

RAJYA SABHA

*SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE

(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

Thursday, March 08, 2018/ Phalgun 17, 1939 (Saka)

Reference on the Occasion of International Women's Day

MR. CHAIRMAN: Today is International Women's Day. March 8, 2018, is the International Women's Day, a day to celebrate and honour the untiring commitment and determination of ordinary women in India and throughout the world to achieve equality, justice and economic development. The famous words of Mahatma Gandhi, I quote, "Be the change you want to see in the world", are probably more relevant today than ever before. Many issues concerning women get highlighted today. But two things which I feel should receive renewed focus are gender equality and safety of women. We all have to act collectively to raise awareness against discrimination of the girl child.

Every household, neighbourhood, school, institutions and community should start gender-sensitization. The mindset to respect girls and women should be promoted at home and in schools, public areas, public transport and at every place and every stage.

The change should begin at home first. Parents should ensure that there is no discrimination between a boy and a girl. Boys should be made to treat girls with respect and affection, while girls should not be made to feel inferior in any way. There cannot be two opinions on

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

the need to eliminate even the remotest possibility of discrimination against the girl child.

Infact, various campaigns and laws are definitely making a difference. Recently, the UNICEF has stated that 25 million child marriages were prevented worldwide in the last decade, with South Asia witnessing the largest decline largely due to progress made in India. It was stated that in the current trend 27 per cent of girls get married before they turn 18 years- steep decline from 47 per cent a decade ago.

An important area of concern is lower female literacy rate when compared to male literacy. This problem has to be addressed on a war-footing to educate and empower women.

As far as curbing crimes against women is concerned, visible policing and patrolling has to be increased, particularly in desolate areas and during nights. Visible policing will not only provide reassurance to people but will also be a deterrent to trouble-makers.

From times immemorial, we have the tradition of respecting women. In fact, no religion denigrates the status of women. Aberrations have crept into our ways of living in modern times and they have to be eliminated. Ancient Indian thought and vision were idealistic. Unfortunately, there seems to be a big hiatus between ancient Indian thought and harsh contemporary realities.

Time and again, women have proved that they are not only second to none in any field, but better than men in multi-tasking. Women have made outstanding contributions in various fields in the country from building rockets to wielding a cricket bat. Be it politics, poetry, sports or business, women have excelled whenever they had an opportunity.

The architect of the Indian Constitution, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had said "I measure the progress of community by the degree of the progress which women have achieved". With women constituting about 50 per cent of our population, social, economic and political empowerment of women, including providing reservation in the

Parliament and State Legislatures, has to be accorded top priority for the country to achieve rapid progress.

I wish all the Hon'ble Members, especially women Members, and through them, all citizens of the country all the best.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Today newspapers are flodded with pictures of such women who have scaled new heights in every sphere of life. But as on date we have not proved helpful to them. Hence, let us pass a resolution to this effect that we are committed towards providing reservation to women in Union and state legislatures.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Even after seventy years, we are still struggling for gaining true independence of women. The number of crimes against women are on the rise. India loses one per cent of GDP because of non-inclusion of women on level-playing fields in work spaces.

KUMARI SELJA: I extend my greetings on International Women's Day. We should rise above party-lines and pass a resolution, supporting the Women's Reservation Bill. The Government should move for an Equal Opportunities Commission for Women, because women in all walks of life are lagging behind. I hope that the Government will look into it.

SHRIMATI RAJANI PATIL: I have said a lot on this subject. We wish that the Government should take steps in passage of Women Reservation Bill.

SHRIMATI SAMPATIYA UIKEY: I extend my greetings on International Women's Day. Providing 50 per cent reservation in three-tier Panchayati Raj has helped women in discharging their responsibilities in society. Women from all walks of life are progressing and building their glorious future due to 'Beti Padhao, Beti Bachao' programme.

SMT. CHHAYA VERMA: I extend my greetings to all on International Women's Day. Women are still devoid of reservation in state legislatures and Parliament. I belong to a very poor state

Chattisgarh that witnesses sexual violence every day. The state has not spent even a single penny from the amount set aside from 'Nirbhaya Fund'.

SHRIMATI WANSUK SYIEM: I pay my deep respects to all women of this world on this International Women's Day. On this day, I reiterate the demand of 33 per cent reservation for women and to end all the atrocities against them.

SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Even today, there is no woman on the 'Panel of Vice-Chairmen'. I would like to say that Women Reservation Bill should be passed at the earliest to do something better for women of this country otherwise 'Beti bachao, Beti Padhao' will be confined to a mere slogan of the Government.

SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI: I thank all the colleagues here for putting aside all the differences today and allowing women here to express their views. We don't want to be celebrated for our sacrifices. We want to find our identity, our individuality and we want to pursue our dreams. Women's Day is all about that. Domestic violence against women is increasing. Workplaces are not safer for them. Female children are still not wanted in this country. There are so many dowry deaths. We passed the Women's Reservation Bill over here after so much of struggle. I request, through you, that the Government passes the Bill in Lok Sabha.

***SHRIMATI THOTA SEETHARAMA LAKSHMI:**
(Spoke in Telugu.)

MS. ANU AGA: I am not for this one day tokenism of allowing women to speak, giving them opportunity. I request all the men treat us with respect and offer us opportunities.

