

up a Commission with enormous power. So, I again request the hon. Member that the Bill may be withdrawn.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI) : Mr. Zahidi, do you withdraw the Bill?

SHRI KHAN GHUFRAN ZAHIDI: Sir, if the Government is prepared to go back and think over the matter again and create any mechanism to control the adulteration of food and water, I am withdrawing the Bill.

The Bill was, by leave, withdrawn.

THE WOMEN AND GIRLS (PREVENTION OF STRIPPING, TEASING, MOLESTATION, BRANDING AS WITCHES AND OFFERING AS DEVADASIS) BILL, 2003

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI) : Now, Shrimati Bimba Raikar to move a motion for consideration of the Women and Girls (Prevention of Stripping, Teasing, Molestation, Branding as Witches and offering as Devadasis) Bill, 2003.

SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR (Karnataka) : Respected Sir, I beg to move :

“That the Bill to provide for the prevention and prohibition of stripping and parading the women or girls naked in public view, teasing, molestation, outraging modesty and branding and killing them as witches and offering as *Devadasis* and for deterrent punishment for such offences and making these offences as cognisable and non-bailable and for matters connected therewith, be taken into consideration.”

Sir, in most of the cities, the life of women has become unsafe. My Bill aims at curbing and eventually eradicating the most heinous and repressive crimes against women, mostly *Dalits*, in the name of the social customs and superstitions. Over many decades, we have been able to bring about social reforms for the betterment and advancement of the backward people and women. Many social reforms have spearheaded campaigns against social evils like untouchability, sati, infanticide, *devadasis*, and killing and rape of women. Even now, despite advancement, both on social and economic fronts, *Dalit* women are still being treated and humiliated like bounded labour. Through this

Bill, it is intended to ensure legislative support for eradicating such crimes against *Dalit* women as enumerated in this Bill. Also, I would like to say a few words about the *devadasi* system. Sir, the *devadasi* system is mostly prevailing in Karnataka, and in Andhra. In *devadasi* system, the girl is offered in marriage in the name of God and after that, that girl is given to the main person in that place, say it is a *Patel* or somebody, on the first day. Then, that girl is treated as a prostitute. And what happens in small villages is that this leads to prostitution. And, what happens when people from Mumbai come to such places and give money to the parents. They attract the girls and these girls are taken to Mumbai and used as prostitutes. You must have heard about some red light areas in Mumbai. That is the place. After some time, when these girls come back to their villages with their fine saris, sandals, ornaments, cosmetics and other things, other girls also get attracted and feel like to go to Mumbai and these agents make money like anything. They give money to the poor parents who have no money. They take money and sell the girls and the girls are brought to Mumbai. Afterwards, for whole of the life, these girls become prostitutes. This is known as *devdasi* system. This is done in the name of God and such girls are just thrown out of the society. So, this system is really horrible. Even after 50 years of our freedom, if the women are going to be treated like this, I think, it is a very heinous crime against them and a shameless thing. Whenever we read newspapers early morning, we find so many rape cases, killing of women, burning of women, women thrown out of houses. All these things are there in the newspapers. We read it everyday. But, what happens sometimes is that women do not get the help of police. Police are also such people that wherever they get little money, they get attracted, and they do not come to the light in some of the cases and these things take place. And, because of poverty, this type of injustice is done to women. Sir, I also feel that ours is a country, where we respect women. We treat them as mother and as Goddess. Even when we take the name of any God, we never say Ram-Sita, we say Sita-Ram; we never say Narayan-Lakshmi, we say Lakshmi-Narayan. Whenever you send an invitation card, there you will first see Shrimati and then Shri. These things are there. We are known for our culture. We are not like women of other countries where there is no respect for marriage. Sir, to tell you one example, I have been to America where I was asked, "What is this red thing you have put"? For which, I replied, "It is the symbol of my marriage". They said, "What marriage and what symbol; we don't have anything like this". Somebody just asked me, "How many years of married life did you have"? I said, 40 years and now my husband is no more". Then I was asked, "How many husbands did you have in 40 years"? Then I

replied, "we are Indians and we do not believe in a number of husbands. We stay with only one husband, if he is alive. And, even if he is dead, we stay like that only". They were surprised. This is what we are known for. We are known for our culture and for our goodness. But, when it is like this, when this type of injustice is done to women in our country, we feel very sorry. That is why, I decided to bring this Bill in this House and place it for consideration of the hon. Members of this august House and call upon them to share their views and wisdom on this most crucial issue pertaining to the social and economic upliftment of women, specially dalit women and women in general. I hope all my colleagues will support my views.

The question was proposed.

MESSAGE FROM THE LOK SABHA

SECRETARY-GENERAL : Sir, I have to report to the House the following message received from the Lok Sabha, signed by the Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha :

"I am directed to inform you that Lok Sabha, at its sitting held on Friday, the 5th December, 2003, adopted the following motion :-

That this House do recommend to Rajya Sabha that Rajya Sabha do agree to nominate one member from Rajya Sabha to associate with the Committee on Public Accounts of the House for the unexpired portion of the term of the Committee *vice* Shri C.P. Thirunavukkarasu retired from Rajya Sabha and do communicate to this House the name of the member so nominated by Rajya Sabha.

2. I am to request that the concurrence of Rajya Sabha in the said motion, and also the name of the member of Rajya Sabha so nominated, may be communicated to this House.

THE WOMEN AND GIRLS (PREVENTION OF STRIPPING, TEASING, MOLESTATION, BRANDING AS WITCHES AND OFFERING AS DEVADASIS) BILL, 2003-Contd.

श्रीमती सविता शारदा (गुजरात) : महोदय, आज सम्माननीया सदस्या श्रीमती बिम्बा रायकर महिलाओं या लड़कियों को सार्वजनिक रूप से निर्वस्त्र करने और उन्हें नगनावस्था में घुमाने, उनसे छेड़खानी करने, उन्हें उत्पीड़ित करने, उनकी लज्जाभंग करने और उन्हें डायन के रूप में घोषित