

RAJYA SABHA

*SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE

(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

Monday, February 06, 2017/ Magha 17, 1938 (Saka)

MATTERS RAISED WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR

1. Alleged Ban on the Democratic Rights of Students in some Central Universities

SHRI ALI ANWAR ANSARI: It has been an year now when several students of BHU staged a '*Dharna*' on the demand of opening of Cyber Library for the whole night. One year has passed but these students are still being harassed. Nine students have been rusticated from the college. They are being barred from taking examination and their parents are being threatened by the University. Several type of restrictions have been imposed on the girl students living in Hostels. Most of the students who have been rusticated belong to the OBC, Dalit and Minority communities. Likewise 15 students have been suspended in JNU. The students of JNU are agitating against the notification of UGC which provide for 100 percent admissions in PhD through interveiw.

*This Synopsis is not an authoritative record of the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha.

SHRI SHARAD YADAV: This kind of a situation has never emerged in the Central Universities for the past 70 years. This is a very serious issue and the Government must look into it.

SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: This is a very serious issue and it also shows their mentality towards women.

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: This is not a small matter. Within the Constitutional framework the autonomy of the Central Universities must be protected.

(Several Hon'ble Members associated.)

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINORITY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI), responding to the matter, said: No intervention is made by the Government in the autonomy and administrative activities of the Universities. We should' not politicize such issues. If some specific incident is in your knowledge you should share the same with us. We will bring it to the cognizance of the concerned Minister.

2. Need to frame a National Policy to prevent Forest Fires

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: We have seen that 24,817 fire incidents took place in various parts of the country. The frequency of such blazes has risen by more than 60 per cent. In Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, over 17,502 acres have been damaged in the last year due to increasing number of forest fires. The Parliamentary Committee which had gone into the whole issue has observed that a large number of posts of forest staff are lying vacant and the fire fighting equipment is almost nil in most of the cases. I urge upon the Government to fill up these posts and also to purchase the necessary equipment besides framing a national policy on managing forest fires on an urgent basis.

(Shri C. P. Narayanan, Shri D. Raja and Shri Ripun Bora associated.)

3. Pathetic Condition of Engineers Categorized under Group C in Railways

SHRI SHARAD YADAV: In Railways a Junior Engineer is recruited in Grade 'C' and despite serving his whole term, not a single promotion is granted to him. Injustice is being meted out to these Engineers. These Engineers are mainly associated with the works related to the safety of the Railways. Hence, I urge upon the Government to resolve this issue at the earliest.

(Shri Ali Anwar Ansari, Shri Ram Nath Thakur, Shri T.K. Rangarajan and Shri K.T.S. Tulsi associated.)

4. Need to pay Attention to the Problems of Central Armed Police Forces

SHRI PARTAP SINGH BAJWA: Last month, we read the disturbing news of a Border Security Force jawan who vented his grievance through social media. The reports suggest that personnel in the CAPF are dissatisfied with the harsh service conditions. They perform their duties in difficult terrain and situations. The existing grievance redressal mechanism seems weak. Implementing a transparent, rational and fair leave policy will greatly reduce the burden on the personnel. The CAPF personnel draw lesser pay and allowances vis-a-vis their Army counterparts. It is the violation of the fundamental principle of equal pay for equal work.

SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: The jawans of Paramilitary Forces live in most miserable and pathetic conditions and they are compelled to put it on social media. I think, the Home Minister should make a statement on the floor of the House.

(Several Hon'ble Members associated.)

5. Securing Interests of the Indian IT Workforce creating Value Globally

SHRI DEREK O'BRIEN: The new executive order issued by USA about H1B visas will adversely affect Indian IT companies. Indian IT companies have played a positive role not only in the American economy but also across the world. So, we need to protect these companies as these software engineers are important for the Indian and international workforce.

(Several Hon'ble Members associated.)

6. NHRC Report on the Rape of 16 Tribal Women in Bastar

SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Way back in 2012, Meena Khalkho, 14-year old girl, was raped and murdered by the Police force, and, later, she was branded as a 'Naxalite'. Later in 2015, the Judicial Commission had submitted its report saying that 'Meena Khalkho was not a naxalite'. Several similar incidents of atrocities have also been reported in the state. Recently, the Indian Express had reported the NHRC report indicting the State Government and the Police of raping of 16 tribal women in Bastar region. They talk about "Sabka Sath Sabka Vikas". In Bastar, it is not vikas but vinash. No action has been taken against the people or the Police who were responsible for such acts. Instead they have filed cases against the NGOs and lawyers who were giving free legal aid to these tribals. We demand immediate action against the guilty officers.

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: The fact of the case is that some abnormality is prevailing in those extremism-affected areas. The Force is surely playing a role there.

(Several Hon'ble Members associated.)

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT, THE MINISTER OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU), responding to the matter, said: It is the naxalites and the maoists who are killing innocent people and adivasis. The Police and the CRPF are doing a fairly difficult job. The Zero Hour is not meant to defame the Forces and make allegations against officers. If they have some evidence, let them write to the Government and the Government would take suitable action. Such political allegations against the Forces should not be allowed.

7. Problems being faced by Kerala Minerals and Metals Limited

SHRI K. SOMAPRASAD: The Kerala Minerals and Metals Limited company is the only manufacturer of rutile grade titanium dioxide in India. The Company produces five different types of titanium products. One of the products is titanium pigment which is the raw material for the titanium metal. Titanium pigment is famous for its high strength and less weight. Thus, the KMML is strategically an important company. It also gives employment to a number of persons directly and indirectly. But, the company is facing so many challenges today. The KMML cannot compete with China, one of the major producers of titanium dioxide, even in our market. The import duty on titanium dioxide is only ten per cent which should be enhanced to a minimum of twenty-five per cent for the survival of the KMML.

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: I request Hon'ble Commerce Minister to respond to this very serious issue.

SHRI K.K. RAGESH: It is extremely important to increase the import duty on titanium dioxide from ten per cent to twenty-five per cent to save the KMML.

(Shri T.K. Rangarajan and Shri C.P. Narayanan associated.)

8. Release of Father Tom Uzhunnalil from Captivity in Yemen

SHRI JOY ABRAHAM: I want to raise the issue of Father Tom Uzhunnalil, an Indian citizen and a native of Kerala. He has been in the captivity of terrorists in Yemen for the last several months. All the efforts made by the Government to get his release have failed. Recently a video has surfaced in which Father Tom has made a passionate appeal. His health is deteriorating day by day. I request that Government must ensure the release of Father Tom as early as possible.

(Shri K. Somaprasad, Shri C.P. Narayanan, Shri K.K. Ragesh and Shri D. Raja associated.)

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN), responding to the matter, said: The External Affairs Minister had spoken about it in the past and efforts were being made on this issue, I am sure the External Affairs Ministry will be able to give extra information on the latest position.

9. Need for CBI Inquiry into the Case of a Missing Student of JNU

SHRI VIVEK GUPTA: One student, named Najeeb is missing for the last couple of months. The attitude of JNU officers in this case is not appreciable. According to the report of the warden, that incident occurred between Najeeb and some students affiliated to a political party. Surprisingly, no action was taken by the university officials on this and ultimately an FIR was registered by Najeeb's mother herself. I want to know the efforts made for locating the missing student, Najeeb. There should not be any politics in it and I demand a CBI probe in this case as the involved students have not been questioned yet.

(Several Hon'ble Members associated.)

10. Concern over the Poor Condition of Ex-Sports persons of the Country

SHRI MD. NADIMUL HAQUE: I want to speak about the pitiable condition of our ex-sportspersons. A nation must honour its heroes – be it a soldier, a sailor or a sports star. But, we are not doing enough to honour those persons who make our nation proud. We are not taking care of our athletes who won medals for us. Though the Ministry of Sports has always talked about the efforts to improve sports facilities in the country, it is equally important that they also start talking about the efforts to honour ex-sportspersons. We have many examples of such players who have to spend their lives in poverty and are struggling to make ends meet. A small amount of monthly pension is now granted to our ex-sportspersons which is not enough.

(Several Hon'ble Members associated.)

SPECIAL MENTIONS

1. Urgent Need to address Gender Inequality in the Country

SHRI K. C. RAMAMURTHY: Sir, gender inequality in India is a growing concern as India ranks abysmally 127 out of 146 countries in this regard. No doubt a significant progress on promoting girls' education and advancing gender equality is made, but stark inequalities still exist between men and women in their access to education, healthcare, resources and opportunities in socio-economic and cultural spheres. Female literacy rate is 65 per cent against 81 per cent for men. Programmes that educate adolescents and young males and females to influence their health and consequently their overall well-being are an absolute priority, apart from investing in skill development on young.

(Shri T.K.S. Elangovan and Shrimati Rajani Patil associated.)

2. Demand to take Steps to Maintain the Spirit of Cooperative Federalism in the Country

SHRI VIVEK GUPTA: Our Prime Minister advocates cooperative federalism. So, the Centre must extend assistance to other states in smooth functioning of the state affairs. But, this Government has not provided any fund or extended any assistance to our State Government whereas the Centre is helping foreign countries. There is a huge shortage of IAS and IPS officers in Bengal, but Centre is not responding. Further, The Central Government is acting arbitrarily and without consulting the State Government as is evident from the case of remitting the money under MNREGA directly to the beneficiaries against the earlier practice of involving States in this process. Despite regular audits done by the CAG, the Central Government recently appointed two senior officers to monitor the working and spending of the Treasury of the West Bengal Government. Sir, we feel this is a direct attack on our fiscal independence. We hope the Government takes these concerns seriously and lays more trust with the State Governments by decentralizing greater powers.

MOTION OF THANKS ON THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS - *Contd.*

SHRI LA. GANESAN: The President's Address must not be taken up in isolation rather there should be a holistic approach. This is like Government's progress report. The people of the country banks on our Prime Minister so much so as they did quit their subsidy on LPG on his one appeal. The population of male and female in the country has become disproportionate. For that matter, we must appeal for one male child along with two female children in every household. The opposition has talked about the pathetic condition of Kashmir. But I would like to ask that who is responsible for that? Being the leader of

a national party, they must talk about Tamil Nadu also whenever they speak about Kashmir. Petty things like demonstration of waste note of Rs. 500 should not be raised on the floor of the House. After demonetization, we have won elections in many places. Today, the people of the country are with us.

SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: There is nothing new in the President's Address which may be appreciated. The Treasury Bench is claiming that everything is alright, but I feel nothing is alright. Today, whether they are farmers, workers, shopkeepers or traders, all are in bad condition. People are criticizing the Government everywhere. Farmers are not getting their Minimum Support Price, factories are being shutdown and workers have become workless. If we consider demonetization as a paradigm, after the demonetization, the BJP has lost many seats in Maharashtra Municipal Elections. The Inspector Raj has started today. The Cashless economy is a good step, but it should be implemented gradually. Demonetization has achieved nothing neither at the front of black money nor at terrorism or fake currency front. The Niti Ayog, which replaced Planning Commission has also failed. As long as one is ruling in states, it is believed that, injustice is being meted out to them. But when the same person becomes a central minister, it is held that states should be accountable. There are many schemes, wherein, money does not reach grassroots level. FIPB has been abolished, but there is no alternative system for that. Rail Budget was over in five minutes. There were only allocation and provision in it. There are allegations regarding autonomy of RBI. There is no mention of clean Ganga project. America's attitude is going to result in loss of jobs for our people. Relations with our neighbouring countries are not good. Foreign secretary had to admit that there was nothing new in surgical strike. Cleanliness drive is welcome. Sewage system has to be constructed along with toilets. Cleanliness drive should include waste management. It is welcome that Government has carried forward the insurance reforms, banking reforms and computerisation started by the previous government. It is a serious matter that collegium system is run arbitrarily. Reforms are required in judiciary.

SHRI SANJAY SETH, making his maiden speech, said:

There are many erroneous policies and schemes in President's address. Non BJP ruled states like Uttar Pradesh have not been given the required financial assistance. Except demonetization, all other schemes have taken a back seat. Farmers of Uttar Pradesh have been worse affected by demonetization. Unemployment is increasing. Some ridiculous circulars have been issued during demonetization. There has to be literacy before going for cashless economy. There have to be details about how interest subsidy can be availed under 'Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana'. Government should give interest free loans for two-room houses. Right to housing should be made a fundamental right. There is no provision for maintenance of toilets under 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan'. States should get money for setting up STP so that our rivers remain clean. Infrastructure schemes being run by government are not evident on ground. Steps must be taken for employment of persons going to be unemployed as a result of visa restrictions in America. Some units should be set up in Uttar Pradesh so that the youth does not have to go elsewhere for employment. Ambulance service in Uttar Pradesh should get central assistance. There is no mention about schemes for tackling pollution. Native places of freedom fighters like Chandrashekhar and writers like Munshi Premchand must be converted into memorials.

SHRI SHARAD YADAV: There is no mention in the President's address about the results of demonetization and the amount of black money recovered thereof. Demonetization has badly affected small farmers who grow perishable crops. Crores of people have lost employment. Government should talk to all people in agenda for alliance with regard to Kashmir. Around eight or nine hydel plants under NHPC installed in Jammu and Kashmir fetch half of the revenue compared to the total revenue generation from the rest of the plants in the country. It is high time for initiating dialogue process to find a solution to the problems of the people residing in Jammu and Kashmir. Tension has mounted along the Indo-Pak borders after the 'surgical strike' conducted by India. Tribals remain devoid of their rights in India. Schedule v and vi of the Constitution has not been

implemented properly. There is no representation from weaker sections in judiciary. The President's Address fails to mention concerns of these people. Inadequate representation from SC/ST/OBC in 43 Central universities won't lead nation on the path of progress. The move of demonetisation has given ammunition to touts and moneylenders to extort more money from poor. Hence, this Address is incomplete in all respects.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Demonetization is the biggest disruption that has happened to our country. It has actually disrupted the normal existence of a vast majority of our people and their day-to-day livelihood. None of the targets that the Prime Minister cited as reasons for this demonetization have been achieved. There is more money than what was demonetized that is coming into your banks today. It means that all the black money that was held as stock in the country has now been converted into white. Government claimed that this move will reduce terrorism and corruption. But on the contrary it is increasing. There is not even a mention of more than a hundred people who died while wanting to withdraw their own money from banks. The money in the banks is individual's property. That right has been violated by this. Nearly eighty per cent of our employment is generated in the informal economy and that is almost based on cash transactions. All that has been disrupted. Crores of Indian people have been put to unnecessary suffering as a result of this. The farmers are selling their produce at one half of the Minimum Support Price. This is the case with the fishermen too. Every sector in the manufacturing industry has shown a drop in sales and production. Business of sports goods industry has gone down. A massive surge in unemployment has been registered. This move is eventually widening inequalities. If Government really wants to curb political corruption then expenditure of political parties should bring under a ceiling. It is very clear now that by digital economy this Government is giving the bonanza of profit maximization to some companies. A bulk of which are foreign companies. This is not a good sign. If small farmers do not pay back their loans then Government confiscate their cattle

and properties. But when the big people don't return the money there is no way of confiscating their properties. It is very unfortunate that farmers' rate of suicide has gone up. Government should waive off their loans for the welfare and prosperity of India. There are about one dozen Pradhan Mantri Yojanas that have been listed from last year to this year. We have moved amendments in this regard. Because of anti-romeo squads and cow protection squads some innocent people have already lost their lives. Today, intolerance is growing. Actually that is a diabolic project that is unfolding today. What is that agenda? Again construction of Ram temple is back on the agenda and that is actually the effort to transform the secular, democratic Indian Republic into their version of theocratic rabidly intolerant Hindu Rashtra. Therefore, this deception, disruption, diversion which is the essence of the President's Address should not be allowed to lead to the unfolding of diabolic agenda. I beseech this entire august House that before we return the Motion of Thanks that adequate changes be made so that this sentiment is conveyed to the hon. President.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINORITY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI): When we came to power there were scams everywhere and corruption was rampant. It was big challenge before us and we have provided a corruption free and development oriented system. We have removed the bottleneck in the form of dishonesty from the system as targeted poor people were not getting the benefits of development despite the expenditure by the Governments. When we talk of development then we talk about inclusive development for all without considering religion and caste. We will fulfil our commitments in the days to come. Crores of people have surrendered their gas subsidy on Prime Minister's call and as result thereof thousand of poor people, who had never imagined to have gas stove, have been provided gas stove free of cost. This is ground reality and people are giving blessings to us. I am relating this to the development. Prime Minister has launched the Swachhh Bharat drive and now it has become big movement. We are working

with honest political will power for the empowerment of poor. It is our national duty as well. Percentage of minorities has increased in the central Government's services since 2014 to till date. We are not the reason behind this but it is due to their capability. We think that capability of all the sections of the society should be respected. As per minority commission's report, there is 200 percent reduction in communal riots. If we want to create the environment for the development and confidence in the country then there should be zero tolerance for such incidents. Various terrorism organisations have not been succeeded in their intentions due to culture of the country and commitment of the people towards harmony. Muslims have protested against such forces by coming forward. Our countrymen are ideal for the whole world in this regard. There have been instances where family has requested that its children should be stopped from indulging in such activities. We should be united for honour and security of the country.

SHRI AHMED PATEL: We should learn about the collective responsibility from Guru Gobind Singh and I don't think that Prime Minister had consulted any one before deciding about the demonetisation. Our conscience guides us for well being of others. What Government have learnt from historical events referred in the President's address? Whether exploitation of farmers and marginal people have stopped? There is a need to bring change in the mentality and just by advertisement and publicity nothing can be achieved. Government have worked with the intention to take vendetta. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru ji has worked too much for this country but you are trying to remove his name out of revenge only. You are trying to forget the name of Indira ji. You do something else and show something else. You have only one target and that is how to take revenge. I think that during the last three years if you have done anything mention-worthy then that thing is that how to misuse the agencies of the country. In what way the appointments are being made today? The heads of agencies are being given extensions. Those who do not agree with you are branded either as communal or as anti-national.

The way Prime Minister told us about demonetization, we accepted that it will contain corruption, it will bring out black money and terrorism will come to an end. But nothing happened like that. We were not benefitted from this. I cannot withdraw my full amount. Outside, people were changing their black money at a commission of ten percent or twenty percent. I think that this is one of the biggest scams and it must be enquired into that how money was being exchanged outside. Our economy was going at a high speed in the world. The growth rate was eight percent during UPA regime. You have never achieved the growth rate of eight percent during your tenure. As far as agriculture is concerned, our Minister is well aware of the condition of farmers. Only 6.14 percent increase was made in the Budget for the farmers. You reduced the Budget by 12 percent and are counting the mandatory loans provided by banks as your achievement. You have said that there will be an increase of 57 percent in irrigation facilities and earmarked 1,450 crores on that count. But, out of that one thousand crores will go against the payment of interest only. What will be left with you? Only 400 crores of rupees will be left with you. In my opinion, the achievements which you are trying to count are on papers only. Today, the farmer is in distress and nobody is willing to listen to him. This Government has betrayed and misled SCs and STs also. 'Stand up India' was introduced last year for downtrodden entrepreneurs. At that time you had promised to pay an amount of 2,000 crores of rupees. But, actually you paid 200 crores only. There is no mention of downtrodden anywhere in the Economic Survey. The Special Component Plan meant for downtrodden was reduced to as welfare scheme by you. Ravi Shankar Prasad ji was talking about disabled. There are still one crore disabled persons who are yet to get employment. There is no provision for the Act in the Budget. If anybody is working most for the disabled, then they are NGOs. This Government never thinks- what suits on the ground. Instead, it thinks of what suits in the advertisement.

You have curtailed the Budget of SCs, STs, downtroddens and OBCs. All the schemes and programmes meant for them have been discontinued. You are talking about women. The Defence Minister said that there will not be any female unit in army. What can be more shameful than this? What happened of women reservation? You are talking about police modernization but a curtailment has been made in their fund. Defence expenditure has been curtailed. You talked about Digital India. By 2016 all the gram panchayats were scheduled to be linked through broad band. But what was the ultimate achievement- only 26 percent. As far 'Aadhar' is concerned, what is happening today? All the private informations are being leaked out. Today, all of your schemes have come to a halt. No scheme is running. Even if there is a provision in the Budget, implementation is not being made. You talk about health. It had been stated that four thousand cities and six lakh villages will be made Open Defecation Free by 2016. I don't know what happened to that. You have been able to do this in 141 cities only. You were saying that three lakh toilets have been constructed. But where there is a toilet, there is no arrangement of water. You have promises and promises only. What happened to National Education Policy? Announcements after announcements only are being made. The President had stated in his Address that it is mandatory to have Lokpal to curb corruption. Three years have lapsed since then, what happened to that Lokpal? The biggest weapons to prevent corruption are enforcement agencies. How these agencies are functioning, you know well. This year a rumour is being spread that Awards have been given to eligible people only. I want to ask that whether the Awards conferred during the last seven years were decided wrongly? The President has stated about simultaneous elections in his address. I do not want to make any comments on that. But whenever you take a decision, in my opinion, a consensus is must. Just now, you were talking about a change. One must keep in mind the sayings of Gandhi ji before copying him. Gandhi ji had said that you change yourself first before changing others. The Government is saying that the country is changing. I would say that nothing has changed. The country is, where it was. If you have to take the country ahead, if you have to make progress, then

you must keep in mind the sayings of Gandhi ji and the sayings of our saints.

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***Supplement covering rest of the proceedings is being issued Separately.