* Synopsis of speech delivered by hon'ble Member in Telugu will be published separately as supplement.

SHRIMATI ROOPA GANGULY: I used to feel from my childhood that we are not any special as women because we are first of all human beings and then women. We all want that all the women should be empowered.

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): I have complete faith that the government and the opposition would come together to build an atmosphere where our daughters in law and our daughters are safe and educated. Women have to always face difficulties. We failed to check the incidents of rape with the women of a particular age and now it is a matter of shame for the country that infants are being raped. We have to be very strict in this regard. There should be reservation for women in State Legislature and in Lok Sabha.

SHRI DEREK O'BRIEN: My party already has 34 per cent of women MPs. In Bengal, we have the Kanyashree Scheme which has benefited 47 lakh girls. I suggest that this programme should be implemented nationally. Best wishes to not only the women but to men to treat women better

SHRI D. RAJA: Alongwith others, Periyar and Lenin also stood for the empowerment of women. We must stand by our commitment to provide reservation to women and the Parliament should see that the Women's Reservation Bill is passed as early as possible.

DR. V. MAITREYAN: The Women's Reservation Bill should be passed at the earliest. When the vacancy arises in July, please elect a woman Deputy Chairman for this House. My request to the Government is please create mother Kaveri Board immediately.

SHRI T.K. RANGARAJAN: Women harassment at workplace is still there and deteriorating. We have a law, but law enforcement is very weak. The courts are not giving justice to women's cases. What is written and spoken by Thanthai Periyar must be translated into all languages in India so that people understand how Periyar has worked for women empowerment. We must use the visual media, print media for women empowerment,

SHRI SATISH CHANDRA MISRA: Male Members should adopt the resolution to honour the women and provide them security. Lest they should adopt the form of Kali Maa and Durga Maa in order to correct them. There must be one lady in the panel of Vice Chairman.

SHRI MAJEED MEMON: When we talk of human rights, we don't talk of different human rights for males and different human rights for females. They are absolutely identical. We, as law-makers have a great responsibility to ensure equal treatment when the Constitution mandates that we should not discriminate any Indian citizen on the ground of sex.

DR. SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Country's tradition is not to discriminate against women or ill-treat them. We should concentrate on their empowerment. So if you are going to have a Deputy Chairman who is a woman, I would say you should have a Cabinet Secretary also who is a woman.

SHRI V. VIJAYASAI REDDY: Women's reservation should be in proportion to their population. I request the Government to consider and amend the Hindu Succession Act and also other relevant immoveable property Acts conferring the right over property to the women. With regard to female foeticide, a firm action needs to be taken.

SHRI K.T.S. TULSI: My mother wrote a poem at very young age in which she said that woman is not the property of man and thus she challenged the male supremacy long ago. This is relevant even today.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: We have to do something concrete and constructive for women. Government should exempt the sanitary napkins from the GST net which will be a great message to the women community.

SHRI DILIP KUMAR TIRKEY: Women have contributed a lot for the country in all the sectors and I would like to bring to your kind notice that our Chief Minister has provided 50 per cent

reservation to women at Panchyat Level. I would like to add "Beti Khilao" with the slogan "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao".

SHRI DHARMAPURI SRINIVAS: We will have to go all-out to empower the women. The pending Women's Reservation Bill has to be passed. It should be taken up with all seriousness and freedom should be given to women. It is better that men realise it and support the women to come up and they should also play a very big role in this great democracy.

SHRI SANJAY SINGH: Mind set towards daughter is to be changed. I think we have same mind set towards our daughters as it was hundred years ago. Male society decides the way of living of women. On this occasion, we should resolve that various restrictions against women should come to an end in the country.

SHRI HARIVANSH: Today we all are peacefully discussing the topic of women. We should respect women in the society. Women should be given reservation in the legislature. On the lines of Bihar, the plan to give cycles to girls living below the poverty line should be implemented throughout the country. We should enact strict law to prevent rape against young girls. Prohibition should be implemented in the entire country so that women could become free from domestic violence.

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): I convey my hearty congratulations to all the women of the world on the occasion of 'International Women's day'. We should appreciate the achievements of women. I proudly state that India is such a country of the world where women have become President, Prime Minister, Speakers, Chief Minister of many States and Presidents of many national parties. Women have broken the monopoly of men in many areas. While these achievements enable us to raise our heads high, the injustice and pain of women make our heads hang in shame. This is why today is a day to resolve that we will not at all tolerate the kind of injustice and pain being experienced by women. This should not just be a government programme but it should become a movement.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI VIJAY GOEL):

There is a need to bring into action whatever we are speaking here. It is not that changes have not come about in the conditions of women. But this transformation should reach throughout the country wherever women are not getting complete rights and respect. The Prime Minister himself has gone to Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan in connection with the 'Beti bachhao, beti padhao' movement.

**SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS FOR GRANTS
2017-18 (MARCH, 2018)**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI RADHAKRISHNAN P.): I lay on the Table, a statement (in English and Hindi) showing the Supplementary Demands for Grants 2017-18 (March, 2018).

Desh Deepak Verma,
Secretary-General.

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