

I may also inform the House that the Constitution (Ninety-fourth Amendment) Bill, 2002 and the Constitution (Ninety-ninth Amendment) Bill, 2003, as passed by the Lok Sabha, will be taken up on Tuesday, the 19 August, 2003.

SPECIAL MENTIONS

Need to remove discrimination in age limit for Air Hostesses of Air India for on-board duty

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, we will take up Special Mentions. Shri Dinesh Trivedi.

SHRI DINESH TRIVEDI (West Bengal): Madam. Deputy Chairperson, I will be extremely brief and very pointed. I am raising the question of discriminating the women air-hostesses on the basis of gender. Madam, recently a directive was published by the Government of India about which I came to know through a newspaper. It was later confirmed by the Air-Hostesses' Association also. Recently, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has given a directive to Air India that their air-hostesses ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Do you remember your Special Mention by heart?

SHRI DINESH TRIVEDI: Madam. I had my papers, but I did not know that it would be taken up today. However, I do remember it because I have done some study on it and I have done some work.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay.

SHRI DINESH TRIVEDI: So, Madam, Air India was given a directive that air-hostesses who reach the age of 58 should be grounded, and, may be given the ground duties. Please understand this that it is only for the air-hostesses and not for the cabin attendants; their male counter-parts. So, Madam, the difference here is that the female air-hostesses, who are females obviously, should get some ground job after the age of 50 years, and their male counter-parts could continue after the age of 58. Madam, in this very House, you have been a champion in promoting the cause of women. There is the Women's Empowerment Committee as well. We have article 40, which protects the rights of individuals and there is no discrimination based on sex, creed, caste, colour, religion, race and place of birth. But here, Madam, instead of giving more encouragement to women,

we are just giving them ground job, after they reach the age of 50, which is very unfortunate. I fully appreciate that the job requirement in an aircraft is that of high skill and good health. There is no problem, as far as these air-hostesses are concerned. They could go through medical check-ups once in six- months or a year, whatever is the recommendation. Being a pilot, I know a little bit about flying. We have a lot of capable women pilots who are not only co-piloting the aircraft, but they are flying as commander as well. We have several flights also where both the commander and the co-pilot are women and they fly the aircraft very successfully, with full confidence and safety. If women pilots are allowed to fly a plane, why can't they serve the passengers after the age of 50? What all I am trying to say, in conclusion, Madam, is that Air India should give the directives, or the Ministry should give the directives that whoever wants to retire at the age of 50, for whatever reason, other than medical, they could be permitted to retire and get a ground job till the age of 58, that is, till the retirement. Lastly, the Indian Airlines, which is also a State-owned Airline, does not discriminate. For them, the retirement age, as of now, is 58, if there is a recent change, I do not know. So, Madam, I will appeal through you - you are a champion of the cause of women- to give some directives and I hope the Government would change this step.

SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA (Gujarat): Madam. I associate, myself with the Special Mention made by Shri Trivedi.

SHRIMATI GURCHARAN KAUR (Punjab): Madam, I also associate, myself with the Special Mention made by Shri Trivedi.

SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH (Madhya Pradesh): I also associate myself with what the hon. Member has said.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Why only the women Members are associating, and not the men? ...*(Interruptions)*... The question is of the discrimination on the basis of gender, differential treatment on the basis of gender, which is against the spirit of the Preamble of the Constitution, and no Government office or Department should go against the spirit of the Constitution. But, why is there such a differential treatment? Through the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, I convey it to the Government and to the Minister of Civil Aviation, to look into the matter. Whatever decision they take, has to be taken in the spirit of the Constitution.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): Madam, I will definitely convey the concern expressed by the hon. Members. But, at the same time, I believe, the matter is pending in the court also.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The matter might be pending in the court, because they are not getting redressal otherwise. If the Government takes a decision, they won't go to the court. Why should anybody go to the court, if there is a redressal according to the Constitution?

SHRI BALBIR K. PUNJ (Uttar Pradesh): Madam, I have got a point. I totally associate myself with what my learned friend has said. But, there is another aspect to it also. We have competition in the airlines business and the Indian Airlines, for example, retire their air-hostesses at the age of 58. The private airlines, that is, the Jet Airways, the Sahara ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We are not discussing anything, Mr. Punj. It is not a counter argument. You will go ...*[Interruptions]*:..

SHRI BALBIR K. PUNJ: There should be a law which makes it equal for the Indian Airlines and other airlines. You should not leave the women working outside the Indian Airlines, that is, in Jet Airways or Sahara. They should also be given the same protection which is available to the women working in both, Indian Airlines and Air India. ...*interruptions*)...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please, there is no discussion on it; there is no argument on it. The question which the hon. Member has raised here is a serious question. According to the Constitution, we should not discriminate on the basis of gender. That is the basic issue. If the other airlines are doing, something, that is another matter. What the Government should do, or, should not do, it is for them to decide. Here, is the question of the Government-owned airlines which is having a differential treatment between the pursers and air-hostesses, which should not be done.

श्री संजय निरुपम (महाराष्ट्र): मैडम, मैं इससे एसोसिएट नहीं करता हूँ।

उपसभापति: आप मत कीजिए, कोई फर्क नहीं पड़ता। आपको औरतों के खिलाफ जाना है तो आप बड़ा खुशी से जा सकते हैं। ...*(व्यवधान)*... मैं डिस्कशन नहीं कर रही हूँ। ...*(व्यवधान)*...

[14 August. 2003]

RAJYA SABHA

श्री संजय निरुपम: मैडम, मैं थोड़ा एक्सप्लेन करता हूँ इस विषय को।

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I have got 42 Special Mentions. ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्री संजय निरुपम: आधे तो नहीं है।

उपसभापति: कोई बात नहीं।

SHRI BALBIR K. PUNJ: Why are you not extending this protection to the women who work in the private airlines also? ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I would rather like to have this protection everywhere. If i am concerned, I will get the protection for women and their rights according to the Constitution. ...*(Interruptions)*... अच्छा, इस पर झगड़ा नहीं है कुछ। ...*(व्यवधान)*... संजय जी, इस पर कोई झगड़ा नहीं है। अभी कोई डिस्कशन नहीं हो रहा है। आगे चलने दीजिए। ...*(व्यवधान)*...

श्री संजय निरुपम: मैडम, आपने कहा कि कोई डिस्क्रिमिनेशन नहीं होना चाहिए। शायद आपको जानकारी नहीं है कि एयर इंडिया और इंडियन एयरलाइन्स में जो cabin crew members होते हैं, उसमें male cabin crew members और female cabin crew members इन दोनों के appointment की जो शर्तें हैं, वही अलग-अलग हैं।

उपसभापति: गलत है।

श्री संजय निरुपम: इसलिए बेसिकली यह तय किया गया है कि औरतों को पहले रिटायर होना पड़ेगा, इसलिए उनको अच्छे wages दिए जाएं। इसलिए इनको wages मिलते हैं और पुरुषों को higher wages मिलते हैं। इस प्रकार कोई डिस्क्रिमिनेशन नहीं है, नंबर एक। दूसरी बात...

उपसभापति: अच्छा, अभी आप बैठिए॥ would be happy if you take up this...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI BALBIR K. PUNJ: Madam, there is a discrimination. In spite of the qualification and experience of a woman, she can never become in charge of the crew. It is always a male member, who will be in charge of the crew and a woman is not allowed to hold the charge. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I am very happy. ...*(Interruptions)*... Many issues have been raised...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI BALBIR K. PUNJ: You should not be happy about it. you should feel unhappy about it. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I am happy because you are raising these issues.

SHRI BALBIR K. PUNJ: Yes.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I am not happy about the situation; I am happy with your attitude. I am happy that he is raising these issues for women because generally women get up and speak. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI BALBIR K. PUNJ: And the logic given is, that men will not take orders from women. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Shri Santosh Bagrodia, absent. Shri Manoj Bhattacharya, absent. Smt. Jamana Devi Barupal, absent. Smt. Shabana Azmi, absent. Dr. T. Subbarami Reddy, absent. Dr. Ramendra Kumar Yadav, absent. I have to read the names because they are on my list, otherwise they will say that I have not even called their names. Shri Abu Asim Azmi, absent. Shri Prasanta Chatterjee, absent. Shri Ravula Chandra Sekar Reddy, absent. Shri S. Agniraj, absent. Shri Munawar Hasan, absent. Ms. Pramila Bohidar, absent. Shri Aimaduddin Ahmad Khan, absent. Smt. Vanga Geetha, absent. Shri Ramachandra Khuntia, absent. Shri Satish Pradhan, absent. Dr. Arun Kumar Sarma, absent. Prof. Saif-ud-Din Soz, absent. Shri R. Kamaraj. At least, we got someone.

Need to accord approval for proposals and allocation of adequate funds for implementing Fishermen Model Village Scheme

SHRI R. KAMARAJ (Tamil Nadu): I request the Central Government for early approval and to provide its fiscal share for the implementation of Fishermen Model Village Scheme under the Centrally-sponsored scheme during the year 2001-2002, 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 in Tamil Nadu. In the present financial year, the Government of Tamil Nadu requested for the approval of proposal which envisages development of Model Fishermen Villages with 4000 fishermen houses, 200 tube-wells and 10 community halls in our State. The estimated cost of the project is Rs. 1677.50 lakhs, which will be shared equally between the State Government and the Central Government. The Central Government's share of Rs.834 lakhs for this scheme is yet to come. Further, the Central Government have already approved the implementation of the Scheme of Model Fishermen Villages in Tamil Nadu during the year 2002-2003 at a cost of Rs.1551.50 lakhs, but the Central Government's share of Rs.775.75 lakhs has not been provided; whereas for the proposal during the year 2001 -2002. the Central Government has provided only Rs.104 lakhs as the first installment, out of its 50 per cent share of Rs.417 lakhs for this scheme, for the construction of 2000 houses. 90 tube-wells and four community halls and the balance fund of Rs.313