There is a heavy dropout from the schools particularly from the municipal schools. Sir, the Judiciary looks at issues on the lines of law but we, who are here as representatives of the people, should have an outlook of the people in a different manner. That should be human. We should have a concern for the poor, for the needy who are suffering. In that respect, so many teachers have represented to us. Some who have been teachers and now who are not teachers may not realize the pain or would have forgotten the pain. But those who are employed now have come to us and literally cried before me. It is that which prompted me to bring this Bill. He says, 'Why has he not brought a Bill for amending the RP Act?' That would follow, Mr. Minister. Even the Constitution is undergoing so many changes. We are amending the Constitution, which had been discussed at length for more than three years extensively in the Constituent Assembly. A Constitution that is considered superior all over the world is still undergoing amendments and you expect a Private Member Bill to bring forth all the amendments! Does your law or the Bills that you bring forth fully cover everything? Your Acts are amended again and again. They are relooked. So many things are being done. You brought the 2009 RP Act. What was the previous Act about? Why did you bring the 2009 Act? What does the RTE Act say? In a single Bill, I cannot provide that the RTE Act must be amended, the RP Act must be amended, the Constitution must be amended, and so on. That is not my job. My intention is to convey, through this House, or to create an awakening in the Government, to kindly consider and realize the pain and the agony that teachers of this country face because of their being deployed for election duties or non-academic duties. When we talk about post offices, they are also engaged in various activities, but what is the job that the teachers are doing? They are dealing with children. They are teaching them. They are preparing them for the future of the country. They hold this big responsibility. Don't deprive them of this responsibility. Don't let them undergo mental strain. It is in this backdrop that I said that this amendment is necessary.

Sir, I am very thankful for this discussion. Many hon. Members have contributed

[Shri Tiruchi Siva]

and supported this Bill. The Minister's reply did not show any intent to consider this issue. Some people believe that whatever I bring forth must be opposed by them. In our State, if the State Government brings forth some legislation which is necessary for the people, we support it. There the Party does not come in.

SHRIMATI VIJILA SATHYANANTH: Sir, we do not have any inclination to ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: But here, it is the convention. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY): Shrimati Vijila, please ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Sir, in a way, I am happy that they have themselves agreed that they are against the concerns of the teaching community and the pains that they are undergoing. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI VIJILA SATHYANANTH: Sir, we are not against ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Sir, I am not yielding. I am not yielding. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI VIJILA SATHYANANTH: We are with the teachers. We stand by...  
...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY): Please sit down.  
...*(Interruptions)*... He has not named anybody. Please sit down. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Sir, I am not yielding. The floor is meant for me.  
...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY): Please don't do this. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI VIJILA SATHYANANTH: Sir, he should not criticize what our Government... ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: It was deliberately done. ...*(Interruptions)*... I am very happy that they have been exposed today again. ...*(Interruptions)*... They are against a section of the society. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY): No, no. This is not fair. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI VIJILA SATHYANANTH: Sir, the hon. Member should not criticize any of the views placed before this House. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: That is because they are against the fact that a Bill has been moved by a person from a Party that they oppose. They have exposed themselves. ...(Interruptions)...

SHRIMATI VIJILA SATHYANANTH: That is not our intent. ...(Interruptions)... We are not against the teachers. We are with the teachers. ...(Interruptions)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY): You have made your point. ...(Interruptions)... Both of you have made your points. Now, please sit down. ...(Interruptions)...

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Sir, everything is on record. ...(Interruptions)... It was registered here that this amendment is not necessary. ...(Interruptions)...

SHRIMATI VIJILA SATHYANANTH: He must respect that somebody who.. ...(Interruptions)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY): Please sit down. ...(Interruptions)...

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Sir, I do not wish to be interrupted. ...(Interruptions)... This is what I said. ...(Interruptions)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY): Please sit down. Let him complete. ...(Interruptions)... Don't divert the issue. ...(Interruptions)...

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: I did not interrupt anybody. ...(Interruptions)...

SHRIMATI VIJILA SATHYANANTH: Sir, we are not interrupting, but by... ...(Interruptions)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY): No, no. He has not named anybody. ...(Interruptions)...

SHRIMATI VIJILA SATHYANANTH: He should not blame us. ...(Interruptions)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY): He has not blamed you. He did not name any particular party. ...(Interruptions)...

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: I didn't speak against anybody in particular. ...(Interruptions)... I did say anything about anybody in particular. ...(Interruptions)... The cat is out of the bag! The cat is out of the bag! ...(Interruptions)... I didn't point at anyone, Sir. ...(Interruptions)...

SHRIMATI VIJILA SATHYANANTH: How will the Election Commission carry out this process? That is what we asked. ...(Interruptions)...

