

No. 32/99 CE, dated 9th July, 1999, had provided tax concession for industries established in North East India. It is a known fact that North-East India, consisting mainly of tribal people who are backward in terms of employment, education, health and other areas, is one of the most backward parts of the country.

Considering these incentives, many industries, including cigarette manufacturers, established their units in this region. However, for unknown reasons, the Government of India partially modified this Notification and withdrew the exemption given to cigarette manufacturers *vide* their Notification No. 45/99, dated 31st December, 1999. This exemption was reintroduced on 17th January, 2000, and again withdrawn on 22nd January, 2001.

The incentive is to return the excise duties paid by the companies. But now the Government has arbitrarily stopped refunding the excise duty from July 2000, without assigning specific reasons.

As a consequence of withdrawal of such incentives, especially to tobacco industry, the tobacco industry and tobacco growers have been put to serious problems. Therefore, I request the Central Government not to withdraw such tax exemptions, already given, with retrospective effect, as proposed in the Union Budget, 2003.

Demand for making provision of pension, education and health facilities for distressed women in the country

MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR (Orissa): Madam, there are many innocent women in our society who are victims of suppression, dowry, lose character and drunken behaviour of their husbands. If a lady protests against this oppression at her in-law's house, either she is done away with or thrown out from the house without any fear of the law. The women are driven out from their homes without providing adequate financial support.

In this situation, where will a woman get shelter? At her father's home or in society! At her parental home, she is considered a burden, and no sympathy is shown for her. Although she gets sympathy in society, but behind this sympathy, there are selfish motives. In such a situation, her children never get proper respect. They are not cared by the society, and

they are deprived of getting health, education and social recognition. They are ostracised by the society.

In the case of matrimonial disputes and maintenance allowance for women, provision for an interim maintenance is there, but due to abject poverty, helplessness and ignorance of the rules, very few women seek shelter in court of law.

Though the society is progressing, due to want of witness, there is little scope for the victims to bring the culprits to book. Therefore, it is my appeal to this august House that the matter should be scrutinised and proper steps be taken so that such depressed women get immediate relief and culprits are brought to book. Such laws should be enacted as may make culprits think twice before committing any crime against women. Therefore, I request the Government that such depressed women should be given either Old Age Pension or Widow Pension and proper education and health facilities be provided to their children.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO (Goa): Madam, I associate myself with the Special Mention made by Ms. Pramília Bohidar.

DR. M.N. DAS (ORISSA): Madam, I also associate myself with the Special Mention made by Ms. Pramília Bohidar.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Dr. C. Narayana Reddy; not present.
Dr. T. Subbarami Reddy.

Request for total exemption from customs duty for import of equipment for Ropeway Project by Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation Ltd.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Madam, the State Government of Andhra Pradesh had sent a proposal to the Government of India in which a request was made to consider and extend the benefit for total exemption from customs duty in the ensuing Budget for setting up an Aerial Passenger Ropeway System to ferry pilgrims from Tirupati to Tirumala Temple. The ropeway system is designed to handle 2000 passengers per hour who wish to go to Tirupati temple.