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Sir, I may be allowed to speak. ...(*Interruptions*)... Everyone is concerned about... ..(*Interruptions*)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY): Please allow him to speak. ...(*Interruptions*)... Mr. Siva, please address the Chair.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Sir, I said, we are concerned about this democratic country. Holding elections is a mandatory job. And I say it again to the hon. Minister that it is the people's responsibility to get involved themselves and contribute to democracy, not just by way of casting their votes. They may say that they are contributing to democracy, but they should also volunteer themselves by coming and working for the elections. They must help the Government and the Election Commission. Everyone has got that responsibility. When you cite article 51A of the Constitution, 'Fundamental Duties', what does it say? It says that the parents have the responsibility to impart education to their children aged between 6 and 14. Now, while you are concerned about a part of the Constitution, I am concerned about other things as well. That is also a fundamental duty. When students are deprived of education because of the absence of teachers in the school, what will the parent do? So, Sir, my Bill's intention is simply based on two things. I am concerned about the future of the posterity. The younger generation should be fruitful citizens and they should set examples. Our country is thickly populated with youth community. Teachers are also undergoing the pain. I am very sorry that some people are opposing it. I don't mind that they have different views because this is a forum which has got different views. The debate is always that. Not everybody could be for; they could be against. But, at least, they should realize how it is to be done. They should have an outlook for those who are undergoing trouble. It has to be done in a different manner. Technology is improving. There are so many people to offer themselves to take up the same duty. You consider some other sources. When I say, unemployed youth or retired teachers, you can say that you are not happy with this experiment. Then you find some other alternative. But you cannot outrightly reject that this amendment is not needed and only teachers should be committed and students should also come for election duties. Mr. Minister, I don't understand it. Students should not get involved in politics. It is the concern of even political parties. They should know politics but if they get into politics their future will be at stake. What is expected of teachers is basically to teach children and to shape the future of the country. In that situation, I brought this Bill. If I get a solid assurance from the Minister, I will withdraw it or else I move the Bill for passing.

SHRI P. P. CHAUDHARY: Sir, the Supreme Court passed the direction in 2007 and in compliance with that direction that the teachers should not be engaged during



the working hours or teaching hours, the Election Commission passed the order on 28th January, 2008. Thereafter, the Parliament enacted the Act of 2009, that is, the Right to Education Act, whereas the specific provision has been made under Section 27 with regard to the participation of teachers. So, compliance has already been made to a large extent and in view of that the services of teachers are only being utilized on holidays and non-teaching hours. The other staff in the country is not enough to conduct such a massive election in such a big country. We are the biggest democratic country where elections are held and where lakhs of polling booths are set up. We use all the staff, not only the teachers. What we are saying is that we are not only using the teachers, we are also using the other Government servants; we are using servants from local authorities and we are using services even from the companies. So far as the teachers are concerned, they are spread all over the country in rural areas. Democracy is the basic structure of the Constitution. To strengthen and conduct the free and fair elections, the services of teachers are required. In view of the Supreme Court's judgment, the services of the teachers are being utilized only during holidays and strict compliance is being made. So, I again request hon. Tiruchi Siva to kindly withdraw it. Hon. Prime Minister's electoral reforms are in pipeline. Whatever suggestions the hon. Member has given, we will take them into consideration; everything is in pipeline. Thank you, very much.

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE AND THE MINISTER OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): Sir, I am very grateful that you have given me the floor, though the hon. Minister of State has done a very good job. Sir, I know hon. Member, Mr. Siva, for a long time and he is a distinguished friend and colleague. He has articulated a very serious concern and I do appreciate his concern that teachers must be put to the maximum use for teaching the students only. And that point is fairly well taken. I don't want to go into the judgment also. The judgment also says — hon. Vice-Chairman, you have a very wide knowledge — 'Ordinarily they should not be put on working days.' So, it is a wish of the Supreme Court. In view of the mandate of Article 324, hon. Vice-Chairman is very much aware, the entire domain is of the Election Commission. Since the hon. Member has articulated his concern, I wish to assure hon. Member, Mr. Siva, that these concerns shall be conveyed to the Election Commission. That is what we will do. A serious issue arose here and the Election Commission should do the best while upholding the majesty of free and fair election. Please ensure that students and teachers are not unnecessarily disturbed. Kindly appreciate, hon. Vice-Chairman, the fact that whenever examinations are there, elections are normally not held during that time to disturb it in all the States of

[Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad]

India, including your State. That care we do take. But a specific issue has been raised. We will convey this very serious concern to the Commission and I hope the Commission will take proactive measures. Our Government, the Prime Minister and the entire House are concerned that we need to further improve the electoral system. A lot of things are in the pipeline and there will be an all-Party discussion also. In fact, on behalf of the Government, I will tell my officers to convey it to the Election Commission that whenever there is any all-Party meeting with regard to electoral reforms, maybe hon. Siva's views should also be conveyed there to see the all-Party consensus on that.

With these kinds of assurances which I am giving to you, I would request you to kindly withdraw the Bill.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Sir, this is what is expected of a Minister. As the MoS has suggested, nothing is static in the world. Even on the Constitution, there is a view that it needs to be relooked. When the Supreme Court gives a judgement, we enact a law to supersede that judgement. We have got powers to do that. You cannot cite a Supreme Court judgement and say that we should stop at it. You cannot cite an earlier Act and say that we should stop at it. We should always have an open mind to relook into the views and depending upon the existing situation, we need to amend the laws. That is how the evolution of law has taken place.

I thank my very good friend. I take the privilege of calling him as my very good friend for more than two decades. The hon. Minister is a legal luminary. He has rightly given me the assurance. I know very well that a Bill cannot bring so many revolutions and changes and that too a private Member's Bill. I just wanted to convey the sentiments of the teaching community and the pain which it is experiencing. As a representative of the people, I think I have conveyed it rightly. So many hon. Members have participated in that. Taking his assurance into confidence, I withdraw the Bill. Thank you very much.

*The Bill was, by leave, withdrawn.*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY): Now, I take up the Women (Equal Participation in Decision Making) Bill, 2015. Shri Anubhav Mohanty. He is absent.

Now, I turn to the Declaration of Countries as Sponsor of Terrorism Bill, 2016. Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar.