

PREFACE

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ഭരണഘടനാ മൂല്യങ്ങൾ ഒരു പുനർ വായന

ഡോ. എ. സുഹൃത്കുമാർ

1949 മുതൽ 2019 വരെയുള്ള കാലത്തിനിടയിൽ ഭരണഘടനാ മൂല്യങ്ങൾ ഇത്രയേറെ ചർച്ച ചെയ്യപ്പെട്ട കാലം ഒരിക്കൽ മാത്രമാണ് കാണാനാവുക. കേശവാനന്ദ ഭാരതിയും നാനിപൽക്കിവാലയും എച്ച്.ആർ.ഖനയും ഉൾപ്പെടെയുള്ളവർ പരാമർശിക്കപ്പെടുന്ന ഒരു കാലം. അത് അടിയന്തരാവസ്ഥയിലാണ് പരിണമിച്ച് എത്തിയത്. ഇപ്പോഴിതാ നാട്ടിലാകെ ഭരണഘടനയുടെ അടിസ്ഥാനമൂല്യങ്ങളും അവയുടെ പ്രസക്തിയും ഒരിക്കൽ കൂടി ചർച്ചാ വിധേയമാകുന്നു. ഒരു തരത്തിൽ ഈ സംവാദങ്ങൾ നമ്മുടെ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യ സമരത്തെയും ഭരണഘടനാരൂപീകരണത്തെയും അതിന്റെ പരിപാലനത്തെയും പറ്റി നമുക്കിടയിൽ ശക്തമായ അവബോധം രൂപപ്പെടുത്താൻ ഏറെ സഹായകമാകും എന്നു തന്നെ കരുതാം.

എന്താണ് ഭരണഘടനാ മൂല്യങ്ങൾ ?

സാധാരണ പരാമർശിക്കുന്ന രീതിയിൽ നിന്ന് വ്യത്യസ്തമായ ഒരു രീതി അവലംബിച്ച് ഇന്ത്യൻ സാമൂഹ്യ, രാഷ്ട്രീയ ദർശനങ്ങൾ അവലംബിച്ചുള്ള ഒരു വീക്ഷണമാണ് ഇവിടെ അവതരിപ്പിക്കുന്നത്. ഒന്നാമതായി സ്വാഭിമാനം അഥവാ സ്വയം നിർണ്ണയം തന്നെയാണ് ചൂണ്ടിക്കാട്ടേണ്ടത്. രണ്ടാമതായി സ്വയംഭരണം അഥവാ സ്വരാജ്. മൂന്നാമത്തേത് അഹിംസയാണ്. നാലാമത്തെ ഘടകം സത്യവും നീതിയും. അഞ്ചാമതായി ചൂണ്ടിക്കാട്ടാനാകുക സർവ്വോദയം അഥവാ സർവ്വശേഷിയായ ഉൾക്കൊള്ളൽ എന്നതാണ്. ഈ അഞ്ച് അടിസ്ഥാന ഘടകങ്ങൾ നൂറ്റാണ്ടുകളുടെ ഗതിക്രമത്തിലൂടെ ഇന്ത്യൻ ജനതയിൽ ഉരുത്തിരിഞ്ഞതാണ്. അതാകട്ടെ ഏറെ വൈവിധ്യവും വൈജാത്യവും വൈരുദ്ധ്യവും ഇടകലർന്ന ഒരു സാമൂഹ്യസാഹചര്യത്തിൽ രൂപപ്പെട്ട് ശക്തിപ്പെട്ട് വികസിച്ചു പുലർന്നുവന്നതുമാണ്. പതിറ്റാണ്ടുകൾ നീണ്ട സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യസമര കാലഘട്ടത്തിലും അതിനു ശേഷമുള്ള അവസരങ്ങളിലും ഇന്ത്യൻ ജനത ഉയർത്തിപ്പിടിച്ച ധാർമ്മിക മൂല്യങ്ങൾ തന്നെയാണ്



ഈ അഞ്ച് ഘടകങ്ങൾ. ഇവ ഓരോന്നും പ്രത്യക്ഷത്തിലും പരോക്ഷമായും പ്രതിഫലിക്കുന്നവയാണ് ഇന്ത്യൻ ഭരണഘടനയുടെ ഉള്ളടക്കമെന്ന് പൊതുവിൽ നിരീക്ഷിക്കാം.

ഭരണഘടനയുടെ മുഖവാചകം

ഇന്ത്യൻ ഭരണഘടനാസംഹിതയുടെ അവിഭാജ്യമായ ഭാഗമായിരിക്കുമ്പോൾ തന്നെ അതിലേക്കുള്ള പ്രവേശനദാരുമായി വർത്തിക്കുന്ന വാചകമാണ് അതിന്റെ ആമുഖം. ഭരണഘടനയുടെ അവകാശികളും ഉടമകളും പരിപാലകരും ഗുണഭോക്താക്കളും ഇന്ത്യയിലെ പൗരന്മാരാണെന്ന് ആത്യന്തികമായി ഈ മുഖവാചകം അർത്ഥശങ്കയില്ലാതെ സമർത്ഥിക്കുന്നു. അതിന്റെ ആദ്യവാക്യം തന്നെ ഇത്തരം ജനകീയത ഉറപ്പാക്കുന്നു.

രണ്ടാമതായി ഇന്ത്യയെന്ന രാഷ്ട്രത്തെ മുഖവാചകം അസന്ദിഗ്ദ്ധമായി നിർവചിക്കുന്നു. സ്വതന്ത്ര, ജനാധിപത്യ, മതനിരപേക്ഷ, സോഷ്യലിസ്റ്റ് പരമാധികാര രാഷ്ട്രമായി ഇന്ത്യയെ അത് വ്യവസ്ഥാപനം ചെയ്യുന്നു. ഭരണഘടനാ നിർമ്മാണസഭയിൽത്തന്നെ അഞ്ച് പദങ്ങൾ ചേർത്തുള്ള നിർവചനം നിർദ്ദേശിക്കപ്പെട്ടതായിരുന്നു. എന്നാൽ അന്നത്തെ ചരിത്രപരമായ സാഹചര്യത്തിൽ നിന്ന് വ്യത്യസ്തമായ ഒരു ഘട്ടത്തിൽ ഉൾച്ചേർക്കപ്പെട്ട പരാമർശങ്ങൾ കൂടി പരിഗണിച്ചാൽ ഈ അഞ്ച് സൂചകങ്ങൾ ഇന്ത്യയെന്ന രാഷ്ട്രത്തിന്റെ, ജനതയുടെ നിലനിൽപ്പിന്റെ തന്നെ നിദർശകമാണ്. അവയ്ക്ക് എപ്പോഴെങ്കിലും കോട്ടമോ ദുർബലതയോ സംഭവിച്ചാൽ ഈ രാഷ്ട്രത്തിനു തന്നെ അത് വിനാശകരമായിത്തീരും. ജനതയ്ക്കുമേൽ അതു സൃഷ്ടിക്കുന്ന ഫലം ഏറെ ദുഷ്കരമായിരിക്കും.

രാജ്യത്തെ പൗരസമൂഹത്തിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാന അവകാശങ്ങൾ ഹ്രസ്വമായും മുർത്തമായും സമാഹരിച്ച് സംഭരിച്ച് മുഖവാചകം പരാമർശിക്കുന്നു. എന്തെല്ലാമാണവ? സ്വതന്ത്രത, തുല്യത, നീതിപൂർവ്വകത, അഖണ്ഡത എന്നിവയാണ് പ്രസ്തുത അടിസ്ഥാന അവകാശങ്ങൾ. അല്പം കൂടി വിശദീകരണം ഈ പദപ്രയോഗങ്ങൾ ആവശ്യപ്പെടുന്നുണ്ട്.



സ്വതന്ത്രത എന്നതു കൊണ്ട് ലക്ഷ്യമിടുന്നത് ചിന്ത, വിശ്വാസം, ആരാധന, നിഷ്ഠ, ആചാരം എന്നിവയ്ക്കുള്ള സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യമാണ്. എന്നാൽ ഇവയോരോന്നിലും നമുക്ക് എങ്ങനെയാണ് സ്വതന്ത്രത അനുഭവിക്കാനാവുക ? തീർച്ചയായും ജനാധിപത്യപരമായ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യത്തിലും സ്വയം നിർണ്ണയാവകാശത്തിലും സരാജ്യ സങ്കല്പനത്തിലും ഊന്നിക്കൊണ്ടു മാത്രമേ അതിന് കഴിയുകയുള്ളൂ. വ്യക്തിയുടെ അന്തസ്സും മനുഷ്യപദവിയും സ്വപ്രകാശനാവകാശവും ഉറപ്പാക്കിക്കൊണ്ടു മാത്രമേ രാഷ്ട്രത്തിന്റെ സ്വതന്ത്രതയും പരമാധികാരവും പുലർത്താൻ കഴിയൂ എന്നും ഭരണഘടന വിഭാവനം ചെയ്യുന്നു. അതു കൊണ്ടാണ് നിലവിലിരിക്കുന്ന നിയമ വ്യവസ്ഥയുടെ പിൻബലമോ പ്രയോഗമോ കൂടാതെ അടിസ്ഥാന പൗരാവകാശങ്ങൾ ഹനിച്ചു കൂടാ എന്ന തത്വം ഭരണഘടനാ വ്യവസ്ഥയായിത്തന്നെ ഉൾച്ചേർക്കപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്നത്.

തുല്യത എന്നത് നിയമത്തിനു മുമ്പിലും നിയമപരിരക്ഷയിലുമുള്ള തുല്യതയെന്നും അന്തസ്സിലും പദവിയിലും അവസരത്തിലുമുള്ള തുല്യതയെന്നുമാണ് വ്യവഹരിക്കപ്പെടുന്നത്. ഭരണഘടന ബാഹ്യമായ ഒരു കാരണത്താലും ഈ തുല്യത ലംഘിക്കപ്പെടാവുന്നതല്ല. മത-ജാതി-ലിംഗ-ഭാഷാ-പ്രാദേശികതത്വങ്ങൾ വിവേചനത്തിന് കാരണമായിക്കൂടാ. എന്നിരിക്കിലും പരിരക്ഷാത്മകവും അർഹതാധിഷ്ഠിതവുമായ പ്രത്യേക പരിഗണനയിലൂടെ തുല്യത ഉറപ്പാക്കുന്നതിനെ ഭരണഘടന സാധൂകരിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. അതിജീവനം, വികസനം, അവസരം, അവകാശം എന്നിവയിലെല്ലാമുള്ള തുല്യതയാണ് ഇവിടെ അർത്ഥമാക്കപ്പെടുന്നത്. പിന്നാക്കാവസ്ഥയുടെയോ ലിംഗപദവിയുടെയോ സംസ്കാരത്തിന്റെയോ സാമൂഹ്യ-സാമ്പത്തിക സ്ഥിതിയുടെയോ കാരണത്താൽ അന്തരമോ വിവേചനമോ അനുവദനീയമല്ലെന്നും തുല്യതാപ്രഖ്യാപനം വഴി ഭരണഘടന അസന്ദിഗ്ദ്ധമായി പ്രഖ്യാപിക്കുന്നു.

നീതിപൂർവ്വകത എന്നത് ഒരാളിന്റെ നീതിന്യായ അനുഭവം മറ്റൊരാളിന് ധ്വംസനമായോ, അനീതിയായോ മാറരുതെന്നും, അധികാരവകാശങ്ങളുടെ



വിതരണ ക്രമപരിപാലനമാണ് മുഖ്യമെന്നും അനുശാസിക്കുന്നു. സഹാനുഭൂതിയും സഹവർത്തിത്വവും സാഹോദര്യവും തന്നെയാണതിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനം. അരികുവൽക്കരിക്കപ്പെടുന്നവരോട്, തിരസ്കരിക്കപ്പെടുന്നവരോട്, നിരാലംബരോടുള്ള അതിരറ്റ സഹാനുഭൂതിയും അവരുടെ അടിസ്ഥാന അവകാശങ്ങളുടെ സാക്ഷാത്കാരത്തിനായുള്ള അദൃശ്യമായ ഉത്കണ്ഠയും അഭിവാഞ്ചയും പ്രതിജ്ഞാബദ്ധതയും തന്നെയാണിവിടെ നിർണായകം.

അഖണ്ഡതയെന്നത് ഇന്ത്യയുടെ വൈവിധ്യത്തിന്റെയും ബഹുസ്വരതയുടെയും സർവ്വാശ്ലേഷിയായ ഉൾക്കൊള്ളലിന്റെയും കൂടി നിദർശമാണ്. ആരെയും എന്തിനെയും ബഹിർഭാഗസ്ഥമെന്നോ അന്യമെന്നോ കരുതാതെ സ്വാംശീകരിക്കാനും ഉൾക്കൊള്ളാനുമുള്ള മഹത്തായ സന്നദ്ധതയാണതിൽ പ്രകടമാകുക. മേൽ സൂചിപ്പിക്കപ്പെട്ട പ്രതിഷ്ഠാപിത മൂല്യങ്ങൾ ചോദ്യം ചെയ്യപ്പെടുമ്പോൾ, തർക്കപ്പെടുമ്പോൾ, ഇന്ത്യയുടെ, ഇന്ത്യൻ ജനതയുടെ ഇന്ത്യയിലെ പൗരന്മാരുടെ നിലനിൽപ്പുതന്നെയാണ് അപകടപ്പെടുക.

മൂല്യങ്ങൾ അനുഭവവേദ്യമാകണം

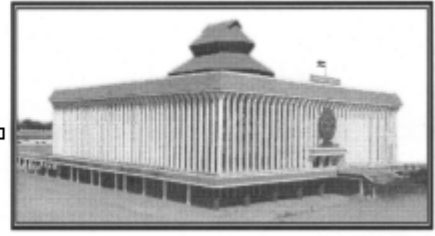
1959-ൽ ദില്ലിയിൽ ചേർന്ന അന്താരാഷ്ട്ര നീതിശാസ്ത്രസമ്മേളനത്തിന്റെ പ്രഖ്യാപനം ആറ് പതിറ്റാണ്ടിന് ശേഷം ഓർമ്മിച്ചെടുക്കുന്നത് നന്നായിരിക്കും. നിയമവാഴ്ചാ തത്വത്തിന്റെ അന്തസ്സത്തയും അർത്ഥപൂർണ്ണതയും പ്രാബല്യവുമാണ് പ്രഖ്യാതമായി പരിഗണിക്കപ്പെട്ടത്. നിയമമാണ് പരമമായ അപ്രമാദിതമായ ഘടകമെന്നും ഭരണഘടനയാണ് അതിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനമെന്നും ഭരണഘടനയ്ക്കും നിയമവാഴ്ചയ്ക്കും മുമ്പിൽ ഏവരും സമന്മാരേന്ന് പ്രഖ്യാപിച്ചതു കൊണ്ടും മാത്രമായില്ല. അത് അനുഭവവേദ്യമാക്കണമെന്നു കൂടി ദില്ലിപ്രഖ്യാപനം ചൂണ്ടിക്കാട്ടി. അടിസ്ഥാന അതിജീവന അവകാശമോ അവസരമോ ഇല്ലാതെ, ശുദ്ധജലം, ശുദ്ധവായു, പോഷകാഹാരം, ആരോഗ്യപരിരക്ഷ, അടിസ്ഥാനവിദ്യാഭ്യാസം, തൊഴിലവസരം, അടിസ്ഥാന വേതനം, ഇതൊന്നും അവകാശപ്പെടാനില്ലാതെ കേവലമായ നിയമവാഴ്ചാ പ്രഖ്യാപനം നിരർത്ഥകമാകുമെന്ന് അവർ ചൂണ്ടിക്കാട്ടി.



ഇവിടെയാണ് ഇന്ത്യൻ ഭരണഘടനയുടെ മൂന്ന് ഭാഗങ്ങൾ നിർണ്ണായക പ്രാധാന്യം കൈവരിക്കുന്നത്. മൗലികാവകാശങ്ങൾ, രാഷ്ട്രനയ നിർദ്ദേശകതത്വങ്ങൾ, മൗലിക പൗരധർമ്മങ്ങൾ എന്നിവയാണ് ഈ മൂന്ന് ഭാഗങ്ങൾ.

വ്യക്തിഗത, രാഷ്ട്രീയ, സാംസ്കാരിക അവകാശങ്ങളാണ് മൗലികപൗരാവകാശമായി വ്യവസ്ഥാപിതമായിട്ടുള്ളത്. മനുഷ്യനെന്ന അന്തസ്സോടെയും പദവിയോടെയും അതിജീവിക്കാൻ ഈ അവകാശങ്ങൾ പരിപാലിക്കപ്പെടണം. നിയമപ്രാബല്യം കൂടാതെ അവയൊന്നും നിഷേധിക്കപ്പെടാനോ ഹനിക്കപ്പെടാനോ പാടില്ല. മറിച്ച്, പൗരന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാന മൗലികാവകാശങ്ങൾ ലംഘിക്കുന്നതോ ഹനിക്കുന്നതോ നിഷേധിക്കുന്നതോ ആയ ഏതൊരു നിയമത്തിനും നടപടിക്കും തീരുമാനത്തിനും സാധ്യതയോ നിലനിൽപ്പോ പ്രാബല്യമോ ഉണ്ടായിരിക്കുകയില്ലാ എന്ന വസ്തുത നാം തിരിച്ചറിയണം. അത് പുലരാൻ നിരന്തരം ജാഗ്രതയോടെ പ്രവർത്തിക്കണം. രാഷ്ട്രനയ നിർദ്ദേശക തത്വങ്ങൾ കേവല പ്രഖ്യാപനങ്ങളോ പ്രമാണങ്ങളോ മാത്രമല്ല രാഷ്ട്ര പുരോഗതിയിൽ അനുവർത്തിക്കപ്പെടേണ്ട തത്വങ്ങൾ തന്നെയാണ്. അവയിലടങ്ങിയ സിദ്ധാന്തപരമായ മൂല്യങ്ങൾ പ്രായോഗികമാക്കാനുതകുന്ന നിയമങ്ങൾ രൂപപ്പെടുത്താനും നടപ്പാക്കാനും ഇന്ത്യയിലെ നിയമനിർമ്മാണ സഭകൾക്കും രാഷ്ട്രഭരണകൂടത്തിനും ബാധ്യതയുണ്ട്. അവർ അങ്ങനെ ചെയ്യുന്നു എന്ന് ഉറപ്പാക്കുന്നതിന് ഗൗരവബുദ്ധിയോടെയുള്ള പൗരന്റെ കടമയും ബാധ്യതയും അനിവാര്യമാണ്. മൂന്നാമതായി, രാഷ്ട്രത്തോടുള്ള പൗരന്റെ കടമയും ബാധ്യതയും സ്വധർമ്മമായി നിറവേറ്റുന്നതിന് പൗരന്മാർക്കുള്ള ഉത്തരവാദിത്വമാണ്. അതാകട്ടെ നിർബന്ധിതമായോ അടിച്ചേൽപ്പിച്ചോ പരീക്ഷണ നടപടിയിലൂടെയോ അല്ല, മറിച്ച് സ്വാവബോധത്തിലൂടെ പ്രാവർത്തികമാക്കാനാണ് ഇന്ത്യൻ ഭരണഘടന ലക്ഷ്യമിടുന്നത്.

രാഷ്ട്രത്തിന്റെ ഫെഡറൽ ഘടനയും ഭരണഘടനാ സ്ഥാപനങ്ങളുടെ നിലനിൽപ്പും, കേന്ദ്ര-സംസ്ഥാന-തദ്ദേശ ഭരണ കൂടങ്ങളുടെ പാരസ്പര്യവും വിഭവ



വിതരണ ക്രമനീതിയും വികസന അതിജീവന അവസരവും മാത്രമല്ല ഭരണഘടനാഭേദഗതിയുടെയും അധികാര വിഭജന തത്വത്തിന്റെയും അടിയന്തരാധികാര പ്രയോഗത്തിന്റെയും കാര്യത്തിലും ഉൾപ്പെടെയുള്ള പരമപ്രധാനമായ, പ്രാഥമികമായ ഉത്തരവാദിത്വം ഇന്ത്യയിലെ പൗരന്മാരുടെ ചുമലിലാണ്. നിഷ്ക്രിയവും നിഷ്ഫലവുമായ ഒരു നിർമ്മജനതയെ അല്ല ഇന്നത്തെ ഇന്ത്യ ആവശ്യപ്പെടുന്നത്. ഈ രാഷ്ട്രത്തെ അതിന്റെ, ഭരണഘടനയെ, ഇന്ത്യയിലെ ജനതയെത്തന്നെ സംരക്ഷിക്കാനും നിലനിർത്താനും ആർജ്ജവും ഊർജ്ജവും ഉള്ള ഒരു സമൂഹത്തെയാണ് സമകാലിക രാഷ്ട്രം ആവശ്യപ്പെടുന്നത്. അത് തിരിച്ചറിയാൻ സഹായകമാകുന്ന ഒരു പുനർ വായനയ്ക്ക് ഇന്ത്യൻ ഭരണഘടന വിധേയമാക്കപ്പെടേണ്ട കാലം കൂടിയായിരിക്കുന്നു എന്ന് ഓർമ്മിച്ചിരിക്കുക. ഇപ്പോഴില്ലെങ്കിൽ പിന്നീട് സാധ്യമാകില്ലെന്നും നമ്മളല്ലാതെ മറ്റാർക്കുമത് സാധിക്കില്ലെന്നും കൂടി തിരിച്ചറിയുക.

**സമകാലിക ജനപഥം,
ജനുവരി 2019.**

ഞാൻ



സഞ്ചാരികളില്ലാത്ത ദൈവത്തിന്റെ നാട്

രവിശങ്കർ കെ.വി.

2018 കേരളം ഓർക്കുക മഹാപ്രളയം തകർത്ത വർഷമെന്നായിരിക്കും. പക്ഷേ, കേരളത്തിലെ ഏറ്റവും വലിയ സേവന-വ്യവസായമേഖലകളിൽ ഒന്നായ ടൂറിസം അതിന്റെ ചരിത്രത്തിലെ ഏറ്റവും വലിയ നിലനിൽപ്പ് ഭീഷണി നേരിട്ട വർഷമായിട്ടായിരിക്കും ഇത് രേഖപ്പെടുത്തുക. കഴിഞ്ഞ 30 വർഷക്കാലത്തെ കണക്കെടുത്താൽ, അതിന്റെ ചരിത്രത്തിലെ ഏറ്റവും വലിയ പ്രതിസന്ധികളിലൂടെ ആണ് വിനോദ സഞ്ചാരമേഖല കടന്നു പോകുന്നത്. പുതുവർഷം പിറന്നിട്ടും ആ അവസ്ഥയിൽ വലിയ മാറ്റമൊന്നുമില്ല. മഹാപ്രളയം ഏറ്റവും കൂടുതൽ തകർത്ത മേഖലകൾ കൃഷിയും ടൂറിസവും ആയിരുന്നു. ഈ അവസ്ഥ ഇനിയും നീണ്ടുപോയാൽ വിനോദസഞ്ചാര മേഖലയും കേരളത്തിന്റെ ഭാവിയിൽ കറുത്ത നിഴൽ വീഴ്ത്തും എന്ന കാര്യത്തിൽ സംശയമില്ല.

ബാറും ഓഖിയും ലിഗയുടെ കൊലപാതകവും

കേരളത്തിലെ ടൂറിസം മേഖലയുടെ തകർച്ച തുടങ്ങിയത് ബാർ നിരോധനത്തിലാണെന്ന് നിസ്സംശയം പറയാം. യാതൊരു വീണ്ടു വിചാരവും മുന്നൊരുക്കങ്ങളും ഇല്ലാതെ, ഒരു സുപ്രഭാതത്തിൽ പ്രഖ്യാപിച്ച ബാറുകളുടെ നിരോധനത്തിൽ തുടങ്ങിയ തകർച്ചയിൽ നിന്നും ടൂറിസം-ഹോട്ടൽ വ്യവസായ മേഖല പതുകെ കരകറിയത് പുതിയ സർക്കാർ അധികാരത്തിൽ വന്ന് ഒരു വർഷത്തിനു ശേഷമാണ്. 2017 ഏപ്രിൽ ഒന്ന് മുതലാണ് പഴയ മദ്യനയം പുനഃസ്ഥാപിച്ചതിലൂടെ വിദേശ-ആഭ്യന്തര സഞ്ചാരികളെ വീണ്ടും ആകർഷിക്കാനായത്. കേരളം സഞ്ചാരികളെ സ്വാഗതം ചെയ്യാൻ തയ്യാറായി എന്ന് മികച്ച വിപണനതന്ത്രങ്ങളിലൂടെ ലോകത്തെ അറിയിച്ചു. 2017 ഒക്ടോബർ മുതൽ തുടങ്ങുന്ന സീസൺ വിനോദസഞ്ചാര മേഖല തയ്യാറെടുത്തിരിക്കുമ്പോഴാണ് അപ്രതീക്ഷിതമായി ഓഖി ചുഴലിക്കാറ്റ് കേരള തീരത്ത് ആഞ്ഞടിക്കുന്നത്.



2017 നവംബർ 21-ന് ഓഖി ചുഴലിക്കാറ്റ് നമ്മുടെ തീരത്ത് കനത്ത നാശനഷ്ടവും നിരവധി മനുഷ്യജീവനുകളും തീരവും സമ്പത്തും എല്ലാം കൊണ്ടു പോയതും എല്ലാം ഇന്നും തീർത്താൽ തീരാത്ത നഷ്ടമായി നമുക്ക് മുന്നിലുണ്ട്. ആലപ്പുഴയിലെ മാരാരിക്കുളത്തെ സ്വന്തം റിസോർട്ട് മുഴുവൻ കടലെടുക്കുന്നത് നിസ്സഹായനായി നോക്കി നിൽക്കേണ്ടി വന്ന വിനോദ് എന്ന ഒരു ടൂറിസം സംരംഭകന്റെ ദയനീയ ചിത്രം അന്ന് കേരളം കാണുകയുണ്ടായി. അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ മാത്രം നഷ്ടം 12 കോടി രൂപയായിരുന്നു. കോവളം തീരത്തിനും ശംഖുമുഖം കടൽത്തീരത്തിനും ഉണ്ടായ ശോഷണം ഇപ്പോഴും നികത്താനായിട്ടില്ല.

ഓഖിയിലൂടെ മാത്രം കേരളം ടൂറിസത്തിന് ഉണ്ടായ വ്യാപാര നഷ്ടം 1000 കോടി രൂപയിൽ കവിയും. അതോടെ കഴിഞ്ഞ ടൂറിസം സീസൺ മുഴുവൻ കേരളത്തിനു നഷ്ടമായി. അതിലൂടെ ഉണ്ടായ പരോക്ഷ നഷ്ടം എത്രയോ വേറെയും. അതിന്റെ പരിണിത ഫലമായി 2018 മാർച്ച് വരെ സീസൺ ഇഴഞ്ഞു നീങ്ങിയപ്പോഴാണ് ഏപ്രിൽ മുതൽ തുടങ്ങാൻ പോകുന്ന ഡൊമസ്റ്റിക് സീസൺ ഒരു പരിധി വരെ പിടിച്ചു നിൽക്കും എന്ന ഒരു തോന്നൽ ടൂറിസം വിപണിയിൽ ഉണ്ടാക്കിയത്. അത് ഒരു പരിധി വരെ ശരി വെയ്ക്കുന്ന തരത്തിൽ ആയിരുന്നു തുടക്കത്തിൽ മൂന്നാർ, വയനാട്, തേക്കടി അടക്കമുള്ള ഡെസ്റ്റിനേഷനുകൾ സഞ്ചാരികളെ സ്വാഗതം ചെയ്തത്.

ഓഖിയുടെ സംഹാരതാണ്ഡവം കഴിഞ്ഞു അധികം താമസിയാതെ ലിഗ എന്ന വിദേശ വനിതയുടെ കൊലപാതകം അതു നടന്ന കോവളത്തെ മാത്രമല്ല, മറ്റ് വിനോദ സഞ്ചാര കേന്ദ്രങ്ങളേയും ബാധിച്ചു. കഴിഞ്ഞ വർഷം തുടക്കത്തിൽ ആയിരുന്നു അത്. അതും ടൂറിസം സീസൺ അതിന്റെ ഏറ്റവും പരകോടിയിൽ നിൽക്കുമ്പോൾ. ഡൽഹിയിലെ നിർഭയ സംഭവത്തിനു ശേഷം ഇന്ത്യ മൊത്തം വനിതാ സഞ്ചാരികൾക്കു പോകാൻ പറ്റിയ സ്ഥലമല്ല എന്ന പ്രചാരണം വിദേശ രാജ്യങ്ങളിൽ നിലനിൽക്കുമ്പോഴാണ് ലിഗയുടെ കൊലപാതകം കേരളത്തെ പിടിച്ചുലയ്ക്കുന്നത്. സമൂഹ മാധ്യമങ്ങളിലൂടെ അത് വല്ലാതെ നമ്മുടെ



വിപണികളെ സ്വാധീനിച്ചു. 2018 ജർമനിയിൽ നടന്ന, ലോകത്തിലെ ഏറ്റവും വലിയ സൂറിസം മേളയായ ഐ.ടി.ബി ബെർലിനിൽ അടക്കം ഈ വിഷയം ചർച്ചയായി. പക്ഷേ, കേരള പോലീസിന്റേയും സൂറിസം വകുപ്പിന്റേയും സമയോചിതവും നിഷ്പക്ഷവുമായ ഇടപെടൽ, കുറ്റവാളികളെ പിടിക്കാനും നിയമത്തിന്റെ മുന്നിൽ കൊണ്ടു വരാൻ സാധിക്കുകയും ഒരു പരിധി വരെ അധികം ഡാമേജ് സൂറിസം മേഖലയ്ക്കുണ്ടാകാതെ രക്ഷിക്കാനും കഴിഞ്ഞു. ഒടുവിൽ ലിഗയുടെ സാഹോദരിയെ കേരള സൂറിസത്തിന്റെ അനുദ്യോഗിക പ്രചാരക ആക്കുന്നതിൽ വരെ ആ സന്ദർഭോചിതവുമായ ഇടപെടലുകൾ സഹായിച്ചു.

നിപയും മഹാപ്രളയവും

നിർഭാഗ്യവശാൽ 2018 ജൂണിൽ കോഴിക്കോട് ജില്ലയിൽ പൊട്ടിപ്പുറപ്പെട്ട നിപ വൈറസ് ബാധ കേരളത്തിലെ സൂറിസം മേഖലയ്ക്ക് ഉണ്ടാക്കിയ നഷ്ടം ഏകദേശം 4000 കോടി രൂപയ്ക്കും 5000 കോടി രൂപയ്ക്കും ഇടയിലായിരുന്നു. തേക്കടി, മൂന്നാർ, വയനാട് എല്ലാം കഴിഞ്ഞ ഡൊമസ്റ്റിക് സീസണിൽ മെലിഞ്ഞുണങ്ങി. എന്നാൽ, നമ്മുടെ സർക്കാർ സംവിധാനവും പൊതു-സ്വകാര്യ ആരോഗ്യ മേഖലയുടെ ചിട്ടയായ പ്രവർത്തനത്തിലൂടെയും നാം നിപായെയും അതിജീവിച്ചു. അപ്പോഴും സൂറിസം മേഖലയിലെ എല്ലാവരും ശുഭപ്രതീക്ഷയിൽ ആയിരുന്നു. വരുന്ന ഓണക്കാലവും പുജാഅവധിയും ദീപാവലിയും എല്ലാം നമുക്ക് നല്ല ഒരു തിരിച്ചു വരവിന് കളമൊരുക്കും എന്ന്. പക്ഷേ, അതിന്റെ പിറകെ വന്ന ഓഗസ്റ്റിലെ മഹാപ്രളയം ഇതുവരെയുള്ള എല്ലാ പ്രതീക്ഷകളെയും തച്ചുടയ്ക്കുന്നതായിരുന്നു.

കേരളത്തിലെ എല്ലാ സൂറിസം ഡെസ്റ്റിനേഷനുകളും സഞ്ചാരികളുടെ വരവും കാത്ത് ഇരിക്കുകയാണ്. പലയിടത്തും ചില റിസോർട്ടുകളിൽ ഒരു റൂമിൽപ്പോലും ആളില്ലാത്ത അവസ്ഥ. അതും സാധാരണ ഗതിയിൽ കേരളത്തിലെ പീക്ക് സൂറിസം സീസൺ എന്നു വിലയിരുത്തുന്ന ഡിസംബർ-ജനുവരി മാസങ്ങളിൽ. ഓണവും പുജാ അവധിയും ദീപാവലിയും ഒക്കെ വെള്ളപ്പൊക്കത്തിൽ ഒലിച്ചു



പോയപ്പോഴും ഈ മേഖല വലിയ പ്രതീക്ഷ വെച്ചു പുലർത്തിയത് നവംബർ മുതൽ തുടങ്ങുന്ന സീസണും ക്രിസ്‌മസ്-പുതുവത്സര ആഘോഷങ്ങളുമായിരുന്നു. സാധാരണ ഗതിയിൽ ഡിസംബർ 20 മുതൽ ജനുവരി 20 വരെ കേരളത്തിൽ ഒരു റൂം കിട്ടാൻ പ്രയാസമാണ്. എന്നാൽ ഇക്കൂറി ഡിസംബർ 24-നും 31-നും ഒക്കെ കാലിയായ റൂമുകൾ നിരവധി റിസോർട്ടുകളിൽ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു. അത്ര മാത്രം ദയനീയമായിരുന്നു ടൂറിസം മേഖലയുടെ അവസ്ഥ.

കെ.ടി.ഡി.സി ചെയർമാൻ എം.വിജയകുമാർ കഴിഞ്ഞ മാസം ഒരു പൊതു ചടങ്ങിൽ പറഞ്ഞത്, കെ.ടി.ഡി.സി. യുടെ പ്രീമിയം ഹോട്ടലുകളിലെ അതിഥികളുടെ കണക്ക് വെറും 30 ശതമാനം മാത്രമാണ് എന്നാണ്. അര നൂറ്റാണ്ട് പിന്നിട്ട കെ.ടി.ഡി.സി യുടെ ചരിത്രത്തിൽത്തന്നെ ആദ്യമായാണ് ഇത്തരമൊരു അവസ്ഥ ഉണ്ടാകുന്നത്. കേരളത്തിലെ പ്രമുഖ ഹോട്ടൽ ബ്രാൻഡുകൾ എല്ലാം സമാനമായ അവസ്ഥയിലൂടെ ആണ് കടന്നു പോയിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നത്. ടൂർ ഓപ്പറേറ്റർമാരുടെ കാര്യമാണ് ഇതിലും കഷ്ടം. കോവളം, കുമരകം, ഫോർട്ട് കൊച്ചി തുടങ്ങിയ വിനോദസഞ്ചാര കേന്ദ്രങ്ങളിലെ അവസ്ഥയും വ്യത്യസ്തമല്ല. ഹൗസ്ബോട്ട് മേഖല നിശ്ചലമായ അവസ്ഥയിൽ ആയിട്ട് മാസങ്ങളായി. അറബ് ടൂറിസ്റ്റുകളിലെ നേരിയ വർദ്ധന മാത്രമാണ് ഇതിനിടയിൽ ആകെയുള്ള ഒരാശ്വാസം.

നവംബർ ആദ്യ വാരം ലണ്ടനിൽ സമാപിച്ച ലോക ടൂറിസം മേളയിൽ കേരളവും ഇന്ത്യയിലെ മറ്റു സംസ്ഥാനങ്ങൾക്കൊപ്പം പങ്കെടുത്തിരുന്നു. ഉത്തരവാദിത്വ ടൂറിസം രംഗത്തെ രണ്ട് ഗോൾഡ് അവാർഡ് അടക്കം കേരളം നേടുകയും ചെയ്തു. ടൂറിസം മന്ത്രി കടകംപള്ളി സുരേന്ദ്രനും സെക്രട്ടറി റാണി ജോർജ് ഐ.എ.എസ്. അടക്കമുള്ള കേരള സംഘം സഞ്ചാരികളുടെ എണ്ണത്തിലുള്ള വർദ്ധനയ്ക്കായി പലവിധ പ്രചാരണ പരിപാടികൾക്കും അവിടെ തുടക്കം കുറിക്കുകയുണ്ടായി. പക്ഷെ, കേരള ടൂറിസം സ്റ്റാൾ രൂപ കൽപ്പന കൊണ്ട് അതിമനോഹരമായിരുന്നെങ്കിൽ, വ്യാപാരം കൊണ്ട് ശുഷ്കമായിരുന്നു. അതേ



സമയം നമ്മുടെ അയൽ രാജ്യങ്ങളായ ശ്രീലങ്കയും മാലിദ്വീപും അവിടെ കാഴ്ചവെച്ച പ്രകടനം കാണുമ്പോൾ കണ്ണ് തള്ളിപ്പോകും. അവസാന ദിവസം സഞ്ചാരികളും അവരുടെ സ്റ്റാളുകളിൽ തള്ളിക്കയറി.

വിപണി തിരിച്ചു പിടിക്കാനുള്ള ശ്രമങ്ങൾ

കേരള ടൂറിസം വകുപ്പ് സ്വകാര്യ മേഖലയുടെ ഉറച്ച പിന്തുണയോടെ, നമുക്ക് കൈമോശം വന്ന വിപണി തിരിച്ചു പിടിക്കാനുള്ള ഭൗമ ശ്രമത്തിലാണ് കഴിഞ്ഞ മൂന്ന് മാസങ്ങളായി. സഞ്ചാരികളുടെ തിരിച്ചു വരവിനായി എല്ലാ ശ്രമങ്ങളും നടത്തിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുകയാണ്. ഇതുവരെ മറ്റൊരു സർക്കാരും കൈക്കൊണ്ടിട്ടില്ലാത്ത വിധമാണ് നിലവിൽ കേരള ടൂറിസം വകുപ്പ് കാര്യങ്ങളെ കൈകാര്യം ചെയ്യുന്നത്. പ്രളയാനന്തരം കേരളത്തെ തിരികെ കൊണ്ടു വരാനുള്ള തീവ്രശ്രമത്തിനായി സാമ്പത്തിക ഞെരുക്കത്തിനിടയിലും രണ്ടു മാസം കൊണ്ട് 11 കോടിയിൽ അധികം രൂപയാണ് കേരളത്തിന്റെ ടൂറിസം സങ്കേതങ്ങളുടെ വിപണനത്തിനായി സർക്കാർ, ദേശീയ അന്തർദേശീയ മാധ്യമങ്ങളിലും പ്രധാന സോഴ്സ് മാർക്കറ്റുകളിലും ചെലവാക്കിയത്.

ശബരിമല പ്രതിഷേധങ്ങളും ഹർത്താലുകളും ടൂറിസം മേഖലയെ കൂടുതൽ പ്രതിസന്ധിയിൽ ആക്കുന്നതിനും വിനോദസഞ്ചാര മേഖല ഇക്കാലയളവിൽ സാക്ഷ്യം വഹിച്ചു. മൂന്നാറും തേക്കടിയും അടക്കമുള്ള വിനോദസഞ്ചാര കേന്ദ്രങ്ങൾ അക്ഷരാർത്ഥത്തിൽ ആളൊഴിഞ്ഞ അവസ്ഥയിൽ ആണ്. ശബരിമല വിഷയത്തിലെ പ്രതിഷേധം ഡിസംബർ മുതൽ തുടങ്ങിയ പീക്ക് സീസണേയും വല്ലാതെ ബാധിക്കും എന്ന കാര്യത്തിൽ സംശയമില്ല.

ഇതിനിടയിൽ ആകെയുള്ള ആശ്വാസം ഉത്തരവാദിത്വ ടൂറിസം മേഖലയിലും ആയുർവ്വേദ അനുബന്ധ ടൂറിസം മേഖലയിലും വലിയ പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾ ഇല്ലാതെ പോകുന്ന അവസ്ഥയാണ്. അവിടെ ഇപ്പോഴും വിദേശ-സ്വദേശ ടൂറിസ്റ്റുകൾ കുറച്ചെങ്കിലും വരുന്നു.



പുത്തൻ പരിപ്രേക്ഷ്യം അത്യാവശ്യം

കേരള ടൂറിസം ഇനിയും ശക്തമായി മുന്നോട്ട് പോകണമെങ്കിൽ, നമുക്ക് ഒരു പുത്തൻ പരിപ്രേക്ഷ്യം ഉണ്ടായേ തീരൂ. കഴിഞ്ഞ 27 വർഷങ്ങളായി നാം അഭിമാനത്തോടെ കൊണ്ടു നടക്കുന്ന കേരള-ഗോഡ്സ് ഓൺ കൺട്രി എന്ന ബ്രാൻഡ് കാലപ്പഴക്കത്തിൽ ക്ഷീണിച്ചിട്ട് ഏതാനും വർഷങ്ങളായി. കഴിഞ്ഞ 20 വർഷത്തിൽ അധികമായി കേരള ടൂറിസം ബ്രാൻഡിന്റെ വിപണനം കൈകാര്യം ചെയ്യുന്ന ഏജൻസികൾ രണ്ടും (പരസ്യങ്ങൾ-സോഷ്യൽ മീഡിയ എന്നിവ കൈകാര്യം ചെയ്യുന്ന സ്റ്റാർക്ക് കമ്മ്യൂണിക്കേഷൻസും ഇന്റർനെറ്റ്-വിഷ്വൽ മീഡിയ എന്നിവ കൈകാര്യം ചെയ്യുന്ന ഇൻവിസ് മൾട്ടിമീഡിയയും) തങ്ങളാലാകുന്ന വിധത്തിൽ ബ്രാൻഡിനെ പിടിച്ചു നിർത്താൻ ശ്രമിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. ഇന്ന് ഈ രംഗത്ത് ഇന്ത്യയിലെ തന്നെ രണ്ടു മികച്ച ഏജൻസികൾ ആണ് ഇവ രണ്ടും എന്ന കാര്യത്തിലും സംശയമില്ല. തുടർച്ചയായി നമുക്കു കിട്ടുന്ന ദേശീയ-അന്തർദേശീയ അവാർഡുകൾ, പ്രത്യേകിച്ചും മാർക്കറ്റിംഗ് രംഗത്തു നേടുന്ന അവാർഡുകൾ അതിനുള്ള തെളിവുകൾ ആണ്. അപ്പോൾ യഥാർത്ഥ കാരണം മറ്റെന്തോ ആണെന്ന് വ്യക്തം.

ആയുർവ്വേദവും കെട്ടുവള്ളങ്ങളും

ഒന്നാമതായി കഴിഞ്ഞ മുപ്പതു വർഷങ്ങളായി കേരള ടൂറിസം ആശ്രയിക്കുന്ന രണ്ടു ടൂറിസം ഉൽപ്പന്നങ്ങൾ എന്നു പറയുന്നത് നമ്മുടെ കായലോരങ്ങളും ഇവിടുത്തെ കെട്ടുവള്ളങ്ങളും ആയുർവ്വേദ ടൂറിസവുമാണ്.

ആയുർവ്വേദ ടൂറിസം, നൂറ്റാണ്ടുകൾ കൊണ്ട് ഉരുത്തിരിഞ്ഞ നമ്മുടെ പാരമ്പര്യ ചികിത്സാ രീതിയായതിനാൽ യാതൊരു ക്ഷീണവും തട്ടാതെ പിടിച്ചു നിൽക്കുക മാത്രമല്ല, ദിനംപ്രതി വളർച്ച നേടുകയും ചെയ്യുന്ന മേഖലയാണ്. ആ മേഖലയിൽ ഓരോ വർഷവും പുതിയ തലങ്ങളിലേക്ക് കൊണ്ടു പോകാൻ ആ



രംഗത്തെ മികച്ച സംരംഭകർക്ക് ആകുന്നുണ്ട്. കഴിഞ്ഞ കുറേ വർഷങ്ങളായി വെൽനെസ്സ് ടൂറിസം രംഗത്തെ ദേശീയ ടൂറിസം അവാർഡ് കേരളത്തിനു കിട്ടുന്നതു തന്നെ ഇതിനൊരു മികച്ച തെളിവാണ്. ആഗോള സാമ്പത്തികമാന്ദ്യ കാലത്തും പ്രളയാനന്തര കേരളത്തിന്റെ ദയനീയ ചിത്രങ്ങൾക്കിടയിലും ആയുർവ്വേദ ടൂറിസം മികവ് തെളിയിക്കുന്നതിൽ നമുക്ക് തീർച്ചയായും അഭിമാനിക്കാം. അത് അരക്കിട്ടുറപ്പിക്കുന്ന മറ്റൊരു സംഗതി കൂടിയുണ്ട്. തനതായ നിലവാരം നിലനിർത്തുന്ന, അതിന്റെ നൈതികത ചോരാതെ സൂക്ഷിച്ചാൽ, ഏതൊരു ഉൽപ്പന്നത്തിനും ബ്രാൻഡുകൾക്കും ഏതു പ്രതികൂല കാലാവസ്ഥയിലും പിടിച്ചു നിൽക്കാനാകും എന്നത്.

എന്നാൽ കേരളത്തിന്റെ ടൂറിസം രംഗത്തിന്റെ വളർച്ചയ്ക്കൊപ്പം ഉരുത്തിരിഞ്ഞു വന്ന കായൽ ടൂറിസം മേഖലയും കെട്ടുവള്ളവും അതിന്റെ നൈതികതയും ആത്മാവും ചോർത്തിക്കളഞ്ഞു കൊണ്ടും പ്രകൃതിയെ പൂർണ്ണമായി അവഗണിച്ചും സേവന മികവിനു പുല്ലുവില കൽപ്പിച്ചു കൊണ്ട് ലാഭക്കൊതി മാത്രം കച്ചവടമന്ത്രം ആക്കിയപ്പോൾ ഒരു കാലത്തു തകർന്നടിഞ്ഞ കൂട്ടനാടൻ സാമ്പത്തിക-സാമൂഹിക രംഗത്തെ തിരിച്ചു കൊണ്ട് വരാനും പിടിച്ചു നിർത്താനും വികസനക്കുതിപ്പിന് കാരണഭൂതവുമായ ഹൗസ്ബോട്ട് മേഖലയെ യാതൊരു ആസൂത്രണവും ദീർഘ വീക്ഷണവുമില്ലാതെ തകർത്തതിന്റെ പരിണിത ഫലമാണ് ഇപ്പോൾ അനുഭവിച്ചു കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നത്.

1992 മെയ് മാസത്തിൽ ആണ് തിരുവനന്തപുരത്തെ ടൂർ ഇന്ത്യ എന്ന സ്ഥാപനത്തിന്റെ ഉടമയായ അന്തരിച്ച ബാബു വർഗീസ് എന്ന വ്യക്തി ആദ്യമായി ഹൗസ്ബോട്ട് എന്ന ആശയം കരുനാഗപ്പള്ളിക്കടുത്ത് ആദിനാട് ആലുംകടവ് എന്ന സ്ഥലത്ത് അവതരിപ്പിച്ചത്. 'സുമംഗലി' എന്ന പേരിൽ അദ്ദേഹം ഒരു ക്രൂയിംഗ്ബോട്ട് നീറ്റിലിറക്കി. ഇന്നും കേരളത്തിലെ ഏറ്റവും നല്ല കായൽക്കാഴ്ചകളിൽ



ഒന്ന് പ്രദാനം ചെയ്യുന്നത്, ആലുംകടവ്-ആയിരം തെങ്ങി മേഖലയിൽ ആണെന്ന് നിസ്സംശയം പറയാം.

ഒരു കാലത്തു കേരളത്തിലെ നദികളിലും കായലുകളിലും ചരക്കു കടത്താൻ ഉപയോഗിച്ചിരുന്ന പ്രധാന മാർഗ്ഗമായിരുന്നു കെട്ടുവള്ളങ്ങൾ. ആയിരക്കണക്കിനു ചെറുതും വലുതുമായ കെട്ടുവള്ളങ്ങൾ ആണ് അന്ന് നമ്മുടെ ജലാശയങ്ങളിലൂടെ തുഴയെറിഞ്ഞു കടന്നു പോയിരുന്നത്. അക്കാലത്തെ പല മലയാള സിനിമകളിലും കെട്ടു വള്ളങ്ങളിലെ ജീവിതം ഒരു നേർക്കാഴ്ചയായിരുന്നു.

എന്നാൽ, ആധുനികതയുടെ കടന്നു കയറ്റം റോഡുകളും റെയിൽവേ ലൈനുകളും കേരളം മുഴുവൻ വികസിച്ചതും ചരക്കു തീവണ്ടികളും ലോറികളും അടക്കമുള്ള അതിവേഗ ചരക്കുനീക്ക മാർഗ്ഗങ്ങളും ഒരു മേഖലയെ പടിയടച്ചു പിണ്ഡം വെയ്ക്കുന്ന അവസ്ഥയിൽ കൊണ്ടെത്തിച്ചു. കെട്ടുവള്ളങ്ങളുടെ നിർമ്മാണം നടത്തിയിരുന്നവരും 'വളവര' എന്നറിയപ്പെടുന്ന മേൽക്കൂര നിർമ്മിച്ചിരുന്നവരും വള്ളങ്ങൾ തുഴഞ്ഞിരുന്നവരും തൊഴിൽരഹിതരായി. പലരും ജീവിതംതന്നെ വഴിമുട്ടിയ അവസ്ഥയിൽ ആയി. 1990-കളുടെ ആദ്യം ബാബു വർഗീസ് ഉപയോഗ്യമായ കെട്ടുവള്ളങ്ങൾ തേടി തെക്കൻ കേരളം മുഴുവൻ അലഞ്ഞു. ഒരു കാലത്തു ആയിരക്കണക്കിന് കെട്ടു വള്ളങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്ന കേരളത്തിൽ അപ്പോൾ ആകെ കണ്ടെത്താനായത് 30-ൽ താഴെ മാത്രം എണ്ണമായിരുന്നു എന്നറിയുമ്പോഴാണ് കാര്യത്തിന്റെ ഗൗരവം പിടികിട്ടുന്നത്.

അതിൽത്തന്നെ ആറെണ്ണം മാത്രമായിരുന്നു സാമാന്യം വലുതും വലിയ കാലപ്പഴക്കം ഇല്ലാതിരുന്നതും. ആ ആറ് വള്ളങ്ങളും പിൻക്കാലത്ത് ഇപ്പോഴത്തെ കെട്ടുവള്ളങ്ങളുടെ ആധുനിക രൂപമായി പരിണമിച്ചു. കെട്ടു വള്ളത്തിന്റെ ആദ്യത്തെ യാത്രയിൽ ആലുംകടവിൽ നിന്നും വള്ളിക്കാവ് വഴി, കായംകുളത്തെ ആയിരം കായൽ വരെ യാത്ര ചെയ്യാൻ ഭാഗ്യമുണ്ടായ ഈ ലേഖകൻ പിന്നീടുള്ള കാൽനൂറ്റാണ്ടും ഈ മേഖലയുടെ കുതിപ്പും കിതപ്പും നേരിൽ കാണുന്നു.



ആലുങ്കടവിന്റെ നഷ്ടം ആലപ്പുഴയുടെ സൗഭാഗ്യം

ഇന്ന് കേരളത്തിലെ കായൽ ടൂറിസത്തിന്റേയും കെട്ടുവള്ളങ്ങളുടേയും കേന്ദ്രം ആലപ്പുഴയാണ്. കുറച്ചു കുമരകം, വൈക്കം ഭാഗങ്ങളിലും ഉണ്ട്. യഥാർത്ഥത്തിൽ ആലുങ്കടവ് എന്ന കരുനാഗപ്പള്ളിക്കടുത്ത ഗ്രാമത്തിന്റെ നഷ്ടമാണ് ആലപ്പുഴയുടെ ലാഭമായി മാറിയതെന്ന് മറക്കരുത്. 1993 അവസാനം ബെഡ്റൂമുകളോട് കൂടിയ കേരളത്തിലെ ആദ്യ ഹൗസ് ബോട്ട്-‘സുന്ദരി’ എന്ന പേരിൽ ബാബു വർഗീസ് അവതരിപ്പിച്ചതോടെ കേരളത്തിലെ കായലോര ടൂറിസത്തിന്റെ പുതിയ യുഗം ആരംഭിക്കുകയായിരുന്നു.

1992 മുതൽ 1994 വരെ ഇറങ്ങിയ ആറ് കെട്ടുവള്ളങ്ങളും ഓടിയിരുന്നതും അവയുടെ കേന്ദ്രീകൃത മേഖലയും ആലുങ്കടവ് ആയിരുന്നു. അന്ന് വെറും നാല് കമ്പനികൾ മാത്രമാണ് ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നത്. ടൂർ ഇന്ത്യ, കാസിനോ ഗ്രൂപ്പ്, ഗ്രേറ്റ് ഇന്ത്യ ടൂർ കമ്പനി, ന്യൂഡൽഹി ആസ്ഥാനമായ ഫാർ ഹൊറൈസൺ എന്നിവ. എന്നാൽ, ഇന്ന് ഏകദേശം 1200 കെട്ടുവള്ളങ്ങൾ ആലപ്പുഴ-കുമരകം മേഖലയിൽ മാത്രമായി ഓടുന്നു.

1990-കൾ കേരളത്തിലെ (കു)പ്രസിദ്ധമായ സംഘടിത തൊഴിലാളി സമരങ്ങളുടേയും മേൽക്കോയ്മകളുടേയും കാലഘട്ടമായിരുന്നു. കർഷകത്തൊഴിലാളി സമരം കാരണം കൂട്ടനാട്ടിലെ കാർഷിക മേഖല തകർന്ന് കുത്തുപാള എടുത്തിരിക്കുന്ന സമയം. ആലപ്പുഴയിലെയും കൊല്ലത്തെയും കയർ-കശുവണ്ടി തൊഴിലാളികളുടെ കാര്യവും ഏകദേശം അങ്ങനെ തന്നെ. അപ്പോഴാണ് ബാബു വർഗീസ് കെട്ടുവള്ളം എന്ന നൂതന ആശയം അവതരിപ്പിക്കുന്നത്. അത് ആലുങ്കടവ് എന്ന ഗ്രാമത്തിന്റെ ഉയിർത്തെഴുന്നേൽപ്പിന്റെ കഥയായിരുന്നു. ആലുങ്കടവിൽ കെട്ടുവള്ളങ്ങളുടെ നിർമ്മാണം ആരംഭിച്ചു. ‘വളവർ’ ഉണ്ടാക്കാൻ പരിചയസമ്പന്നരായ ആളുകളെ ചേർത്തല നിന്നു വരെ ആ ഗ്രാമത്തിൽ എത്തിക്കാൻ ബാബു വർഗീസ് തയ്യാറായി. ആദ്യത്തെ രണ്ടു



സീസൺ നന്നായിത്തന്നെ ആ ഗ്രാമം ആഘോഷിച്ചു. കേന്ദ്ര സർക്കാർ കേരളത്തിന് ആദ്യമായി ഒരു കേന്ദ്ര പദ്ധതി ടൂറിസം മേഖലയിൽ അനുവദിച്ചത് ആലുങ്കടവിൽ ആയിരുന്നു എന്നറിയുമ്പോഴാണ് അതിന്റെ പ്രാധാന്യം മനസ്സിലാവുക. ദേശീയ ജലപാതയുടെ അടിസ്ഥാന വികസന പദ്ധതിയുടെ ഭാഗമായി ആലുങ്കടവിൽ ഒരു കായലോര വിശ്രമകേന്ദ്രത്തിന് ഫണ്ട് അനുവദിച്ചു. യുദ്ധകാലാടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ കേരളം ടൂറിസം വകുപ്പ് അതിന്റെ പണി പൂർത്തിയാക്കി. കേരളത്തിലെ കായൽ ടൂറിസം ഇനി ആലുങ്കടവ് കേന്ദ്രീകരിച്ചു പ്രവർത്തിക്കുമെന്ന് അന്നത്തെ മുഖ്യമന്ത്രി അത് ഉദ്ഘാടനം ചെയ്തു കൊണ്ട് പ്രസംഗിച്ചു.

എന്നാൽ, കാര്യങ്ങൾ മാറിമറിയാൻ അധികകാലം വേണ്ടി വന്നില്ല. 1994 ടൂറിസം സീസണിന്റെ തുടക്കത്തിൽ കുലി കൂടുതൽ ആവശ്യപ്പെട്ടുകൊണ്ട് ആലുങ്കടവ് മേഖലയിലെ തൊഴിലാളികൾ നടത്തിയ സമരം മൂലം കെട്ടുവള്ളങ്ങളുടെ യാത്ര രണ്ടാഴ്ച തടസ്സപ്പെട്ടു, മുൻകൂർ ബുക്ക് ചെയ്തു കേരളം കാണാനെത്തിയ സഞ്ചാരികൾ കെട്ടുവള്ളത്തിൽ കയറാനാകാതെ നിരാശരായി മടങ്ങാൻ തുടങ്ങി. തൊഴിലാളി നേതാക്കളുമായി നടത്തിയ ചർച്ചകൾ പരാജയപ്പെട്ടു. ഒടുവിൽ അതുവരെ തങ്ങൾ കഷ്ടപ്പെട്ടതും നിക്ഷേപവും എല്ലാം വെള്ളത്തിൽ ആവും എന്ന ദയനീയസ്ഥിതിയിൽ നിവൃത്തിയില്ലാതെ ബാബു വർഗീസ് മറ്റുള്ളവരുമായി ആലോചിച്ചു ഒറ്റരാത്രി കൊണ്ട് തങ്ങളുടെ ആസ്ഥാനം ആലപ്പുഴയിലെ പുനമട കായലിലേക്ക് മാറ്റാൻ തീരുമാനിച്ചു. പദ്ധതി നടപ്പിലാക്കി. ഒരു സംഘടിത തൊഴിലാളി സമരം കേരളത്തിൽ ഉണ്ടാക്കിയ മാറ്റം പഠിക്കണമെങ്കിൽ ഈ ഒരൊറ്റ സമരചരിത്രം പഠിച്ചാൽ മതി. 1994 മുതൽ ഇന്നു വരെയുള്ള ആലപ്പുഴയുടേയും കുമരകുത്തിന്റേയും ടൂറിസം രംഗത്തെ വികസനവും കൊല്ലത്തേയും ആലുങ്കടവ് മേഖലയുടേയും തളർച്ചയും നോക്കിയാൽ മതി. എല്ലാത്തിനും മുകസാക്ഷിയായി ആലുങ്കടവിലെ കായലോര വിശ്രമകേന്ദ്രം ഒരു നോക്കുകുത്തിയായി ഇന്നും അവിടെ അവശേഷിക്കുന്നു.



ആദ്യകാലം മുതൽ കേരളത്തിന്റെ നെല്ലറയായ കൂട്ടനാട്ടിലെ കർഷകരുടെ സ്ഥിതി, 1980-1990 കാലയളവിൽ വല്ലാത്ത അനിശ്ചിതാവസ്ഥയിൽ ആയിരുന്നു. കർഷിക മേഖല തകർന്നു. നിരന്തരം തൊഴിലാളി സമരങ്ങൾ, ചുരുക്കം ചില ആത്മഹത്യകൾക്ക് വരെ അക്കാലത്ത് കൂട്ടനാട് സാക്ഷ്യം വഹിക്കേണ്ടിവന്ന കാലം. എന്തു ചെയ്യണമെന്നറിയാതെ ഒരു സമൂഹം മുഴുവൻ നിൽക്കുമ്പോഴാണ് ബാബു വർഗീസും കൂട്ടരും ആലപ്പുഴ കെട്ടുവള്ളങ്ങളുടെ സ്ഥിര താവളമാക്കാൻ തീരുമാനിക്കുന്നത്.

പുന്നമട കായലിലേയും വേമ്പനാട് കായലിലേയും കെട്ടുവള്ളങ്ങളുടെ യാത്രകൾ കണ്ട ആലപ്പുഴയിലെ ഇടത്തരം, സമ്പന്ന കുടുംബങ്ങളിലെ ചിലർ ഈ മേഖലയിലേക്ക് ഇറങ്ങി. അതുവരെ മറ്റ് സ്ഥലങ്ങളിൽനിന്നും വന്ന് ഹൗസ് ബോട്ട് ബിസിനസ്സ് ചെയ്തിരുന്നവരെക്കാൾ സ്വദേശി വ്യവസായികൾക്ക് പതുക്കെ മേൽക്കൈ വന്നു. അതുവരെ തൊഴിലില്ലാതെ നടന്നിരുന്ന കർഷക തൊഴിലാളികളും മറ്റും ഈ മേഖലയിലേക്ക് കൂടുമാറി. തനി കേരളം ഊണും വിഭവങ്ങളും കൂട്ടനാടൻ കരിമീനും വെള്ളപ്പുവും താരാവ് കറിയും എല്ലാം സഞ്ചാരികളുടെ മനം കവർന്നു. അതുവരെ തകർന്നുതരിപ്പണമായ കൂട്ടനാടൻ മേഖലയുടെ സാമ്പത്തിക ഉയർച്ചയ്ക്ക് അധികകാലം വേണ്ടിവന്നില്ല. കഴിഞ്ഞ 25 വർഷങ്ങൾ ആലപ്പുഴയുടെ ഈ രംഗത്തെ കുതിച്ചുചാട്ടമാണ് കേരളം കണ്ടത്. ഹൗസ് ബോട്ട് നിർമ്മാണമേഖല തഴച്ചുവളർന്നു. 1992-ൽ വെറും 30-ൽ താഴെ വള്ളങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്ന കേരളത്തിൽ പഴയ പ്രൗഢിയെ ഓർമ്മിപ്പിക്കുന്ന വിധത്തിൽ ആയിരത്തിലധികം കെട്ടുവള്ളങ്ങൾ കായൽപ്പുരപ്പുകളെ പുളകം കൊള്ളിച്ചു യാത്ര തുടങ്ങി.

നിർഭാഗ്യവശാൽ ആ യാത്രയാണ് ഇപ്പോൾ മറ്റൊരു പ്രതിസന്ധിഘട്ടത്തിൽ എത്തി നിൽക്കുന്നത്. ഒരിക്കൽ ആലുംകടവിന്റെ നഷ്ടം ആലപ്പുഴയുടെ സൗഭാഗ്യമായെങ്കിൽ ഇന്നത് നഷ്ടപ്പെടുന്ന അവസ്ഥയിൽ എത്തിനിൽക്കുന്നു.



പൊന്മുട്ടയിടുന്ന താരാവിനെ കൊല്ലുന്ന അവസ്ഥ

ആദ്യകാലത്ത് വെറും ആറോ ഏഴോ ലക്ഷം ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നെങ്കിൽ നീറ്റിൽ ഇറക്കുമായിരുന്ന കെട്ടുവള്ളത്തിന്റെ ഇന്നത്തെ ചെലവ് ഒരു കോടിയിൽ അധികമാണ്. ആദ്യകാലങ്ങളിൽ കായലിന്റെ കുളിരും കുട്ടനാടിന്റെ ഭംഗിയും ആസ്വദിക്കാൻ വളരെ വായുസഞ്ചാരമുള്ള നിർമ്മിതിയിൽ ആണ് വള്ളങ്ങൾ ഇറക്കിയിരുന്നതെങ്കിൽ, പിന്നീട് ഓളപ്പുരപ്പുകളിലെ ആഡംബരത്തിന്റെ വേദികളായി ആ മേഖലയെ പലരും ചെന്ന് മാറ്റിയെടുത്തു. ഇന്ന് എയർകണ്ടീഷൻ, സിമിന്റ് പൂൾ, സ്പാ, കോൺഫറൻസ് ഹാൾ ഒക്കെയായി പല വലുപ്പത്തിലും രൂപത്തിലും കെട്ടുവള്ളങ്ങൾ ഇറക്കിത്തുടങ്ങി.

കഴിഞ്ഞ കാൽനൂറ്റാണ്ടുകൊണ്ട് ഈ മേഖലയിലെ എല്ലാത്തിനും വില കയറി. കുലി കൂടുതൽ ആയി. ഡീസലിന്റേയും പെട്രോളിന്റേയും ഭക്ഷ്യ വസ്തുക്കളുടേയും വില താങ്ങാവുന്നതിൽ അധികമായി. പക്ഷേ, അന്നും ഇന്നും വലിയ മാറ്റമില്ലാതെ തുടരുന്ന ഒന്നു മാത്രം. ഹൗസ് ബോട്ടുകളുടെ നിരക്ക്. 25 വർഷം മുൻപ് ബാബു വർഗീസ് ഒരു ദിവസത്തെ കായൽ യാത്രയ്ക്ക് ഭക്ഷണമടക്കം ഈടാക്കിയിരുന്നത് 5000 രൂപ ആയിരുന്നെങ്കിൽ ഇന്ന് ചില സമയങ്ങളിൽ 2000 രൂപയ്ക്കു വരെ ഹൗസ് ബോട്ടുകൾ ലഭ്യമാവുന്ന അവസ്ഥയിലേക്ക് ഈ മേഖല അധഃപതിച്ചു. അതോടൊപ്പം ലോകനിലവാരം പുലർത്തിയിരുന്ന, സഞ്ചാരികൾക്ക് ജീവിതത്തിൽ ഒരിക്കലും മറക്കാനാവാത്ത സഞ്ചാര അനുഭവം പ്രദാനം ചെയ്തിരുന്ന മേഖല ഇന്ന് സഞ്ചാരികൾ പതുക്കെ കയ്യൊഴിയുന്ന അവസ്ഥയിൽ എത്തി. എല്ലാത്തിനും കാരണം ആ മേഖലയിലുള്ളവർ തന്നെ. ഒപ്പം സർക്കാർ സംവിധാനങ്ങളുടെ പിടിപ്പുകേടും.

നമ്മുടെ കായലുകളുടെ പരിസ്ഥിതിയെപ്പറ്റിയോ അതിനു താങ്ങാവുന്ന ശേഷിയെപ്പറ്റിയോ ആലോചിക്കാതെ ആർക്കും കെട്ടുവള്ളങ്ങൾ ഇറക്കാൻ അനുമതി കൊടുക്കുന്ന അവസ്ഥ. എന്നാൽ, വള്ളങ്ങൾ ഇറക്കിയാലോ അതിനു



കൃത്യമായ ലൈസൻസ് കൊടുക്കാൻ അതിന് ഉത്തരവാദിത്വമുള്ള സംസ്ഥാന പോർട്ട് വകുപ്പിനു സമയമില്ല, സാവകാശമില്ല, ഉത്തരവാദിത്വമില്ല. ഫലമോ അതിനുശേഷം ടൂറിസം വകുപ്പ് നൽകുന്ന ക്ലാസിഫിക്കേഷൻ നൽകാൻ പറ്റുന്നില്ല. അതിന്റെ സർവ്വീസ് നിലവാരമോ ജീവനക്കാരുടെ പരശീലനമോ അതിൽ സഞ്ചരിക്കുന്ന വിദേശികളും സ്വദേശികളും ആയ സഞ്ചാരികളുടെ സുരക്ഷപോലും ഇപ്പോൾ തുലാസിൽ ആണെന്ന് പറയുന്നതാകും ശരി. സംസ്ഥാനത്തെ മൂന്ന് (കുറച്ചുകാലം നാല്) പ്രഗത്ഭരായ മന്ത്രിമാർ നേരിട്ട് ഇടപെടുന്ന, അവരവരുടെ മണ്ഡലങ്ങൾ ഉൾക്കൊള്ളുന്ന ഒരു മേഖല ഇങ്ങനെ നാമനില്പാത്ത, കയറുരിവിട്ട അവസ്ഥയിൽ ആകുന്നത് കേരളത്തിനു മൊത്തം നാണക്കേടാണെന്നു പറയാതെ വയ്യ.

കേരളത്തിലെ ടൂറിസം മേഖല രക്ഷപ്പെടണമെങ്കിൽ, കൂട്ടനാടിന്റെ സാമൂഹിക സാമ്പത്തിക പരിസ്ഥിതിമേഖലയെ സംരക്ഷിക്കുകയും പിടിച്ചു നിർത്തുകയും ചെയ്യണമെങ്കിൽ അടിയന്തരമായി സർക്കാർ കെട്ടുവള്ളമേഖലയിൽ ഇടപെടുക തന്നെ വേണം. ലൈസൻസ് ഇല്ലാത്ത, അവശ്യം വേണ്ട സുരക്ഷയും ഗുണനിലവാരവും ഇല്ലാത്ത ഒറ്റ ബോട്ടും ഇനി കേരളത്തിലെ കായൽപ്പുറപ്പുകളിൽ ഓടില്ല എന്ന് നിയമം മൂലം ഉറപ്പുവരുത്തണം. ലൈസൻസ് കിട്ടിയ ഓരോ വള്ളവും ഓടിക്കാനും അതിലെ സഞ്ചാരികളെ പരിചരിക്കാനും കൃത്യമായ പരിശീലനം കിട്ടിയ ജീവനക്കാർ മാത്രമേ നിയമിക്കപ്പെടുന്നുള്ളൂ എന്ന് ഉറപ്പുവരുത്തണം.

എല്ലാ വള്ളങ്ങളേയും ജി.പി.എസ്., ജീവൻരക്ഷാ (ഫയർ & സേഫ്റ്റി) ഉപകരണങ്ങൾ, തുടങ്ങിയവ അടക്കം സജ്ജമാക്കിയതാണെന്നും ഒരു ജീവനക്കാരൻപോലും ഡ്യൂട്ടി സമയത്ത് മദ്യപിക്കുകയോ സഞ്ചാരികളോട് അപമര്യാദയായി പെരുമാറുന്നില്ല എന്നും ഉറപ്പുവരുത്തണം. ഓരോ ബോട്ടുകളുടേയും സഞ്ചാരപാത, സഞ്ചാരികളുടെ പേര് വിവരങ്ങൾ, അടിയന്തര സാഹചര്യങ്ങളിൽ ബന്ധപ്പെടേണ്ടവരുടെ വിവരങ്ങൾ, കൂട്ടികളുമായി



യാത്രചെയ്യുമ്പോൾ എടുക്കേണ്ട മുൻകരുതലുകൾ, അവ സഞ്ചാരികളെ ബോധവാന്മാരാക്കാനുള്ള വിവിധ ഭാഷകളിൽ ഉള്ള വിവരണങ്ങൾ ഒക്കെ ഓരോ ബോട്ടിലും നിർബന്ധമായും ഉണ്ടായിരിക്കണം.

ടൂറിസം വകുപ്പ് ക്ലാസിഫിക്കേഷൻ കഴിഞ്ഞ വള്ളങ്ങളെ തിരിച്ചറിയാൻ വാഹനങ്ങൾക്ക് ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്ന പോലത്തെ സുരക്ഷിത നമ്പർ പ്ലേറ്റുകൾ വള്ളത്തിന്റെ രണ്ടു വശങ്ങളിലും മൂന്നിലും പിന്നിലും നിർബന്ധമായും സ്ഥാപിക്കണം. വളവരയുടെ മുകളിലായി ഓരോ സ്റ്റാർ ക്ലാസിഫിക്കേഷനും അനുസരിച്ചുള്ള കൊടികൾ കെട്ടണം (ഇവ രണ്ടും ഡിസൈൻപോലും കഴിഞ്ഞ് ടൂറിസം വകുപ്പിൽ തയ്യാറായി കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ട് 10 വർഷത്തിൽ അധികമായി എന്നുകൂടി ഓർക്കുക) ആലപ്പുഴ ബസ് സ്റ്റാൻഡ്, റെയിൽവേ സ്റ്റേഷൻ, നെഹ്റു ട്രോഫി ഫിനിഷിങ് പോയിന്റ്, പള്ളാത്തുരുത്തി, വൈക്കം, കുമരകം തുടങ്ങി വള്ളങ്ങളുടെ പ്രധാന കേന്ദ്രങ്ങളിൽ എല്ലാം സഞ്ചാരികൾക്കും കാണാവുന്ന വിധത്തിൽ വലിയ ബോർഡുകൾ സ്ഥാപിച്ചു സർക്കാർ അംഗീകൃത വള്ളങ്ങൾ ഏതാണെന്ന് അറിയിക്കണം. ഈ രംഗത്തെ കള്ളനാണയങ്ങൾ യുദ്ധകാലാടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ ഇല്ലാതാവണം. എന്നാൽ മാത്രമേ നമുക്ക് കായൽ ടൂറിസം മേഖലയിൽ ഒരു ഉയിർത്തെഴുന്നേൽപ്പ് ഉണ്ടാവുകയുള്ളൂ. അത്തരമൊരു സാഹചര്യത്തിൽ മാത്രമേ ആ മേഖലയ്ക്ക് സുസ്ഥിരമായ നിലനിൽപ്പ് സാധ്യമാവുകയുള്ളൂ. എങ്കിൽ മാത്രമേ ഒരു കാലത്ത് രണ്ടും മൂന്നും രാത്രികൾ ചെലവഴിക്കാൻ തയ്യാറായിരുന്ന സഞ്ചാരികൾ ഇപ്പോൾ പകൽയാത്ര കഴിഞ്ഞു സ്വയം സുരക്ഷയെ കരുതി റിസോർട്ടുകളിലേക്ക് കൂടിയേറുന്നത് ഒഴിവാക്കാനാവുകയുള്ളൂ. അല്ലെങ്കിൽ ഭാവിയിൽ മറ്റൊരു ആലുംകടവ് ആയി മാറാൻ ആലപ്പുഴയ്ക്കും അധികസമയം വേണ്ട.

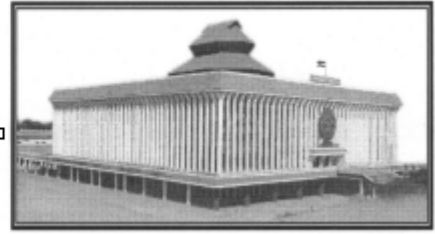
ഇതോടൊപ്പം കേരളത്തിൽ ടൂറിസം ഇനിയും ഉയർത്തെഴുന്നേൽക്കണമെങ്കിൽ അടിയന്തരമായി ചില കാര്യങ്ങൾ സർക്കാരും ടൂറിസം വ്യവസായ മേഖലയും കൂട്ടായി ചെയ്യണം.



ആഭ്യന്തര സഞ്ചാരികളുടെ കൊഴിഞ്ഞുപോക്ക്

മഹാപ്രളയത്തിനുശേഷം ഇപ്പോൾ കേരളം ഉത്തരേന്ത്യൻ സഞ്ചാരികളുടെ പട്ടികയിൽ സ്ഥാനം പിടിച്ചിട്ടില്ല എന്നതാണ് വാസ്തവം. 2015 വരെ ആഭ്യന്തര സഞ്ചാരികളുടെ കണക്കെടുത്താൽ 75.75 ശതമാനവും മലയാളികളായിരുന്നു. എന്നാൽ, അടുത്തിടെ പുറത്തിറക്കിയ 2017-ലെ കണക്കനുസരിച്ച് ഇത് 63 ശതമാനമായി കുറയുകയും കേരളത്തിനു പുറത്തുനിന്നും ഇവിടെ എത്തുന്ന സഞ്ചാരികളിൽ ഒന്നാം സ്ഥാനം തമിഴ്നാട് (2015-ൽ 8.02 ശതമാനവും 2017-ൽ ഒൻപത് ശതമാനവും) രണ്ടാം സ്ഥാനം കർണ്ണാടകത്തിനും (2015-ൽ 4.61 ശതമാനവും 2017-ൽ ആറ് ശതമാനവും) ആണ്. മൂന്നാം സ്ഥാനത്തുള്ള മഹാരാഷ്ട്രയുടെ സംഭാവന 2015-ൽ 2.87 ശതമാനവും 2017-ൽ നാല് ശതമാനവും. നാലാമതായി ആന്ധ്രപ്രദേശ് (2015-ലെ 1.83 ശതമാനത്തിൽ നിന്നും രണ്ട് ശതമാനമായി ഉയർന്നു). അതായത് നമ്മുടെ ആഭ്യന്തര സഞ്ചാരികളിൽ 2015 വരെ 25 ശതമാനം മാത്രമായിരുന്നു കേരളത്തിനു പുറത്തുനിന്നും വന്നിരുന്നതെങ്കിൽ, 2017-ലെ കണക്കെടുക്കുമ്പോഴും ചെറിയ വർദ്ധനയിലൂടെ അത് 37 ശതമാനം മാത്രമേ ആകുന്നുള്ളൂ. അതിൽത്തന്നെ 18 ശതമാനം ദക്ഷിണേന്ത്യയിൽ നിന്നാണ്. ബാക്കിയുള്ള 18.82 ശതമാനം മാത്രം ആണ് ഉത്തരേന്ത്യയിൽ നിന്നും വരുന്നത്. മഹാരാഷ്ട്ര (നാല് ശതമാനം), ഗുജറാത്ത്, ഡൽഹി, പശ്ചിമബംഗാൾ, ഉത്തർപ്രദേശ് എന്നിവിടങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നും ഒരു ശതമാനം എന്നിവയാണ് നമ്മുടെ മുഖ്യ സ്രോതസ്സുകൾ.

ഇനിയുള്ള കുറച്ചു മാസങ്ങൾ നമ്മുടെ ആഭ്യന്തര വിപണനതന്ത്രങ്ങൾ തമിഴ്നാട്, കർണ്ണാടകം, തെലങ്കാന, മഹാരാഷ്ട്ര, ഗുജറാത്ത് സംസ്ഥാനങ്ങളെ കേന്ദ്രീകരിച്ചായിരിക്കണം. കാരണം അവിടെ നിന്നുള്ള സഞ്ചാരികൾ കൂടുതലായി എത്തിയാലെ മൂന്നാർ, തേക്കടി, കുമരകം, വയനാട് എന്നീ പ്രധാന കേന്ദ്രങ്ങളെ പഴയ സ്ഥിതിയിലേക്ക് കൊണ്ടു വരുകയുള്ളൂ. ഇപ്പോൾ കേരള ടൂറിസം നടത്തുന്ന



ബി 2 ബി പ്രചാരണങ്ങൾ കുറച്ചു കൊണ്ട് സഞ്ചാരികളിൽ നേരിട്ട് എത്താൻ പറ്റുന്ന ബി 2 സി വിപണനത്തിൽ കേന്ദ്രീകൃതമാക്കണം. ഈ സംസ്ഥാനങ്ങളിൽ മിനി കേരള ട്രാവൽ മാർട്ടുകളും കേരള ടൂറിസം ഫെസ്റ്റിവലുകളും സംഘടിപ്പിക്കണം. എക്സിബിഷൻ, ഫുഡ് ഫെസ്റ്റിവൽ, കൾച്ചറൽ പെർഫോമൻസ് എല്ലാം ഉൾപ്പെടുത്തിയുള്ള വിപുലമായ പ്രചാരണപരിപാടികൾ നടത്തി സഞ്ചാരികളെ നേരിൽ ആകർഷിക്കാൻ പറ്റുന്ന തരത്തിൽ പരസ്യ പ്രചാരണമാർഗ്ഗങ്ങളും തേടണം.

ദക്ഷിൺ ടൂറിസം സർക്യൂട്ടും കൂട്ടായ വിപണനവും

കേരള ടൂറിസത്തിന്റെ തുടക്ക കാലത്ത് അന്നത്തെ മുഖ്യമന്ത്രി ഇ.കെ.നായനാറും ടൂറിസം വകുപ്പ് മന്ത്രിയായിരുന്ന പി.എസ്. ശ്രീനിവാസനും മുൻകൈ എടുത്ത് 1989 ജനുവരി ഒൻപതിന് കോവളത്തെ ഐ.ടി.ഡി.സി. അശോകഹോട്ടലിൽ വെച്ച് ദക്ഷിണേന്ത്യൻ സംസ്ഥാനങ്ങളിലെ ടൂറിസം മന്ത്രിമാരുടെ ഒരു സമ്മേളനം വിളിച്ചുചേർക്കുകയുണ്ടായി. അതിന്റെ 30-ാം വാർഷിക വേളയിലും അന്നെടുത്ത ചില തീരുമാനങ്ങൾക്ക് പ്രസക്തിയേറുന്ന സമയമാണ് ഇത്. ഇന്ത്യ സന്ദർശിക്കാൻ വരുന്ന വിദേശ സഞ്ചാരികളിൽ 20 ശതമാനത്തിൽ താഴെ മാത്രമാണ് വീണ്ടും ഇന്ത്യ കാണാൻ വരുന്നവർ. മറ്റുള്ളവരിൽത്തന്നെ ബഹുഭൂരിപക്ഷം പേരും മൂന്നോ അതിലധികമോ സംസ്ഥാനങ്ങൾ ഒരു വർഷത്തെ ട്രാവൽ പ്ലാനിൽ ഉൾപ്പെടുത്താൻ താല്പര്യപ്പെടുന്നവരാണ്. ഒന്നുകിൽ പ്രസിദ്ധമായ ഗോൾഡൻ ട്രയാംഗിൾ എന്നറിയപ്പെടുന്ന ഡൽഹി-ആഗ്ര-ജയ്പൂർ സർക്യൂട്ട് അല്ലെങ്കിൽ കേരളം, തമിഴ്നാട്, കർണാടകം ഉൾപ്പെടുന്ന സർക്യൂട്ട്; അല്ലെങ്കിൽ ബീഹാർ, ബംഗാൾ ഒക്കെ ഉൾപ്പെടുന്ന ബുദ്ധിസ്റ്റ് സർക്യൂട്ട് എന്നിങ്ങനെയാണ് സഞ്ചാരികളുടെ യാത്രാമാർഗ്ഗം.

കോവളം സമ്മേളനത്തിൽ അന്നത്തെ വലിയ നാല് സംസ്ഥാനങ്ങളും പോണ്ടിച്ചേരി, ലക്ഷദ്വീപ് എന്നീ യൂണിയൻ ടെറിട്ടറികളും ചേർന്ന് 'ദക്ഷിൺ' എന്ന പേരിൽ അന്താരാഷ്ട്ര മാർക്കറ്റിൽ ഒത്തൊരുമിച്ചു വിപണനം നടത്താനുള്ള



സാധ്യതകൾ ആരാഞ്ഞിരുന്നു. അത് ഏകദേശം ലക്ഷ്യപ്രാപ്തിയിൽ എത്തിനിൽക്കുന്ന സമയത്ത് കേരളത്തിൽ സർക്കാർ അധികാരമാറ്റം വരികയും അതുവരെ ചെയ്ത പണികളെല്ലാം സർക്കാർ നൂലാമാലകളിൽ കുടുങ്ങി ഇല്ലാതാവുകയും ചെയ്തു. പിന്നീട് കേരളം ഒറ്റയ്ക്കുള്ള പരസ്യ പ്രചാരണത്തിലൂടെ വലിയ തോതിൽ വളർച്ച നേടി. ഇതിന്റെ ഗുണഫലങ്ങൾ തമിഴ്നാടും കർണാടകവും ശരിക്കും അനുഭവിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു എന്ന് കാണാതിരുന്നുകൂടാ. എന്നാൽ കഴിഞ്ഞ 10 വർഷത്തോളമായി ഓരോ സംസ്ഥാനങ്ങളും നമ്മുടെ മാതൃക പിന്തുടരുകയും നമ്മുടെ വിപണിയിലെ കുറേയധികം സഞ്ചാരികളെ അടർത്തിയെടുക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. ഇനി നമുക്ക് ഒന്നിച്ചു മാർക്കറ്റിംഗ് ചെയ്യാതെ രക്ഷയില്ല എന്ന അവസ്ഥയിലാണ്.

മലേഷ്യ ടൂറിസം ഒരു വർഷം ഇന്ത്യ എന്ന വലിയ വിപണി ലക്ഷ്യമിട്ട് 100 കോടി ചെലവഴിക്കുമ്പോൾ, കേരളത്തിന്റെ ആകെയുള്ള മാർക്കറ്റിംഗ് ബജറ്റ് അതിലും താഴെയാണ്. ഇതാണ് അന്താരാഷ്ട്ര വിപണിയിലെ പ്രധാന വ്യത്യാസം. കേരളം നമ്മുടെ മുഖ്യ സ്ത്രോതസ്സുകളായ യൂറോപ്യൻ രാജ്യങ്ങളും യു.കെ., യു.എസ്.എ., ഗൾഫ് രാജ്യങ്ങൾ, ഓസ്ട്രേലിയ, ജപ്പാൻ എന്നീ രാജ്യങ്ങളിൽ എല്ലാം കൂടി വിപണനത്തിനായി മാറ്റിവെയ്ക്കുന്ന തുക വെറും 40 കോടി രൂപ മാത്രമാണെന്നറിയുമ്പോഴാണ് നമ്മുടെ അപര്യാപ്ത ബോധ്യപ്പെടുന്നത്.

ഇതേപോലെ തന്നെയാണ് തമിഴ്നാടും കർണാടകവും തെലങ്കാനയും ആന്ധ്രാ പ്രദേശുമെല്ലാം ചെയ്യുന്നത്. അതേസമയം ഈ അഞ്ചു സംസ്ഥാനങ്ങളും ഒന്നുചേർന്ന് അന്തർദ്ദേശീയ വിപണനത്തിന് ഒരു കാര്യപരിപാടി തയ്യാറാക്കിയാൽ അതിലൂടെ ലഭിക്കുന്ന വിപണി വ്യാപ്തിയും മൂല്യവും എത്രയോ ഇരട്ടി ആയിരിക്കും. ഈ നൂറ്റാണ്ടിന്റെ ആദ്യത്തിൽ കിഴക്കൻ ഏഷ്യൻ രാജ്യങ്ങളെ പിടിച്ചുകുലുക്കിയ 'സാർസ് വൈറസ്' രോഗബാധയ്ക്കുശേഷം തകർന്നടിഞ്ഞ മലേഷ്യ, തായ്‌ലന്റ്, സിങ്കപ്പൂർ എന്നീ രാജ്യങ്ങളിലെ ടൂറിസം ബോർഡുകൾ ചേർന്ന്



അഞ്ചു വർഷത്തോളം, സംയുക്തമായി ലോകമെങ്ങും ഒരു വലിയ പ്രചാരണം നടത്തി. ‘ഒരുമിച്ച് ഏഷ്യ കാണാം’ എന്ന് അർത്ഥം വരുന്ന Together in Asia പരസ്യപ്രചാരണങ്ങൾ. അതിലൂടെ തിരിച്ചുവന്ന ഈ മൂന്നു രാജ്യങ്ങളും ഇന്ന് ഇന്ത്യയേക്കാൾ വലിയ ടൂറിസം ഡെസ്റ്റിനേഷൻ ആണ്. അതാണ് കൃത്യമായുള്ള മാർക്കറ്റിംഗ് പ്ലാനിന്റെ ശക്തി. ഇപ്പോഴും ഇന്ത്യയിലെ ഏറ്റവും വിപണിമൂല്യമുള്ള ടൂറിസം ബ്രാൻഡ് ആയ കേരളം മുൻകൈ എടുത്താൽ തെക്കേ ഇന്ത്യൻ സംസ്ഥാനങ്ങളെ ഒരുമിപ്പിച്ചു ലുക്ക് സൗത്ത് ഇന്ത്യ (Look South India) എന്നോ ദക്ഷിണ എന്നോ പേരിട്ട് ഒരു വലിയ പരസ്യ പരിപാടി ആസൂത്രണം ചെയ്യുകയാണെങ്കിൽ അത് തകർന്നു കിടക്കുന്ന കേരള ടൂറിസത്തിന് വലിയ ഊർജ്ജം പകരും എന്ന കാര്യത്തിൽ സംശയമില്ല.

കേരള ടൂറിസം മുൻകൈ എടുത്ത് ദക്ഷിണേന്ത്യൻ സംസ്ഥാനങ്ങളിലെ ടൂറിസം മന്ത്രിമാരുടെ ഒരു യോഗം വിളിക്കുകയും ഒന്നായുള്ള മാർക്കറ്റിംഗ് പ്ലാൻ അവരുടെ കൂടി പങ്കാളിത്തത്തോടെ മുന്നോട്ടു കൊണ്ടുപോവുകയും ചെയ്യണം. കേരളത്തിലെ ടൂറിസം മേഖല ഇപ്പോൾ ഏകദേശം ഒരു ലക്ഷം കോടി മുതൽ മൂടക്കുള്ള, നേരിട്ട് 20 ലക്ഷം പേർക്കും പരോക്ഷമായി അത്രതന്നെ പേർക്കും തൊഴിൽ നൽകുന്ന മേഖലയാണ്. 36000 കോടി രൂപയാണ് ഈ മേഖലയിൽ നിന്നുള്ള വരുമാനം. സംസ്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ മൊത്തം ആഭ്യന്തര വരുമാനത്തിന്റെ 11 ശതമാനം സംഭാവന ചെയ്യുന്ന ഒരു വ്യവസായ മേഖലയെ സംരക്ഷിക്കാൻ സർക്കാരും മുഖ്യ രാഷ്ട്രീയകക്ഷികളും ഈ മേഖലയുമായി തോളോട് ചേർന്ന് രക്ഷാപ്രവർത്തനം നടത്തിയില്ലെങ്കിൽ കേരളത്തിലെ സാമ്പത്തികമേഖല തന്നെ ഒരിക്കൽക്കൂടി നിശ്ചലമാകും. ഒരുപക്ഷേ, ഒരിക്കലും തിരിച്ചെടുക്കാനാകാത്തവിധം.

ടൂറിസം വകുപ്പും സ്വകാര്യ സംരംഭകരും ഒറ്റക്കെട്ടായി പുതിയ പരസ്യ വിപണന പരിപാടികൾ രൂപകൽപന ചെയ്യുകയും നിലവിലുള്ള ടൂറിസം ഉല്പന്നങ്ങളുടെ നവീകരണവും ആധുനിക സഞ്ചാരികൾ പ്രതീക്ഷിക്കുന്ന തരത്തിൽ നവീന ടൂറിസം

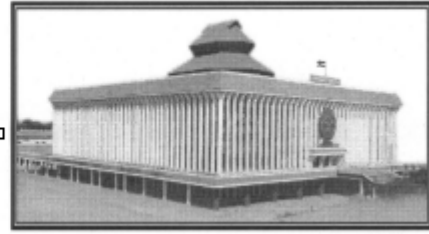
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അനുഭവങ്ങൾ പ്രദാനം ചെയ്യാനായി പുതിയ ഉല്പന്നങ്ങൾ വികസിപ്പിച്ചെടുക്കാനും യുദ്ധകാലാടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ തയ്യാറായില്ലെങ്കിൽ കേരള ടൂറിസത്തിന്റെ ഭാവി കൂടുതൽ അനിശ്ചിതമായ നാളുകളിലേക്കായിരിക്കും വരും നാളുകളിൽ കൊണ്ടുപോവുക.

സമകാലിക മലയാളം,
28 ജനുവരി 2019.

ഞഞഞ



Speaking of Abuse

The Pyramid of Reporting Domestic Violence in India

Suraj Jacob, Sreeparna Chattopadhyay

Domestic violence has serious economic, social, and health consequences not only for women but also for children and the wider family. It is an acute problem in India; one in three women reports physical abuse at some point in her life. Domestic violence is an offence; it can be tried under either criminal law (Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1983) or civil law (Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005). Despite legal provisions, and the mainstreaming of discourse around gender-based violence following recent brutal rapes, however, violence against women is on the rise, and there appears to be no concomitant changes in the processes by which families, institutions, and the wider society recognise and pro actively respond to violence against women.

How domestic violence is addressed is a barometer of the country's commitment to gender equity. But to address such violence, it would, of course, need to be reported, and the challenge starts right from that most elementary of steps- reporting is far from frequent. India lacks mandatory reporting mechanisms such as routine screening, and reporting by hospitals when women visit with suspicious injuries associated with domestic violence.

Due to deeply entrenched patriarchal practices within legal institutions, domestic violence is often treated as a private family matter. Such has been the recent patriarchal backlash from some sections of the judiciary that some high courts have instructed the police not to file complaints unless "visible signs of abuse are present", and men's rights groups and organisations such as Save Indian Family Foundation have called to repeal or rescind parts of Section 498 (A) of the IPC.

Not only is reporting the first step towards ending the silence around domestic violence, it can also be construed as an act of resistance and an exertion of female agency. Reporting carries risks, with responses ranging from a lack of acceptance by families, to humiliation by the police, to retaliatory escalation of violence. The extent and type of support-familial, social, and institutional, including practical assistance and dealing with emotional impacts-influences coping

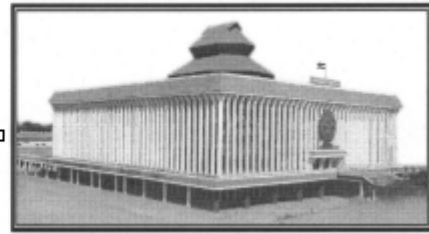


with and recovery from trauma. The responses of family, friends, and neighbours can also influence the decision to report domestic violence to institutional sources. And-of particular relevance for policy-reporting is suggestive of institutional facilitation to visibilise domestic violence.

It is important to distinguish between help-seeking, reporting, and sharing of information. In the health sciences literature, help-seeking is conceptualised as planned, problem-focused, deliberate behaviour, involving interpersonal interaction, with a clear goal . In contrast, reporting- especially through informal routes such as friends or family-while deliberate, may not have a clear goal; it may be unplanned and circumstantial. Sharing of information is even less deliberate or planned; women may let information slip to empathetic friends or family members. The lines between reporting to informal sources and sharing of information as well as letting information slip are blurred.

This article systematically explores the contours of domestic violence sharing and reporting using data from Round 3 of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3) and ethnographic data from an informal settlement (“slum”) in Mumbai. The article problematises the reporting of domestic violence; includes different types of informal and formal reporting (family and friends versus formal authorities, including the police); and constructs a “pyramid of reporting.” A clear pyramid of reporting emerges from the quantitative data. Since the data set is large-scale and representative, it sketches a composite picture for the country. The narrower ethnographic accounts reinforce and nuance this finding, and explore conditions and pathways through which sharing, reporting, and help-seeking occur.

The article also explores the contours of non-reporting. The NFHS-3 data show that of all women who have experienced domestic violence, as many as 74% have never shared this or reported it to anybody-a figure that is high in both absolute and relative terms. This article is the first systematic attempt to study reporting (and non-reporting) of domestic violence in India. The reporting of domestic violence is understudied even in the literature outside India, as is the exploration of the factors that facilitate reporting in contrast with the vast literature on the risk factors for domestic violence. It is worth noting that there are several sources of data on domestic violence, but these are disparate, and need to be systematised.

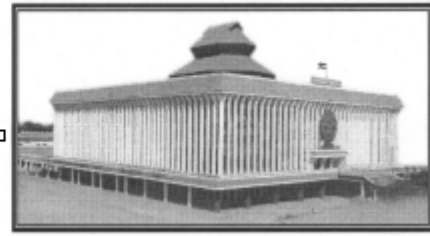


The Pyramid of Reporting

Domestic violence is rarely communicated; when it is, family and friends—rather than formal institutions—are the likeliest points of communication. In the nine-country International Violence Against Women Survey (IVAWS) from the United Nations (UN) and Statistics Canada, on average 54% of respondents reported violence to their families, 39% to friends/neighbours, 17% to social or community-based institutions, and 12% to the police. Broadly, similar results emerge from a 10-country survey of domestic violence by the World Health Organization (WHO); on average, 13% of women subjected to physical domestic violence sought help from at least one agency due to encouragement by friends or family. Across 14 cases, this ranged from 5% (rural Tanzania) to 33% (urban Namibia).

Women prefer to seek help first from parents and health-care providers. Even when formal routes, such as courts and counselling centres, are involved, mitigation of domestic violence occurs using a similar cultural grammar that privileges kinship ties and expects aggrieved women to reconcile rather than separate or divorce. In a clinic based study of young mothers from an informal settlement in Mumbai, find low awareness of formal sources of help; instead, experiences of domestic violence are mostly shared through informal routes, particularly the natal family. They also find that social humiliation and fear of further abuse are important reasons for not disclosing domestic violence, especially to friends or neighbours, although women are willing to reveal this information in a healthcare setting. Neighbours are willing to help women who experience domestic violence only if they consider her a “worthy” victim. In a study of low-income women in Delhi, finds that the nature of support from neighbours ranges from providing temporary refuge, to directly intervening when they witness violence, to providing emotional support and advice.

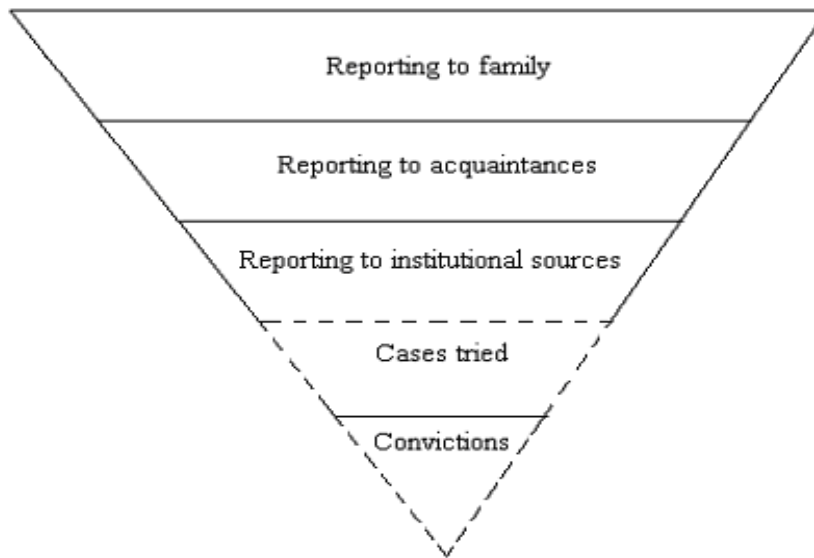
Based on the literature, a “pyramid” is constructed to represent revelations of domestic violence. Before an incident enters the legal system, the family is the first point of contact, and the police the last. Figure 1 distinguishes reporting to family from reporting to acquaintances or to institutional sources (including the police). Typically, “family” consists of natal family members (parents and siblings), but can also include in-laws. “Acquaintances” can include friends, neighbours,



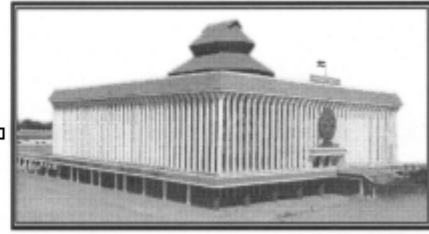
community members and others (for instance, individuals at the workplace or from voluntary groups). Like family and acquaintances, relevant “institutional sources” are also context-specific—besides the police, these can include, for instance, mahila mandals (women’s organisations) in the context of Mumbai’s informal settlements.

The construction of a pyramid of reporting does not imply that there is a strict sequential chain in reporting. Rather, it is argued that the likelihood of reporting to each successive lower tier of the pyramid more if reporting occurred for an upper tier. Beyond reporting to the police, the pyramid tapers because only a fraction of police reports produces legal charges and only a fraction of these ends in convictions.

Figure 1 : Pyramid of Reporting and Conviction



Strikingly, across countries, on average 37% of respondents in the IVAWS and 28% in the WHO survey had spoken to no one—family, friends, or institutional sources—about being subjected to domestic violence. Just as strikingly, even in the case of the route used most frequently (the wider family), on average only about half the respondents did so. Why are reporting rates so low?



The literature notes a familiar set of reasons: low self-esteem, mistrust of others, fear of humiliation, perception of limited options and hopelessness, and intimidation by the abuser. Institutional reporting is constrained by an even greater set of reasons: the norm of not discussing family problems with outsiders, weak/inaccessible institutional support, lack of awareness of legal rights, and fears of biases and humiliation from patriarchal institutions.

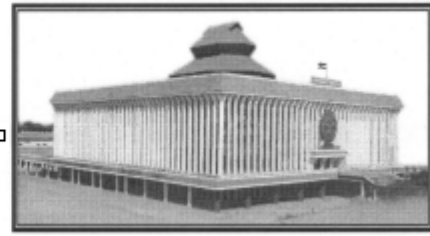
The literature on India identifies a cluster of constraints to reporting, including “cultural” factors that suggest that women prefer dealing with the problem within the family itself, thereby retaining familial honour and reducing stress on others. Intriguingly, conventional measures of “empowerment” do not seem to increase it.

Given the presence of strong patriarchal norms, even when family members-especially those in the natal family-are told about violence, the instinct is often to normalise it and ask women to endure it and adjust to it . It is rarer still to seek help of institutions. The institutions of law and order are viewed with suspicion and there is hesitation even in approaching healthcare providers regarding injuries from domestic violence .

Secondary Data and Analysis

Data from the NFHS-3 are used to sketch a national picture of ‘reporting through different routes. A sizeable number of respondents-31% a little over 20,000 women-reported to surveyors that they experienced domestic violence, and were asked about “help-seeking” behaviour. The specific question asked was: “Thinking about what you yourself have experienced among the different things we have been talking about, have you ever tried to seek help to stop the person(s) from doing this to you again?” Women answering in the affirmative were further asked: “From whom have you sought help to stop this?”

Table 1 (Columns 2 and 3) presents, for women who reported domestic violence, the averages for four broad sources they sought help from-the natal family, husband’s family, acquaintances, and formal institutions such as the police. Shockingly, for the 21,207 women who told surveyors they had experienced domestic violence, almost 75% did not seek help from any



of these sources. The natal family is most frequently contacted for help-it is more than double the second most frequent category-but even this is true for less than 19% of women facing domestic violence. This is followed by the husband’s family (about 9%), acquaintances (about 6%), and formal authorities (about 1%). In the case of the police, it is only about 0.5%, and yet this is higher than the other authorities listed in the NFHS data (religious leaders, social service organisations, and lawyers). Put together, the numbers for informal and formal routes presented in Column (2) of Table 1 are consistent with the pyramid of reporting (Figure 1).

Table 1 : Help –seeking from Different Sources %

Domestic Violence Reporting Route	<u>NFHS –3</u> Some Violence	<u>NFHS –3</u> Severe Violence	<u>Ethnography</u> Physical Emotional Abuse
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Natal Family	18.55	31.37	76% (N=26)
Husband’s family	8.51	13.51	59% (N=20)
Acquaintance(neighbour, friend, Other person)	6.10	12.15	32%(N=11)
Neighbour	4.20	8.62	
Friend	2.25	4.25	
Other Person	0.29	0.67	0%
Authorities (police, religious leader, Social service Organisation, lawyer)	1.04	2.59	3% (N=1)
Police	0.58	1.48	3% (N=1)
Religious leader	0.28	0.68	0%
Social Service organisation	0.18	0.43	0%
Lawyer	0.18	0.46	0%
None	73.63	56.70	

Sample size for NFHS (Column 2) was 21,207. Columns (2) and (3) pertain to women who experienced some violence and severe violence, respectively (for definitions, see IIPS and Macro International 2007). Sample size for the ethnography was 52;28 reported either physical and/or emotional abuse, with the majority reporting physical violence and four reporting only emotional abuse. Of the 28 who reported domestic violence, two had not shared the experience with their natal families.



In Table 1, Column (3) shows frequency of contacting different sources in instances of severe domestic violence. Expectedly, frequencies are higher than in Column (2)-multiples of 1.7 (natal family), 1.6 (husband’s family), 2 (acquaintances), and 2.5 (authorities)- but they still conform to the pyramidal relationship. When there is severe domestic violence, the incidence of reporting to the police is 2.6 times greater than when domestic violence is present but not severe. But it should be noted that in absolute terms only 1.48% of women experiencing severe domestic violence go to the police. Even among women experiencing severe domestic violence, most (56.7%) do not seek help from any source.

Table 2a : Help from Four Sources – Combinations of Sources

No. of Sources	Source	Percentage
1.	Only natal family	12.94
	Only husband’s family	4.10
	Only acquaintances	2.37
	Only authorities	0.33
2.	Natal and husband’s families	2.54
	Natal family and acquaintances	1.73
	Natal family and authorities	0.23
	Husband’s family and acquaintances	0.82
	Husband’s family and authorities	0.03
	Acquaintances and authorities	0.14
3.	Natal family, husband’s family, and acquaintances	0.83
	Natal family, husband’s family, and authorities	0.10
	Natal family, acquaintances and authorities	0.11
	Husband’s family, acquaintances and authorities.	0.03
4.	All	0.06

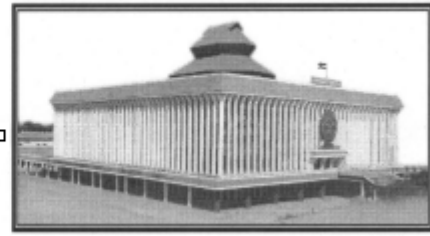


Table 2a shows the frequency of help-seeking from different combinations of the four broad sources (natal family, husband’s family, acquaintances, and authorities). For the approximately 26% of women experiencing domestic violence who do seek some form of help, Table 2a shows that a little over half seek it only from their natal families. The extent to which women seek more than one source of help is quite limited. Of all women experiencing domestic violence, 26% seek help, and 7% seek help from multiple sources, with the natal family figuring prominently in these cases as well. To illustrate this point more fully, Table 2b estimates pairwise conditional frequencies—that is, for two sources X and Y, the frequency of seeking help from X conditional on seeking help from Y. Help from the natal family is sought in over 40% of cases where another source of help is sought. The corresponding numbers are smaller in the cases of the husband’s family and of acquaintances, and far smaller in the case of formal authorities.

Table 2b : Help from Four Sources –Conditional Frequencies

Help from ↓	Conditional on Help From			
	Natal family	Husband’s Family	Acquaintances	Authorities
Natal Family		41.57	44.89	48.83
Husband’s family	19.06		28.67	21.20
Acquaintances	14.76	20.56		33.21
Authorities	2.75	2.60	5.68	

Table 2c : Help from Four Sources – Pair-wise Correlations

	Natal family	Husband’s Family	Acquaintances
Husband’s family	0.21***		
Acquaintances	0.18***	0.17***	
Authorities	0.09***	0.05***	0.12***

Sample size for NFHS-3 was 21,207.

Overall, Tables 2a and 2b reinforce the presence of the pyramid of reporting presented in Figure 1. However, the presence of such a pyramid based on aggregates does not,



of course, imply sequential reporting in individual instances. For example, Table 2b shows that in 48.83% of instances when authorities were contacted for help, the natal family was also contacted, implying that in a slight majority of instances (51.17%), women who contacted the police did not seek help from their natal families. Table 2C presents pairwise correlations between help-seeking across the four sources. The correlations for natal family, husband’s family, and acquaintances are in the range of 0.17- 0.21, but the correlations with institutional help-seeking are far lower, in the range of 0.05-0.12. This suggests that there is clustering among non-institutional sources (albeit far from perfect), and that seeking help from family and acquaintances is a poor predictor of institutional help-seeking.

Understanding Contours Reporting- Ethnographic Insights

Quantitative data sets such as the NFHS-3 cannot provide a nuanced understanding of revelations around domestic violence, or of the absence of such revelations, or of associated processes and contextual influences. This article turns to previously unexplored ethnographic data collected during a year-long field- work (2005-06) by one of the authors (Chattopadhyay) from an urban informal settlement in one of the most deprived wards of north-eastern Mumbai .

There were 1,400 households, split into four housing societies; each society had 200-500 households. Snowball sampling was used to initially visit 80 households, from which 52 women agreed to participate in the study. Strict ethical protocols were followed, and written or oral informed consent was obtained from all participants. Data were kept securely and original names and identifying information have been removed here. The ethnography yielded vignettes pertaining to help-seeking, reporting, and sharing of information, although its focus was on structural violence and the political economy of domestic violence. Field notes and interviews were analysed using the constant comparative methods of induction and iteration and a grounded theory approach.

Although the majority of women interviewed (28 of 52) were physically and emotionally abused, only one reported to the police. Typically, domestic violence was first reported to the victim’s natal family (Table 1, Column 4). Twenty of the 28 women who experienced domestic violence had reported it to their husband’s family, but only two received support; only one reported her husband to the police, although even in that instance, it was an informal complaint (implying



that legal processes were not initiated). Women overwhelmingly justified most forms of domestic violence-viewing it as a tool for disciplining errant wives-and contributed to under-reporting to institutional sources.

The ethnographic data (Table 1, Column 4) are similar in their pyramidal structure to NFHS-3 data (Columns 2 and 3). However, the difference is the gradient of the pyramid, suggesting that contextual and in-depth collection of data through ethnographic methods often leads to a higher rate of revelations around domestic violence than possible through surveys. Out of the 28 women, 26 had shared their domestic violence experience with someone else, a figure that is much higher than found in NFHS-3.

Ethnographic analysis generates several insights pertaining to domestic violence reporting. First, and unsurprisingly, the natal family often tends to be the first port of call, so that its presence and support encourages women to report severe domestic violence to formal sources. If the natal family is absent, the consequent reduction of underlying material, moral, and emotional support tends to deter women from reporting domestic violence to formal sources. However, the presence of the natal family is not a sufficient condition for formal reporting. Even when women report violence to natal families, entrenched patriarchal norms-on matters such as the importance of marriage, the symbolic importance of husbands, and social penalties for separation-along with persistent poverty and structural violence circumscribe the extent of support they receive.

The ethnographic analysis also reveals several barriers to institutional reporting, including (well-founded) mistrust of formal authorities, particularly the police. Civil Society organisations (CSOs) such as women’s organisations may help in mitigating violence and providing access to formal authorities, but those in Ward M had party and ideological affiliations that produced a perception that they were not objective; many women, especially from minority religious groups, preferred not to involve such organisations, Community-based support was often contingent on perceived worthiness” of the victim, since some forms of violence are culturally legitimised in the guise of disciplining errant wives.

Reporting to Informal Sources

This section explores the informal sources used by victims to report domestic violence.



Absence of natal family as a deterrent against reporting to others : The natal family is an important resource in sharing one’s experience of domestic violence. Further, as the vignette below for Preeti, who was in her late 40s, indicates, it could be an important pathway to other forms of reporting. Thus, the absence of the natal family could discourage reporting.

Preeti had endured severe domestic violence, including bruises and cuts, and years of emotional abuse. She did not have the support of her immediate natal family, because both her parents had died by the time she married; and her only sibling, a sister, was also in an abusive relationship. The little natal family support she received was from a maternal aunt. Preeti had an inter-religious marriage, and had limited support from her in-laws.

Natal family as a pathway for institutional reporting: Rita, in her early 30s, had three children. Her husband moved to Mumbai and abandoned her. Rita had recently migrated from Odisha. Her current partner was a male relative who was supporting her and her toddler son. In her case, the parents and brothers were an important source of support. She described an instance when her family supported her after her husband had spent all their money on alcohol and she and her children had nothing to eat. Finally, when her husband took away their child, Rita’s mother accompanied her to the police station.

This narrative indicates that the intervention of the natal family-not just at the point of filing a police complaint, but also prior to that-had created conditions that facilitated and, finally, led to reporting to the police. The period leading up to police reporting was marked by extreme physical violence- he had broken her collar bone, dragged her by the hair on several occasions, and she had to be hospitalised for a head injury and severe bleeding.

Limitations of sharing informally: The ethnographic data suggest that the degree to which the natal family is willing or able to provide help varies greatly. It is contingent on factors such as poverty, hold of patriarchal norms, cultural legitimisation of violence, and structure of the natal family. These factors may discourage women from sharing their experience of domestic violence even with the natal family.

Many women said that they did not think their families would be able to bear their “burden,” especially because typically they had children, and therefore they did not share their



experience with their family. In situations where the natal family itself leads a precarious material and social existence, this is a pragmatic assessment.

Note the following conversation with Sabiha, a 35-year-old widowed mother of three children who worked as a domestic help. Her husband had died four years earlier from liver disease due to prolonged alcohol abuse. When drunk, he would often beat her and throw her out of the house with the children. Sabiha's parents were poor, her father was an alcoholic and her younger brother (who stayed with her parents) had an unstable job and moods, and was often violent towards their mother. The conversation below highlights what would typically occur if she went to her mother's place when her husband threw her and the children out of the house.

I: You would be out the whole night?

R: Yes, that has happened, and if I went to my mother's place my mother would tell me: "What is wrong with you people? You are quiet during the day but start making a ruckus at night." [pause]

R: I would not go because my mother would say that you all are "fine by day and at night you disturb our sleep." So instead of being reprimanded time and again I preferred to bear the pain myself. Then I would take my children and sit outside. I knew if he [husband] fought with me, he would throw us out of the house, so I would catch hold of a rug or a bedsheet beforehand so that we can spend the night outside. He used to harass me a lot after drinking.

While it is disconcerting that the natal family is unsupportive, it is unsurprising given the larger contextual and systemic issues. The pattern of violence ensured that if her husband were to throw Sabiha and the children out of the house, she was ready with a blanket, prepared to spend the night in the alleys of the settlement. This is how domestic violence, embedded within a continuum of structural violence, is normalised. It is amplified by the loss of the safety net of one's family, due mostly to the toxic and long-term effects of poverty.

Institutional reporting: India's poor have a difficult relationship with the police. Often, they are at the receiving end of the state's development policies. Their homes and property are destroyed, but they are not adequately compensated. Instances of custodial rape have developed in many women a grave mistrust of the police, thus amplifying multiple barriers to institutional reporting including.



Barriers to institutional reporting: Uma, 25, had an intercaste marriage. Her husband was an alcoholic. Uma had experienced domestic violence on occasion. When asked whether she thought it may be a good idea for women experiencing domestic violence to involve formal authorities, Uma was categorical in her refusal.

A study in Udaipur finds similar views echoed by both men and women. They categorically rejected formal sources of help and recommended, instead, that victims endure abuse, adjust to the situation, make the perpetrator understand, return to the natal family when the abuse becomes unbearable, remarry (in the case of specific castes), or even commit suicide (a minority view).

The study found that participants were extremely reluctant to involve the police. The participants felt that the police were unreliable, and would not work unless bribed, and that seeking police intervention would tarnish their reputation in the community. The majority of women were financially dependent on their husbands and did not view divorce as a viable option. Although there were non-governmental organisations working in Ward M, few women were aware of any that could help abused women. It is unsurprising that for many women the severity of violence may not be a good predictor for reporting to the police. It is unsurprising that for many women the severity of violence may not be a good predictor for reporting to the police.

Role of CSOs in formal reporting: Despite the presence of a mahila mandal in the settlement, many women were unaware of it. Mahila mandals often mediate in family disputes, hold soft skills classes for women and organise competitions to reward good housekeepers as well as mobilise women during elections.

Durga is a married Maratha woman; she had two adult children. Chronic alcohol abuse had damaged her husband's health. Durga worked intermittently at clerical jobs and used to volunteer for a mahila mandal. The household ran on her erratic income and the income of her adult son. Durga had reported two incidents of being slapped and shoved by her husband. However, what set her apart from the other women is that she actively resisted her-husband.

Durga felt it might be more prudent to go to a women's organisation, but many women reported that mahila mandals could be ineffectual because of corruption, right-wing ideologies leading to exclusionary policies of mahila mandals and ineffective or overly authoritarian leadership.



Durga had not asked the mahila mandal to intervene on her behalf, but she had learnt what her rights were from her interactions with them; as a result, she felt confident in resisting her husband.

On the possibilities of community involvement: Consider the case of Jigna, a 21-year-old Gujarati migrant with two young children and a very thin social network. She had moved to the informal settlement just a year earlier and had reported her husband’s abusive behaviour to her only friend Reema, who like her was also from Gujarat and also experienced domestic violence

A few days earlier, unable to bear the abuse, Jigna had told Reema that she was contemplating suicide. Reema told her to stop “all this nonsense about death and dying” and “to think of her two young sons.” While Reema was not able to directly intervene to stop the violence, one evening she asked Chattopadhyay whether she knew about Jigna’s “problem,” using the English word as a shorthand for domestic violence, in the hope that Chattopadhyay will be able to help Jigna.

Note that despite being a young migrant, she reached out to the only female friend she had made in the community. Western literature suggests that structural violence in impoverished communities not only increases the likelihood of domestic violence but also reduces help seeking and help received. Although such findings should be extrapolated carefully to India because of differences in both spatial and cultural configurations, it is indicative of the role of community.

Uma (introduced earlier) reflected on the role of neighbours in mitigating domestic violence by rescuing the woman from public physical domestic violence.

The spatial configurations of an urban informal settlement are such that a woman who is being physically abused publicly will be “rescued”—even if only temporarily—by her neighbours. This is not just because the community feels empathy for women, but also because violence of this nature is seen as a form of public nuisance and many families would prefer a peaceful neighbourhood. Uma draws on the idea of a “universal sisterhood” by identifying the sources of support for women; it is not the family of her husband who will support her, but in fact other women in the informal settlement who are the only ones “who can understand the pain of the woman.” This suggests that when facilitating informal help-seeking opportunities for women, such coalitions may have a very important role. However, neighbours are not always forthcoming



with assistance and often it depends on a subjective and ad hoc assessment of whether the victim is truly “deserving” based on her role as a wife, mother, and neighbour.

Conclusions

This article explores the non-reporting of domestic violence as well as differential reporting across sources (family, acquaintances, and formal institutions). Reporting—even to close family and friends—is not very common for the vast majority of the approximately 20,000 women interviewed in NFHS-3 regarding help-seeking. Among those who do speak to someone about domestic violence and, possibly, seek help, NFHS-3 data are consistent with a pyramid of reporting. The natal family is contacted most often, and institutional sources contacted the least; legal action against perpetrators of domestic violence falls dismally farther behind the already low incidence of institutional reporting.

Some connections between reporting to informal sources and institutional reporting are explored and, in particular, how reporting to informal sources helps in reporting to institutions. However, there are limitations to informal reporting; in the contexts of structural violence, family and friends face great constraints in responding to a woman sharing her experience of domestic violence. This points to the need for strengthening institutional mechanisms for help-seeking.

Approaching the police and other formal agencies of governance may be forbidding for several women experiencing domestic violence, a potential case can be made for the role of intermediary CSOs. For instance, in the vignette where police reporting occurred only under severe duress (the abusive husband abducted the child), it is conceivable that an inclusionary, community-based organisation may have mediated access to the police and institutional reporting well before the incident of extreme duress.

Two avenues of future research on reporting domestic violence seem evident. The first has to do with spousal attributes that impact help-seeking behaviour. Some important factors discussed in the extant literature are controlling behaviour on the part of the husband and agency (or lack thereof) on the part of the wife. The ways that these factors are connected to help-seeking need better theorisation. Relatedly, the connection between women’s agency and controlling behaviour itself needs to be better understood in the context of help-seeking behaviour.



The second avenue for further research is regarding contextual factors and temporal dynamics of help-seeking behaviour. Several of the vignettes in this article attest to the importance of these. One way to begin to unpack context would be to explore pyramids of reporting for different regions. Figure 2 makes an implicit start by presenting state level data on seeking help from different sources. There is considerable spatial variation of gender-related variables even at the district and sub-district levels, suggesting the importance of going beyond composite all-India constructions. This exploration of an informal settlement context in a megacity needs to be extended to several other contexts.

For disadvantaged women, it may be more important to have strong community-based organisations that are inclusive and knowledgeable about women's rights and social entitlements- as one of our research participants, Durga, advises- to facilitate reporting and access help in situations of abuse. In fact, there are examples of programmes that have reduced intimate partner violence among sex workers in Karnataka by building coalitions of community-based organisations and supporting the formation of sex workers' unions. The police are involved only in extreme cases, since incarceration of perpetrators is seldom a sustainable solution for this group of women.

A recent study by the Northeast Network found that over 64% of the 1,200 women in rural Assam who reported domestic violence over the two years of the study approached someone for help (NEN 2015). This is a much higher level of help seeking than reported in most other studies for India, perhaps because in the study women were recruited through small community-based organisations of rural women, which are more likely to come in contact with women seeking help for domestic violence. For a state like Assam, strengthening mahila samitis (local women's councils) and students' unions may help women experiencing domestic violence and thus different regional contexts may require different approaches to strengthening formal and informal sources for women to address domestic violence.

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Scientific Innovations in the Service of Society

Ajey Lele

Innovation mostly indicates advancements, however, it is important that such advancements should be novel too. This is because, at times, the advancement is more about the progression for the existing technology than having discovered something new or original. Say in case of developments being witnessed over the years in the domain of computers: a 32-bit microprocessor introduced in 1985, the Intel 80386, which was known as 386 was replaced by a 486 microprocessor after a few years, which was a higher performance unit. Here the nature of technology almost remained the same, but the upgradation of technology was witnessed. However, if the present conventional (known as classical) system in future gets replaced by a quantum computing system, then it could be correct to conclude that a new innovation in the computing technology has occurred. This is because the processes of undertaking computations are different in classical format and quantum format and quantum computing has been projected to bring in major change to the existing structures of computing processes. At present, quantum computing is at an experimental stage and it is expected that in a few years this technology could become a reality bringing in major disruption in the IT (Information Technology) sector in particular and ICT (Information and Communication Technology) sector, in general.

Technology forms the subtext of human development. History is replete with instances of technology serving as catalyst in the grand narrative of human development. From basic necessities like food, air, water, clothing and shelter, to structural requirements like security, technology has played a tremendous role in every field of human growth and survival. Over the years, the world has witnessed various innovations happening in the field of science and technology (S & T) which have made significant difference to the lives of the common man. Such innovations have been happening in various fields of science from Physics to Biology. Some of the innovations which have been predicated to change human lifestyle in the near future, are presently at various levels of their technology development life cycles.

Around the year 1948 the invention of the transistor, a device with potential to have numerous applications in radio technology by replacing the vacuum tube, took place. This electronic



component demonstrated its capability to have instantaneous action. This was possible because there was no workup delay that used to take place in the vacuum tube, since no heat was getting developed. The innovation of the transistor could be viewed as one of the most significant innovations of the modern era. The transistor is a resistor or semi-conductor device which helps amplify electrical signals as they get transferred through it. The presence of the transistor enables all kinds of binary logic operations and has brought a revolution to the field of electronics and computing.

Historical Perspective

Actually, manifestation of various technological developments have resulted in various industrial revolutions since 17th/18th century onwards. The beginning of the industrial revolution had British industry at the centre. Slowly, industrialization spread from Britain to other European countries like Belgium, France and Germany, and then to the United States. By the mid-19th century, industrial progress had happened mainly in Western Europe and the North and Northeast of the United States. It was the period when the United State was emerging as a major global industrial centre. In Asia, countries like Japan, and in the later part of 20th century, South Korea contributed much towards the industrial revolution. However, during the last few decades, one country that has shown remarkable progress towards industrialisation is China. Countries like Israel and India are known to have made some contributions too, with Israel playing a major role in the realm of technology development. The main features of these industrial revolutions are as follows:

- The First Industrial Revolution: 1760 - 1840. It was a period which witnessed the emergence of steam engine, textile industry and mechanical engineering .
- The Second Industrial Revolution: 1870 - 1914. The revolution was about emergence of railways and steel industry.
- The Third Industrial Revolution: 1969 - 2000. Electric engine, heavy chemicals,



automobiles and consumer durables made their presence felt during this period.

- The Fourth Industrial Revolution: the digital revolution, since 2000 or a few decades prior.

This is an ongoing phase of this industrial revolution which has also been called as Industry 4.0. Developments in the oil industry and the IT industry have led the initial phase of Industry 4.0. At the same time there are various other S & T innovations which are leading the progression of this Industrial Revolution.

Innovation in Various Sectors

Biology, Biotechnology, Pharmacy and Medicine are the areas which have witnessed various important innovations over the years. Particularly, all these innovations matter much to humanity because they have helped to increase the life expectancy of humans, have also found cures to various diseases and have overall assisted to make humans healthier. Invention of Penicillin during 1928 by the Scottish scientist Alexander Fleming could be considered as the beginning of the modern era of medicine. It transformed the field of medicine by its ability to cure infectious bacterial diseases. Almost seven decades later during 2001, the secret behind the complete sequence of all three billion base pairs in the human genome was discovered. The discovery of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) has totally revolutionized the field of biology and demonstrated that this discovery would help humans to resolve various challenges beyond medicine. Today, DNA profiling has major utility for confirming if people are related to each other (parenthood testing). It also helps the law enforcement agencies towards solving crimes. Apart from these important discoveries, the research on the stem cell is also an important innovation. Such cells have the unique ability to develop into specialised cell types in the body which could be used to replace cells and tissues that have been damaged or lost due to disease. In addition, various innovations in the organ donation field which assist to replace (repair) eyes, lung, heart, kidney, liver, pancreas or intestine have helped human race immensely.



In the power sector, from nuclear power to solar power to space based solar power to biofuels, various clean options have been made available. A major innovation with regard to wind turbines is getting discussed where a start-up is working on an environmentally friendly aero-generator which needs no blades. This is expected to be a more cost effective option. Another interesting technology/method for energy generation is by using nuclear fusion reactors. Presently, much work is happening in the arena of development of nuclear fusion reactors. In southern France, International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) is getting developed. This technology, when fully operationalised, is expected to change the global energy habits. A major innovation could happen when the current nuclear fusion reactors where the hydrogen isotopes tritium and deuterium are used as the fuel would be replaced by other technology. If helium-3 and deuterium could be used as fuels, then a major revolution in the energy sector is expected. The helium-3 is not available on the earth's surface hence, at present few states are undertaking missions to Moon where helium-3 is available in abundance. However, this entire process of getting helium-3 down could take few more decades.

Innovation in Modern Technology

For many years one of the best approaches to industrial production was considered as CNC (Computer Numerical Control) machine. This milling technology has existed since 1950s and is being used to produce significant quantities of large, heavy, precision crafted products having applicability for commercial and industrial equipment, machines, and engines. Today, with the developments taking place in the additive manufacturing (AM) sector it is expected that a major change is at the doorstep of global manufacturing processes. This technology which is commonly known as 3D printing is a mechanism of direct digital manufacturing. This would allow object creation by simply using a digital file which is having the design of the product. This file would send a signal to a printer, which would be constituting the required material (say powder) and 'print' the product as per the requirement.

Internet of Things



At the heart of various technological innovations over the years, lies the Internet. This is the single most technology which has helped to change the face of the world within a few years. This one innovation has actually led to various other innovations. Internet could be branded as one technology which connected the world and has changed various practices of human survival from education to healthcare to nature of doing business including financial transactions. Today, this Internet is being viewed as a first setup towards a major disruption in IT and ICT. Internet 2.0 is expected to bring in major changes in the present-day setup of doing various things. Development in multiple fields of science and engineering like nanoscience, electronics, and sensor technologies are offering new opportunities to relate with internet differently, The idea of using internet differently and by using diverse effects (normally “thing” or “object” are viewed as any possible items in the real world that could join the communication chain) is expected to upswing to the model of Internet of Things (IoT). Generally, IoT is considered to be simply a means of connecting different sensors to a network. It is important to look at IoT over a broader canvass of numerous IT related and futuristic IT technologies. Ambient Intelligence and Cognitive Technologies are anticipated to have a major impact on the future of IT. Technologies like Fog computing, Distributed computing, Cloud computing, Big Data and Block-chain are expected to impact the future of IoT.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is another technology which has been there for many years and is presently found making a lot of impact on the developmental cycle in various disciplines. However, even today, AI is still an evolving technology and the scope for AI is varied. There are various viewpoints about the exact applicability of AI. No final verdict has yet been announced whether AI is a saviour or destroyer. Issues of ethics do get raised in regard to the applicability of AI. However, globally it has been observed that AI could bring in various advantages in very many fields associated with human growth and progress. Robotics is one area, which is associated both directly and indirectly with the AI and has already made many inroads in various human activities over the years. Broadly, it could be argued that AI and Internet 2.0 could decide on the future of the world.



The most fascinating aspect of modern S&T innovations has been its evolutionary and adaptable nature. It is important to appreciate the fact that despite being developed for a specific purpose, some technologies have witnessed modifications and have provided innovation for altogether different purposes. For example, cell phones (mobile phones) were originally developed as a unit for remote wireless communication. Since then, however, phones have been implanted with GPS chips that provide information about the device's geographic position.

Developments in the field of Outer Space have been fascinating. This is one technological field, which could be said to have made major contribution towards addressing various issues of socio-economic importance. Voice and data communication in real time and offering accurate inputs for various developmental aspects and managerial issues has been the key focus of space technologies. Today, communication, navigational, remote sensing (earth observational), weather and scientific satellites actually almost fully control humans lives.

Largely, technology could be said to have evolved as a response to the various requirements of society and it is expected that the S & T innovations happening in the future too would help humans to live more peacefully and happily.

**Yojana,
5 January 2019.**





Trails, Tribulations and Triumphs

(A Review of the Book 'Trails, Tribulations and Triumphs : Life and Times of a Sociologist' written by T.K. Oommen)

Renny Thomas

Autobiographies and biographies of scholars tell us a story otherwise not available to us from their academic writings. Especially in the context of India, one rarely sees autobiographies and biographies of social scientists. On the other hand, scientists, bureaucrats and politicians write autobiographies as markers of their presence. As a sociologist, I have always wondered why Indian social scientists do not give any importance to writing autobiographies which can be seen not only as their life story, but also as a story of their disciplines. Although it is possible to get a brief glimpse of the lives and situations of sociologists and social anthropologists in India from the few available pieces of writing, it is important to note that we do not have many full-fledged autobiographies of Indian sociologists and social anthropologists.

It is in this context, following Andre Beteilles memoir (2012), that we have T.K. Oommen's autobiography. Oommen is well known not only as one of the leading Indian sociologists of our time, but also as an institution builder, one of the first professors of sociology at JNU, and the first Asian president of the International Sociological Association (ISA). Oommen's memoir deals largely with his professional life, and these details are significant to the understanding of the history of sociology in India.

This memoir has 23 chapters and five appendices that include his farewell speech at JNU, Presidential Address to the ISA and a list of his published works. The chapters are divided into two sections. Part one of the book entitled 'Torments of Sociology' discusses his entry into the field of sociology, his life at JNU, his terms as President of ISA and the Indian Sociological Society (ISS), and his various foreign visiting appointments and fellowships. Part two entitled 'Beyond



Sociology' discusses various non-academic positions held by him such as the Planning Commission project on poverty among religious minorities, chairing the Gujarat Harmony Project, and the Prime Minister's High-Level Committee among various other roles and responsibilities. These detailed chapters show Oommen's contributions to academic professional associations and universities as well as the large chunks of time dedicated to working at the policy level. Perhaps this distinguishes Oommen's methodology of doing sociology from that of his contemporaries.

The memoir very clearly narrates Oommen's defence of his practice of sociology right from his initiation into the discipline. His sociology was perceived as non-sociological, as 'social movements' were not dealt with by sociologists of his time. He discusses his encounter with M. N. Srinivas, who was the then Head of the Department of Sociology, University of Delhi. Oommen was interviewed for a PhD position, and denied admission. In the interview, he was asked questions on the dowry system among Syrian Christians of Kerala, because of his own social background (p. 10). Subsequently, Srinivas tried to rectify his 'mistake' by asking Oommen to enrol for a PhD from the Department of Sociology, Delhi University, with a UGC fellowship. It was communicated through Vatsala Rao, who was Oommen's professor at Poona University. Oommen writes.

Given Srinivas' influence it was indeed a possibility, but not a certainty. To add to the authenticity of the offer, it was suggested that I could work on 'Religion and Society among Syrian Christians of Kerala', a sequel to Srinivas's own study of the Coorgs, their religion and society, under the supervision of M. S.A. Rao, who was also on the faculty of the department of sociology. But I was not inclined to accept the offer, telling Vatsala Rao that I was not keen to accept a 'consolation' offer, which was indeed perceived as the arrogance of an immature young man (p. 11).

This autobiography reveals how biases and prejudices were part of commonsense even for sociologists of that time. Oommen narrates his meeting with leading Indian sociologist G. S. Ghurye :



When I was ushered into Ghurye's room and was introduced, Ghurye remarked, 'For a Syrian Christian, you are dark. "Thinking that Syrian Christians cannot be identified on the basis of their pigmentation, since they are not a racial category, I told myself, 'This illustrious scholar can formulate generalizations without empirical basis.' We conversed for twenty minutes about the state of sociology in India and his proclivity to make assertions without verifiable evidence was clear all along, a tendency evident in his writings too. (p 19).

Oommen also explains in detail Indian sociologists' lack of professionalism, especially when it comes to appreciating the achievements of colleagues. In the context of being elected President of ISA he writes:

For the first time in the history of ISA, a president from the Afro-Asian world had been selected. Some Europeans and North Americans thought that I had been elected because I was 'black' and some Indians pronounced that I was elected because I was a Christian. Denigrating achievements of a person who is not 'one of us' is a universal phenomenon (pp. 74-75).

This memoir by T. K. Oommen, one of the first internationally and nationally established non-Hindu Indian sociologists, also tells us of Indian sociology's domination by upper-caste Hindu Sociologists ever since its inception, and perhaps even today. In that sense, it narrates the very history of the discipline of sociology in India. The brief histories of the ISA and ISS will interest sociologists and historians of professional associations.

Although Oommen details his publications and academic engagements, surprisingly few details of his fieldwork experience find their way into the memoir. There are a few mentions, but without much detail. I would have expected a chapter only on his fieldwork experience as a sociologist/anthropologist, and his relationship with his field and the people he met. I am reminded of an excellent memoir by distinguished American sociologist Renee C. Fox (2015), where she



talks about her life as a sociologist through her field and fieldwork, without ignoring the details of her career as a sociologist.

That being said, it is undoubtedly a significant and provocative memoir. It will remain an important text in the history of sociology and social anthropology in India. This memoir, one hopes, will invite other Indian Sociologists and social scientists to write their memoirs, a genre that is relatively absent in India.

**IIC Quarterly,
Summer 2018.**

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RESUME OF BUSINESS TRANSACTED DURING
THE 246TH SESSION OF THE RAJYA SABHA

The Two Hundred and Forty-sixth (246th) Session of the Rajya Sabha commenced on 18th July 2018 and, as scheduled, concluded on 10th August 2018.

During the 246th Session, the Rajya Sabha had a total of 17 sittings spread over more than 67 hours. About 27 hours of the time of the House was lost during the Session due to disruptions. The House, however, sat late for about three hours beyond scheduled time to complete the legislative and other important business.

18th July, 2018

On the first day of the Session, *i.e.* 18th July 2018, seven newly elected/nominated Members made/subscribed oath or affirmation before taking their seats in the House. These were three members elected from the State of Kerala, namely Shri Elamaram Kareem, Shri Jose K. Mani and Shri Binoy Viswam and four nominated members, namely Dr. Sonal Mansingh, Dr. Raghunath Mohapatra, Shri Ram Shakal and Shri Rakesh Sinha.

Hon'ble Chairman made references to the passing away of Sarvashri Vishwasrao Ramrao Patil, Mohammed Amin, Ashok Mitra, Balkavi Bairagi, Kameshwar Paswan, Shantaram Naik, Surinder Kumar Singla and M.M. Jacob, all former Members of Rajya Sabha. During the Session, references were also made by the Chair to the passing away of Sarvashri K.V.R.S. Bala Subba Rao, M. Thangaraj Pandian, Bhishma Narain Singh, R. K. Dhawan and S. Madhavan, all former Members of the Rajya Sabha. Besides, the Chair also made reference to the passing away of Shri Gopal Das 'Neeraj', noted poet and lyricist and Dr. M. Karunanidhi, former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and President of DMK Party.

During the Session, references were also made by the Chair on the 19th Anniversary of Kargil Vijay Diwas and the 76th Anniversary of the Quit India Movement. The Chair also made reference on the occasion of the Birth Centenary of

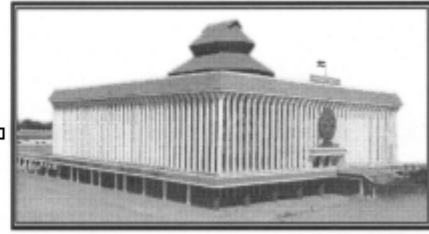


Mr. Nelson Mandela, former President of South Africa and stated that he would continue to be a source of inspiration for civil rights activists worldwide.

The Chairman also made references to the victims of the following incidents: (i) suicide bomber attack in Jalalabad, Afghanistan on the 1st July, 2018, in which 20 people, several of them belonging to the Sikh community, were killed and 20 others were injured; (ii) natural calamities of cloudbursts, landslides, lightening strikes, thunderstorms, dust storms and floods in different parts of the country, in the months of May, June and July, 2018, in which more than one thousand persons lost their lives, several hundreds were injured, and many others were displaced and rendered homeless; and (iii) bus accident in Pauri District of Uttarakhand on the 1st July, 2018, in which 48 persons were reportedly killed and 12 others were injured.

The Chairman made an important announcement regarding the arrangements made for simultaneous interpretation of the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha in five languages, namely Dogri, Kashmiri, Konkani, Santhali and Sindhi, in addition to the already existing arrangements for simultaneous interpretation in 17 languages. He informed the House that Members could henceforth speak in any of the 22 languages listed in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution. He also made an announcement regarding the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between India and Rwanda for promoting cooperation during the visit of a high level delegation from the Senate of that country led by Rt. Hon. Bernard Makuza, President of the Senate consisting of 2 Senators, Ms. Gertrude Kazarwa, Ms. Marguerite Nyagahura and 3 officials of the Senate from 8th to 13th July, 2018. Highlighting its significance, the Chairman said that for the first time in 66 years of its existence, Rajya Sabha entered into a MoU with the Upper House of another country to promote inter-parliamentary dialogue, organization of conferences and seminars, workshops and exchanges, capacity building of Parliamentary staff, furtherance of bilateral relations and friendship between the two countries, etc. So far the practice has been that the Lok Sabha takes the initiative in such matters.

The Chairman informed the Members that those Members who had given Zero hour notices and which could not be taken up, could repeat their notices if they were interested in



raising their submissions. The Chairman stated that as an exception, he has decided to allow them on the next day and called upon the interested Members to give fresh notices again.

19th July, 2018

The Chairman, on behalf of the whole House and on his own behalf, congratulated Miss Hima Das for winning the Gold Medal in the 400-metre event at the IAAF World under-20 Athletics Championships held at Tampere in Finland on the 12th of July, 2018.

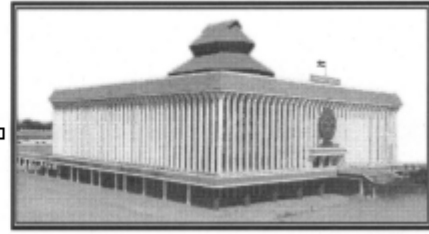
Before calling for laying the Papers on the Table, the Chairman made an announcement regarding provision of Wi-Fi facility inside the Rajya Sabha Chamber, using which Members can access and browse all Government websites including the websites of Parliament on their mobile phones, tablets, laptops, etc.

During the Zero Hour when a Member raised the matter relating to the challenges arising out of misuse of social media, the Chairman too expressed his concern about the sensitivity and seriousness of the issue. He said:

“ ... This issue of misuse of social media is a larger issue and also a sensitive and serious issue. We can't come to conclusions on one side and we can't take unilateral action also. The moment Government does something, then, there will be criticism and also opposition. At the same time, can you allow this situation that is happening to go on? So, keeping this in mind, I can only suggest to the Government to hold discussion with all the stakeholders, including political parties and then try to evolve a national policy because this will have international ramifications also. We can't simply take action. So, keeping that in mind, depending on the time available, we will see whether we can have a separate discussion ...”

During the Zero Hour, when a matter relating to “Growing drug menace amongst children in Bengaluru” was raised by a Member, more than 10 Members associated themselves with the issue.

During the Zero Hour, when a matter relating to “Deaths of youth in Punjab due to drug mafia” was raised by a Member, the Chairman did not miss the import of the issue being raised.



Emphasizing the need for larger public interest, he urged the Members to focus on issues instead of politicizing them and extract more information from the Ministers present in the House. He observed:

“I would like to tell hon. Members that this is Zero Hour, and because of the concern expressed about various issues, I sometimes ask the Ministers concerned to respond. Taking advantage of the presence of the Ministers and extracting some assurance or action would be good in public interest rather than trying to score political points. You say, ‘that party’: they say, ‘this party’. At the end of it, it would be all party! The result would be that we won’t have a meaningful discussion. I have seen some Members highlighting the points excellently, confining to the subject, within the time that is available to them. You heard Shri K.T.S. Tulsı speaking on such an issue, and many others too. So, my suggestion is, please confine to issues and then try to extract information, if the Minister is there and if he is willing. I have also been requesting the Ministers to try and cooperate to the extent possible so that Members could take advantage of their presence and try to get as much information as possible rather than politicizing issues. I can understand that elections are coming nearer, but that should not bother us. We should focus on the issues and a larger public interest should be preserved by the House. That is my advice to all the hon. Members.”

20th July 2018

Soon after the Question Hour began, the Chairman reminded the Members of the need to follow the rules for the effective functioning of the House. He observed:

“ ... Nobody should stand without the permission of the Chairman. Nobody should put a question without permission. That is the system. Otherwise, the House cannot function effectively” ..

During the Question Hour, when the Union Minister of Food Processing Industries, Shrimati Harsimrat Kaur Badal was replying to a supplementary question by a Member regarding one of the major challenges before the food processing industry in the country, *i. e.* lack of



proper infrastructure during harvest, transportation and storage, the Chairman, who has a keen interest in agriculture, shared his concern on the issue. He observed:

“The problem is really humongous. Fruits and vegetables are perishable as farmers do not have facilities of cold storage, refrigerated vans or food processing. The fruits and vegetables perish and the farmer loses. I can understand that a good improvement has been made but the challenge is very big and the food processing is one way for sustainable agriculture”.

23rd July 2018

Soon after the Papers were laid on the Table of the House, the Chairman made an announcement of yet another e-Governance initiative taken for the benefit of the Members. He said that a secure, web-based facility, e-Notices application had been launched to allow Members to submit various Parliamentary Notices online from any location in respect of various devices for raising issues under the rules such as Questions, Zero Hour, Special Mentions, Calling Attention, Short Duration Discussion, etc. He added that the existing system of giving physical notices, in Notice Office, however, would also continue. He expressed the hope that the Members would find the new system useful and convenient and would use it extensively.

Following the announcement on the e-Governance initiative, the Chairman reminded the Members about the need to follow the rules and sought their cooperation in running the House. He observed:

“Once the House has started, anybody coming late should come quietly and then occupy his seat. Anybody leaving in between should go quietly, without disturbing others and without wishing. Standing in the lobby and all that does not send a good signal. This is not confined to one party or one side. This is for all the Hon’ble Members”.

When the Question Hour started, Shri C. M. Ramesh wanted to know from the Chair about the notice given by him under Rule 168 (Motion on matters of public interest). The Chairman said that his notice has been admitted under another rule (Rule 176 relating to Short Duration



Discussion) and asked the Member not to raise the issue when the House was taking up listed business. At the conclusion of the Question Hour, the Chairman observed:

“ ... in the beginning itself, I had explained and clarified that the issue in question has already been admitted by me under Rule 176. Then, the other notice given under Rule 168, as it is not as per the procedure, has not been accepted. You cannot have two notices on the same issue and discuss it as two issues.

24th July 2018

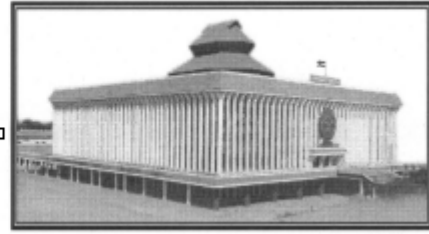
On 24th July 2018, the Chairman set a record of sorts by presiding over the House for the entire day.

During the Zero Hour, as many as 24 Zero Hour Submissions were taken up as ‘Matters raised with permission of the Chair’ which is the highest in the history of Rajya Sabha. Though again, on 6th August 2018, similar number of Zero Hour Submissions were made. The Chairman complimented the Members on this singular achievement. Before the Zero Hour came to an end, Shrimati Jaya Bachchan demanded that the reply should come to all Zero Hour Submissions and requested the Chairman to ensure that there should be a time bound period fixed for the reply. While agreeing with the Member, the Chairman urged the Ministers present to respond to the extent possible. He also asked the Parliamentary Affairs Minister to take note of it and convey the same to all the Ministers.

During the Question Hour, when a rather long supplementary question was put forth to the Minister of Health and Family Welfare, the Chairman observed:

“Supplementaries have to be short and replies should also be short and sharp. “

When the House re-assembled after lunch, it took up the Short Duration Discussion on the non-implementation of the provisions of Andhra Pradesh Re-organization Act, 2014 raised by Shri Y.S. Chowdary. During the discussion, some Members raised objection to a new Member who, while giving his maiden speech, took the name of a Chief Minister and



quoted him. Reacting to the points raised by the Members, the Chairman observed:

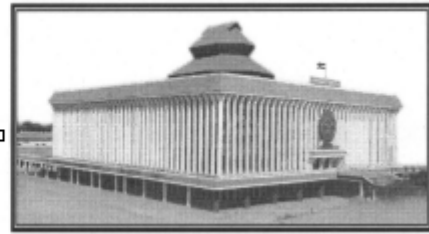
“I will not allow any charge. The question is, if somebody is quoting a document, speaking of a fact according to him, you cannot have any objection to it. If it is an allegation, yes. But if somebody is quoting a speech or a document or a reference to Council, Assembly, or Parliament, we cannot object to that ... I appeal to all Members not to make a distinction between new and old Members. Members get importance because of their conduct”.

31st July 2018

On 31st July, 2018, at the beginning of the Zero Hour, the Chairman referred to the notices given by some Members under Rule 267 (Suspension of rules) on the previous day and stated as follows:

“Hon. Members, some of the Members have given notices under Rule 267 on different issues but I have not admitted them. Yesterday, an important issue was sought to be raised about the non-registration of over 40 lakh names in the National Register of Citizens in Assam. Accordingly, I had requested the Home Minister. He was ‘here and I wanted the issue to be mentioned so that he can respond because I also feel that it is a sensitive and also a serious matter; It has a historical background of Assam Accord. This National Register of Citizens is a part of that Assam Accord which had been approved earlier. But, unfortunately, for whatever reasons, the House could not function yesterday. What I suggest is, today also, on my own, I have taken initiative to speak to the Home Minister, but what is happening is that the Home Minister is having the first question in the Lok Sabha. So, after that, he will come ..”

On a suggestion made by Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad, Leader of the Opposition and some other Members and agreed to by the House to dispense with the Question Hour to take up a discussion on the Final draft of the National Register of Citizens in Assam, the Chairman dispensed with the Question Hour and took up the discussion on the said subject. The Chairman said that though it has been his desire not to suspend the Question Hour, he had taken the decision to do



so since it was the majority will of the House. He said:

“I have decided, in my own discretion, to allow discussion on this. Each Party will be given two to three minutes. Senior Party leaders can speak up to three minutes and others can take two minutes. We will complete it before 1 o’clock. We will start with the Leader of the Opposition. ”

The Leader of the Opposition initiated the discussion and nineteen members took part in the discussion on the final draft of the National Register of Citizens in Assam which lasted for more than 1½ hours. However, the discussion was not concluded as there were persistent interruptions which prompted the Chairman to make several appeals to the Members to maintain order. As the disruption continued, the Chairman had to adjourn the House for the day.

1st August 2018

Soon after the Supplementary Demands for Grants, 2018-19 (July, 2018) were laid on the Table of the House, the Chairman announced that he had received a notice under Rule 267 but he had decided not to allow it as the matter had already been discussed. Shri Anand Sharma raised a point of order under Rule 238(v) regarding the rules to be observed when a Member has been permitted to speak in the House. He said that the previous day a Member had cast aspersions on late Shri Rajiv Gandhi and subsequent Prime Ministers and demanded that those expressions should be removed from record. The Chairman said that he would go through the records and appealed to the Members to set standards for others to follow and explained why he had to adjourn the House on the previous day. He said:

“Hon. Members, I was so upset yesterday, so much so the country also, when some Members menacingly rushed to the Well of the House. I thought something was going to happen to my Secretariat, and then some people started raising slogans also. It was totally unacceptable. I hope such things will not be repeated; I don’t want to name anybody or take any Party’s name. I saw in the newspapers the statement that the House had been going on well and a lot of constructive Business has been done, but now



it will not be allowed like what happened one day before. It came in the newspapers. Subsequently, whatever happened, let me make it very clear. The Chair has the power to adjourn the House as per the situation. There are umpteen number of examples in this very House when the House was adjourned by the Chair to any time. It is the discretion of the Chair because the Chair is overall responsible for the conduct of the House in a dignified manner. Unless there is cooperation by all Members, it is not possible. So, when I find it not possible, the next thing I do is that I adjourn the House instead of allowing these unruly scenes to be seen by people. Since this is the Upper House where people expect a more matured behaviour by one and all, I don't want the negative thing to go out. That is why I adjourned the House.

While explaining about the suspension of the Question Hour the previous day to take up the discussion on final draft of the National Register of Citizens in Assam, the Chairman said:

“The day before yesterday, I requested the Home Minister. He came and was waiting for giving his reply to the discussion that took place. There was even something unusual in allowing the discussion because you know that I am not at all in favour of suspending the Question Hour. But on the request of the Leader of the Opposition and other Members, I found that there was a broad consensus as the issue Members wanted to raise was a sensitive and a serious one. So, I decided to go by the mood of the House as an exception, not as a regular thing and did away with the Question Hour. Then I allowed the discussion. Many of the Members have made very constructive suggestions and also shown restraint as per my expectations. I was feeling happy. But, suddenly, I don't know what it was, Members started coming to the Well of the House. I appealed to them, if they were interested, they should allow the House to function in a normal way. Whatever you want to say outside, people have said earlier also and I am not concerned about what you say and what



you do outside. As far as the House is concerned, it should be conducted in a dignified manner, befitting of the Upper House of the Indian Parliament, which has got a great esteem”

The Chairman then called Shri Amit Anil Chandra Shah who had not concluded his speech the previous day to speak on the issue of final draft of the National Register of Citizens. However, the Chairman had to adjourn the House till Question Hour as there were persistent disruptions.

When the Question Hour was over, the Chairman thanked the Members as the House could take up twelve out of fifteen Questions for oral replies.

Soon after the House reassembled after lunch to take up further discussion on the Final Draft of the National Register of Citizens in Assam, raised by Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad, Leader of the Opposition on the 31st July 2018, Shri Sukhendu Sekhar Ray raised a point of order stating that under Rule 242 (1) [order of speeches and right of reply], if a Member has already spoken, how such a Member could speak twice. Shri Bhubaneshwar Kalita also made a point stating that nobody from Assam had spoken on the issue. As some Members continued to disrupt the House, the Chairman appealed to them to maintain order. He observed:

“ ... You create disorder and you raise a point of order ! want to put on record that this is unbecoming on the part of Members. When there is no order, there cannot be any point of order. There is neither point nor order.”

As the disturbances continued, the Minister of Home Affairs, Shri Raj Nath Singh could not reply to the discussion. The Chairman said that the Members neither wanted the debate to continue nor were they willing to hear the reply of the Home Minister. He thanked the Home Minister for continuously coming to the House for three days to respond to the aforesaid issue and then adjourned the House for the day.

2nd August 2018

On 2nd August, 2018, the Chairman, on behalf of the whole House and on his own behalf, congratulated Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad, Member and Leader of Opposition in Rajya



Sabha and Dr. Najma A. Heptulla, former Member and Deputy Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha, along with Shri Hukmdev Narayan Yadav, Shri Dinesh Trivedi and Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab, Members of the Lok Sabha, who were conferred the Outstanding Parliamentarian Award, at a function organized by Lok Sabha Secretariat in the Central Hall, Parliament House on 1st August, 2018. While congratulating the Leader of Opposition and the former Deputy Chairperson, the Chairman made the following observation:

“This House has been witness to the political and administrative acumen, deep insight into various social issues, command over the Rules and Procedure of the House and simple but effective way of oratory of Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad and Dr. Najma A. Heptulla. It is indeed a matter of great pride for this House that one sitting Member and one former Member have been conferred with this prestigious award.

The rich experience of Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad in public life and as Legislator and Minister, including that of Parliamentary Affairs, lends weight to his present role in this august House as the Leader of the Opposition. Shri Azad, as Leader of the Opposition, has been a great source of support to me in resolving many difficult situations. There are two people, if I have to mention, who are always instrumental in resolving the issues and in helping the Chairman whenever there is a problem. One is the Leader of the Opposition and the other is the Leader of the House. I am happy, though Leader of the House is not here today, that both have been recognised as Outstanding Parliamentarians. Earlier, the Leader of the House, Shri Arun Jaitley, was also conferred the same. At the meeting of the Leaders of various parties convened by me on the 17th of last month, that was a day before the start of this Session, Shri Azad made it clear that all together shall ensure smooth functioning of the House. Referring to the last two unproductive Sessions, Shri Azad noted with concern that people’s esteem for legislators is going down. I am glad that this Session got off to a good start. On behalf of the whole House and my own behalf, I congratulate all the Members on their achievements and do hope that they continue to serve the Parliament and the nation for a long time with grace and distinction. I would also like to



urge other Members, particularly, the new Members, to emulate them and always conduct themselves in accordance with the parliamentary etiquette and make meaningful contributions to the polity and nation.”

Thereafter, some Members including Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister of Law and Justice and Minister of Electronics and Information Technology and Shri Vijay Goel, Minister of State in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, associated with the sentiments expressed by the Chairman.

Before the Zero Hour was taken up, the Chairman referred to two points of order raised by Shri Sukhendu Sekhar Ray and Shri Anand Sharma on the previous day and gave the following ruling:

“Hon. Members, yesterday, two points of order were raised. One point of order was raised by Shri Sukhendu Sekhar Ray. He himself has answered the point of order also saying that ‘if the Chairman permits, the Member can resume his speech’. So, that matter ended there.

The second point of order was raised by Shri Anand Sharma. After laying of Papers on the Table, Anand Sharmaji, Member and Deputy Leader of the Indian National Congress Party in the Rajya Sabha, raised a point of order, quoting Rule 238(v), which reads as under:

‘A Member, while speaking, shall not reflect upon the conduct of persons in high authority unless a discussion is based on a substantive motion drawn in proper terms.

‘That is the rule. Shri Anand Sharma has alleged that one of the Hon. Members of Parliament, while participating in the discussion on the draft National Register of Citizens of Assam on the 31st of July, 2018, used derogatory and unparliamentary words against Shri Rajiv Gandhi and subsequent Prime Ministers and demanded that the Hon. Member should apologize and those words should be expunged from the records. He was agitated over the issue and I had promised to look into the records. I have gone through the records and found that no mention of persons of high authority, as alleged by Shri Sharma, was actually made by Shri Amit Shah. Rather it was Shri Anand Sharma who, while making the said allegation, used one unparliamentary word, which he attributed



to Mr. Shah and, therefore, that word needs to be expunged from the parliamentary records.

But, today morning, Shri Anand Sharma met me in my Chamber. I discussed that issue with him and brought to his notice what had been said. He agreed with me and that is why, I am closing the matter there itself.

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In fact, Mr. Shah did not refer to any Prime Minister other than Shri Rajiv Gandhi, and that too, as a matter of fact only. Now, Sharmaji is saying, 'by implication'. One should not read into it by implication. Let us close this matter here. I treat this matter as closed. "

3rd August 2018

On 3rd August 2018, after making a reference to the passing away of Shri Bhishma Narain Singh, former Member, the Chairman informed the House that he had received requests from one or two Members to speak, but he verified that it was not a practice. He said that though he had no objection basically, it would become a practice for others too.

During the Zero Hour, Shri Raj Nath Singh, Minister of Home Affairs, replied to the discussion on the Final Draft of the National Register of Citizens in Assam, raised by Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad, Leader of the Opposition on 31st July, 2018. Thereafter, some Members sought clarifications from the Home Minister. The Chairman asked the Home Minister to note all the suggestions and clarifications sought by the Members and send the answers to them.

During Question Hour, when some Members rose before the Chairman called for the next Question, the Chairman explained that there was a system in place and stated:

"There is no need to stand.... All names are being noted. And, then, as I told you, I would look into certain things, like, area, party, importance of the question, whether you had been given opportunity yesterday also, etc., etc. All these things are to be kept in mind. I have a system also. "



6th August 2018

On 6th August, 2018, after Papers/ reports were laid on the Table, twenty four matters were raised with permission of the Chair during the Zero Hour, equalling the previous record achieved on the 24th July 2018.

Before proceeding with the Zero Hour, the Chairman reminded the Members about the remaining Business of the House and what had been decided in the Business Advisory Committee. He said:

“Hon. Members, we have five days left. Four days are full working days, and the fifth day is a non-official day. We have so much Business, including 24 Bills. At the end of the Parliament Session, as you know, public, media and others also will be reviewing as to how many Bills were passed, and how many issues were discussed, etc. Keeping that in mind, in the Business Advisory Committee, I suggested and I was happy to note that Hon. Members have agreed that the House will be sitting till late, beyond 6’o clock and sometimes up to 8’o clock also, depending upon the need. So, please ... try to be there in the House.

The Chairman also informed the House about the Orientation Programme organised for newly-elected Members during the weekend on 4th and 5th August 2018. He said:

“I am also happy to inform you all that yesterday and the day before, the Rajya Sabha Secretariat have conducted a Refreshers’ Course for the newly-elected Rajya Sabha Members. Around thirty-six Members took part in this two days’ programme. I am told that it was productive. I also felt, during my interaction, that Members were very, very inquisitive.Members should really make use of such occasions, and then interact and find out the rules and regulations, the procedure, the opportunities available, the duties and responsibilities also. Some good beginning has been made. “

Soon after the Zero Hour was over, the Chairman made an announcement to inform the Members that the Election to the Office of the Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha would be held on Thursday, the 9th August, 2018 at 11.00 a.m. immediately after laying of papers/reports on the Table.



When the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-third Amendment) Bill, 2017 and the National Commission for Backward Classes (Repeal) Bill, 2017 were being discussed, a Member while participating in the discussion on the Bills was reading from his speech. Asking the Member not to read the speech, the Chairman made the following observation:

“Members, please take note- it is not my intention, but the rule says very clearly and specifically and there are a number of rulings- nobody can read a speech. They have to speak. If there is a reference or if you want to quote something, you can quote from any source and then you can say that you are authenticating this source. Please keep this in mind. Otherwise it will be odd for me to stop in- between and say, ‘Please do not read’. That will be covered by media also. So, please keep this in mind. “

7th August 2018

When the Papers were being laid on the Table, the Chairman made three important observations. The first observation was regarding the procedure to be followed while making statement by a Minister on behalf of another Minister. He said:

“Hon. Members I have already observed that I will not allow any Statement made by any Minister on behalf of any other Minister unless I get notice beforehand and then I permit it. Now, there is some improvement but still some people are coming at the last moment and approaching the Table Office and our Secretariat saying, ‘instead of that Minister, I am going to read it.’ This is not permissible. This is the last day. I am not going to allow it at all. Please take note of the same.”

The second observation was regarding punctuality of Members in the House. He said:

“.....I have been seeing that Hon. Members are coming one by one after the Chairman comes and the House assembles. You have got the right. I am not denying that. But, at the same time, the practice is that everybody



should be in their seats before the Chairman comes and then we must start the Business.. That will send a good message. I request you all to please focus on this. This will enhance the prestige and decorum of the House.”

The third observation was regarding the lack of adequate presence of Members in the House when an important legislation was being discussed and passed. It may be mentioned that on previous day the Constitution (One Hundred Twenty-third Amendment) Bill, 2017 to provide for constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes was passed. The Chairman felt that the number of Members present was exactly a little above the requisite numbers to pass the aforesaid Bill. Expressing his concern in this regard, he observed:

“Yesterday, we passed a historic Bill unanimously. I also felt very happy. Even I tweeted also about. What was the total presence in the House? It was 156. And what is the strength of the House? On such a Constitutional Amendment where there is unanimity, where there is concern, we just scraped through because two- thirds majority and more than half to be present, etc., are required. So, in such matters, parties also, through their whips, should see to it that the Members are cautioned or guided or directed to be there in time and also vote in such things. If somebody takes note of it ... it will be a sad commentary on our functioning.”

He summed up his observations for the Members as one, to be punctual; two, to be on time; and three, to be present in the House in large numbers whenever there was important legislation. He said that would enhance the prestige and decorum of the House and also send a good message to the society.

In the post lunch session, when the Chair wanted to take up the discussion on the recent increase in MSP of agricultural crops and the challenges in agricultural sector, there were disruptions by some Members in the House. Expressing his desire to take up important issues, the Chairman said,

“Hon‘ble Members, I wanted to take up important issues. Accordingly, the Business Advisory Committee has agreed to have discussion on challenges in agricultural sector; recent hike in the MSP, etc. The second one is about the state of economy and problems



connected with that. Both have been admitted. One was slated for yesterday. But, it could not be taken up yesterday. So, it is slated for today. And, the other one is to be taken up tomorrow. There are other issues which have been slated for taking up one after the other. As far as Zero Hour is concerned, I have been admitting almost all Zero Hour submissions. First opportunity is given to Members who have not got any opportunity so far. Second opportunity is given to those Members who have got only one opportunity. And, third one is depending upon the importance of the issue”

As some Members continued to disrupt the House, the Chairman had to adjourn the House for the day.

8th August 2018

On 8th August, 2018, the Chairman made a reference to the passing away of Dr. M. Karunanidhi, Former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and President of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) party. The House observed silence, all Members standing, as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed. As a mark of respect to the memory of Dr. M. Karunanidhi, the House was adjourned for the day.

9th August 2018

The House paid homage to Martyrs of the Quit India Movement on the occasion of the 76th Anniversary of the Quit India Movement. The Chairman made the following reference on this occasion:

“Hon. Members, on this very day, 76 years ago, the ‘Quit India Movement’ was launched under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. ‘Quit India’ or ‘Bharat Chhodo’ - this simple but powerful slogan characterised the legendary struggle in which the common people demonstrated unparalleled heroism. If we breathe today in a free and independent India, we owe a lot to the courageous men and women who participated in the Movement, which culminated in our Independence five years later. On behalf of the entire House and also on my own behalf, I pay my humble homage to our freedom fighters. ‘Shat Shat Naman’!



The country has come a long way since our Independence. During all these years, we have produced and followed one of the finest Constitutions in the world. We are the world's largest democracy with a number of democratic institutions, which have stood the test of time. We have established the rule of law, ensured the freedom of Press and upheld the independence of Judiciary. We have one of the best civil services, highly professional armed forces, a strong civil society and a vibrant media. Our legislatures have passed some good laws and held reasoned debates on issues facing the common people.

Amidst all these achievements, however, our failures are also stark. We have many social and economic problems that adversely affect our growth as a nation. We need to make concerted efforts to overcome these challenges. Economic regeneration of our country must engage our undivided attention. Today, it makes all of us happy that Indian economy has emerged as the sixth largest economy in the world. In our march towards economic development, we need to ensure that the fruits of development also reach those who are living at the margins of the society. ... the Quit India Movement achieved its objectives long back. It is now time for all of us to join hands together to ensure that the challenges being faced by the people also 'Quit India forever'.

... on this occasion, I would like to recall the words of Mahatma Gandhi who said: 'I shall work for an India, in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country in whose making they have an effective voice; an India in which there shall be no high class and low class of people; an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony. ' It is our bounden duty to collectively build the India of Mahatma Gandhi's dream. This shall be the best tribute we can pay to Mahatma Gandhi and all those who participated in the Quit India Movement.

On this solemn occasion, we pay our humble and respectful homage to the martyrs who gave their lives and also to those who suffered untold sufferings for the cause of our freedom. May the 'Do or Die' spirit of Quit India



Movement permeate our lives towards upholding the unity and integrity of our country. I request the Hon. Members to rise in their places and observe silence as a mark of respect to the sacred memory of the martyrs “.

The House observed silence, all Members standing, as a mark of respect to the memory of the martyrs.

Election of Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha

After Papers were laid on the Table, the Motions for election of the new Deputy Chairman were moved. Nine motions were moved for election. As per procedure, the Members who had given the notice moved them one by one seconded by the seconders thereof. The candidates were Shri Harivansh and Shri B.K. Hariprasad from the ruling NDA and the Opposition respectively. Shri Ram Chandra Prasad Singh moved the following Motion: “That Shri Harivansh be chosen as the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.” Shri Ramdas Athawale seconded the Motion. Thereafter, Shri Satish Chandra Misra moved the following Motion: “That Shri B.K. Hariprasad be chosen as the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.” Shri Vivek K. Tankha seconded the Motion. Before the Motions moved were put to vote, the Chairman made the following announcement:

“I may like to inform the House that the Motions moved will now be taken up for adoption in the same sequence in which they have been moved. And, at any stage, if a Motion is carried, the remaining Motions will become infructuous and will not be put to the vote of the House.”

Thereafter, the Motion moved by Shri Ram Chandra Prasad Singh and duly seconded by Shri Ramdas Athawale was put to vote. The House divided and the Chairman announced the votes- Ayes 125, Noes 101. The Motion was adopted and the Chairman declared that Shri Harivansh has been chosen as the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. He called upon one Member from the Treasury Bench and one Member from the Opposition Bench to guide the new Deputy Chairman to his seat.



Soon after Shri Harivansh got elected as the Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha, the Chairman called the Leaders of different parties and groups to offer felicitations. Twenty-three Members felicitated Shri Harivansh on his election as Deputy Chairman including Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister; Shri Arun Jaitley, Hon'ble Leader of the House; Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad, Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition; and Shri Ramdas Athawale, Hon'ble Minister of State in the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The Chairman associated himself with the felicitations offered to Shri Harivansh. He said:

“ ... election by this august House of its Deputy Chairman is an important event of this Session. Deputy Chairman has an important role in sharing the responsibility of presiding over the proceedings of the House for a considerable period every day. I heartily congratulate Shri Harivanshji on his election as Deputy Chairman of this august House today. It is an honour conferred on him by this august House. I have reasons to believe strongly that he would live up to the expectations of all sections of the House. I say so based on my interactions with him during the last one year as Member of Parliament and even earlier also as a journalist. I have noticed Shri Harivanshji making constructive suggestions in the meetings of the Business Advisory Committee and also my daily meetings with leaders of various parties. On all such occasions, his suggestions and interventions were very clearly driven by his commitment to enable smooth functioning of the House.I can assure you that Shri Harivansh is calm, cool and smiling all the time. These traits should help Shri Harivanshji in discharging his new responsibility as a Deputy Chairman of this august House effectively. I understand that he hails from a village in Uttar Pradesh bordering Bihar which also gave birth to one of the great leaders of our country, late Shri Jayaprakash Narayanji from whom all of us, including me, have taken inspiration. He resides in Jharkhand and is a Member of this House from Bihar. So, U.P., Jharkhand and Bihar — all three in one! This kind of association with three States of our country would certainly give anybody a true Pan-Indian perspective.Shri Harivanshji is the first to



become Deputy Chairman of this House as a first-time Member. This is indeed an honour. I compliment him for the same. . . . Shri Harivashji also did his schooling in a Government school. He took his graduation from Banaras Hindu University. I have read somewhere one of his teachers saying that Shri Harivansh was a keen student and used to talk less normally but pitched in with very logical and convincing perspectives during debates. That should help him in his new assignment. Shri Harivanshji also worked as a journalist of repute in major media organizations. He was an editor of Prabhat Khabar. The Hon. Prime Minister was mentioning that when he joined this newspaper, the circulation was only four hundreds. I can share with you that when he led the newspaper as Editor, it had reached to almost 10 lakh circulation. That speaks of his capacity. I hope this experience would help this august House find more goodwill from the media. As said, he gave up the comfortable job in a nationalized bank to get back to journalism again. This shows that he goes by his heart in pursuit of larger convictions and commitments. Shri Harivash also has experience of the governance system because he has been Advisor to the Former Prime Minister, Shri Chandrashekarji. I am also happy that this House could elect its Deputy Chairman during the Session immediately after the vacancy arose

The Chairman also complimented Shri B.K. Hariprasad and also all the Members for enabling a smooth and dignified election. He said:

“I also compliment senior Member of this august House, Shri B.K. Hariprasad, whom I have known for years, for contesting this election in the spirit of democracy. After the contest we all move forward with a spirit of friendship and cooperation. The entire election went off in a smooth and dignified manner. So, I compliment not only both the candidates, but also all the Members from various political parties, who behaved in a dignified manner. Even as I am sure, I still formally urge upon all sections of the House to extend full cooperation to the new Deputy Chairman, as has been the case in the past. ”



The newly elected Deputy Chairman, Shri Harivansh thanked the Chairman, the Prime Minister, the Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition and other Members for the felicitations. While responding to the felicitations offered to him, Shri Harivansh quoted Dr. S. Radhakrishnan and Shri N. Gopalaswamy Ayyangar to highlight the importance of dignified debates and deliberations. He said that we could lead the country to greatness if we pay our attention to the rules and procedures framed by our Constitution makers. He said that there would be differences in debates and opinions but together we could find a way out to run the House in a dignified manner and effectively. He further said that he would welcome the suggestions of the Members in this regard.

10th August 2018

When the House met after lunch, the Chairman reminded the Members that on the day when former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Dr. M. Karunanidhi expired, he had called a meeting after having a word with the Leader of the Opposition and in that meeting it was suggested that on Friday the House would have Legislative Business rather than Private Members' Business. But, after talking to others, he had decided that there would be Private Members' Business after which the two bills on which there was a broad consensus, would be taken up.

Thereafter, the Private Members' Business was taken up and Shri Vishambhar Prasad Nishad moved a Resolution regarding the lack of uniform reservation system in the country for the people belonging to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes or Denotified Castes. Eight Members including Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot, Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment participated in the discussion. Shri Vishambhar Prasad Nishad replied to the discussion. When the Deputy Chairman who was presiding over the House asked Shri Nishad whether he would like to withdraw the Resolution or wanted voting on it, the Member pressed for voting on the Resolution. It may be mentioned that when Members from the treasury benches protested at the unprecedented request for division on a Resolution from the opposition, the Deputy Chairman observed that once the process had started, it could not be stopped. The Resolution was accordingly put to the vote of the House and the House divided with 32 votes in favour and 66 against. The Resolution was, therefore, negatived by the House.



Statistical Information

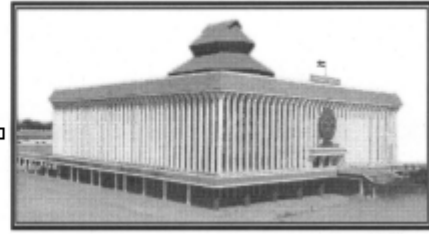
During the Session, 270 Starred Questions and 2879 Unstarred Questions were admitted and answered. Of these, 91 Starred Questions were orally answered on the floor of the House and replies to the remaining Starred and Unstarred Questions were laid on the Table of the House. Question Hour could not be taken up on one day due to disruption of the proceedings in protest over Final Draft of National Register for Citizens in Assam. Three(3) Statements by Ministers correcting answers to questions were also laid on the Table during the Session.

During the Session, 61 Special Mentions on Matters of Public Importance were made or laid on the Table of the House and 120 matters were also raised with the permission of the Chair (Zero Hour Submissions).

The issue regarding non-implementation of the provisions of Andhra Pradesh Re-organisation Act, 2014 raised by Shri Y. S. Chowdary on 24th July 2018 was discussed in the form of Short Duration Discussion which lasted for more than 3½ hours. Twenty four (24) Members took part in the discussion including Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad, the Leader of Opposition, Shri Prakash Javadekar, Minister of Human Resource Development, and Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Railways, Minister of Coal, Minister of Finance and Minister of Corporate Affairs. Shri Rajnath Singh, Minister of Home Affairs, replied to the discussion. However, the Short Duration Discussion regarding recent increase in the Minimum Support Prices for Kharif crops and challenges in agricultural sector taken up on the 7th August 2018 remained inconclusive.

On 26th July, 2018, one Calling Attention to Matter of Urgent Public Importance was taken up. Shri V. Muraleedharan called the attention of the Minister of Electronics and Information Technology on the misuse of social media platforms to spread rumours and fake news leading to rising incidents of violence and lynching in the country. Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister of Law and Justice and Minister of Electronics and Information Technology, made a statement. Thereafter, as many as fourteen (14) Members sought clarifications on the statement made by the Minister.

As mentioned earlier, during the Session, more than 27 hours of the time of the House were lost on account of disruptions of its proceedings. The issues which agitated the Members



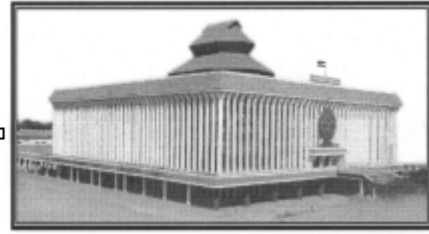
were: (a) demand for Special Category Status to the State of Andhra Pradesh (b) issue of unaccounted deposits by Indians in banks in Switzerland (c) reported incidents of lynching in various parts of the country, (d) Final draft of the National Register of Citizens in Assam (e) reported harassment of girls at a Shelter Home in Deoria (Uttar Pradesh), (f) reported detention of Leaders of AITC in Assam, (g) Rafael deal, etc.

During the Session, 146 Reports/Action Taken Statements of various Committees including Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees (DRPSCs) and the Report and Evidence of the Joint Committee of Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill, 2018 were presented/laid.

As per the direction of the Hon'ble Chairman, Rajya Sabha and the Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha issued in September 2004, a Minister concerned is required to make once in six months a statement in the House regarding the status of implementation of recommendations contained in the Reports of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees (DRPSCs) of Rajya Sabha/Lok Sabha with regard to his/her Ministry. As mandated by the said direction, 50 Statements were laid on the Table of the House on the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the Reports of various Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees (DRPSCs) by the Ministers concerned.

During the Session, twenty-five Statements in English and Hindi showing action taken by Government on the various assurances, promises and undertakings given during the Sessions from 2009 and 2018 were laid on the Table.

Some of the important papers laid on the Table of the House during the Session were: Report of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), New Delhi, for the year 2016-17; Thirtieth Progress Report on the Action taken Pursuant to recommendations of the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on Stock Market Scam and matters relating thereto (July, 2018); Statement of Market Borrowings by the Central Government, during the year 2017-18; Annual Report of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee



Act (MGNREGA), for the year 2017-18, First Annual Report of the National Mission for Clean Ganga for the year 2016-17, Statement of Half Yearly Review of the Trends in receipts and expenditure in relation to the Budget, at the end of the Financial year 2017-18, Medium-term Expenditure Framework Statement (August, 2018), Report of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC), New Delhi, for the year 2016-17, Report of National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC), New Delhi on the Problems faced by Scheduled Caste students in obtaining Scholarships, for the year 2016, First Annual Report of the National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2016-17, one sensitive notification and few CAG Reports were some of the important Reports/Papers that were laid on the Table of the House during the Session.

Orientation Programme for newly elected and nominated Members of Rajya Sabha

An Orientation Programme for the newly elected and nominated Members of Rajya Sabha was organized on 4th and 5th August 2018 in the Main Committee Room, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi. The Programme was inaugurated by the Hon’ble Vice-President of India and Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu and was attended by nearly 40 Members of Rajya Sabha. During the Orientation Programme, eminent and experienced Parliamentarians and other experts interacted with the new Members through a series of lectures on different aspects of the parliamentary functioning, especially the Rajya Sabha. Speaking at the inaugural session, the Chairman said that even if a person had been in public life for years, everybody needed training. He also advised the new Members to become conversant with the procedures, etiquette and methods of Parliament; to be punctual; and to be attentive to whoever is speaking on whatever subject in the House.

Legislative Business

In the sphere of legislative business, one (1) Government Bill namely, the *National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities (Amendment) Bill, 2018* was introduced and one (1) Bill namely, the *Armed Forces*



Tribunal (Amendment) Bill, 2012 was withdrawn by the Government. The *National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities (Amendment) Bill, 2018*, was deferred and the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Amendment) Bill, 2018*, as passed by Lok Sabha was referred to Select Committee of the Rajya Sabha. The discussion on the *National Council for Teacher Education (Amendment) Bill, 2018*, and the *Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2017* as passed by Lok Sabha, was not concluded.

Fourteen (14) Government Bills were passed/returned during the Session. These were: (i) The State Banks (Repeal and Amendment) Bill, 2017, (ii) The Requisitioning and Acquisition of Immovable Property (Amendment) Bill, 2017, (iii) The Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill, 2013, (iv) The Specific Relief (Amendment) Bill, 2018, (v) The Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018, (vi) The Negotiable Instruments (Amendment) Bill, 2018, (vii) The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-third Amendment) Bill, 2017, (viii) The National Commission for Backward Classes (Repeal) Bill, 2017, (ix) The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2018, (x) The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Bill, 2018, (xi) The National Sports University Bill, 2018, (xii) The Homoeopathy Central Council (Amendment) Bill, 2018, (xiii) The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Second Amendment) Bill, 2018, and (xiv) The Commercial Courts, Commercial Division and Commercial Appellate Division of High Courts (Amendment) Bill, 2018. The summary of the Bills passed is given below:

(i) The State Banks (Repeal and Amendment) Bill, 2017 sought to repeal the State Bank of India (Subsidiary Banks) Act, 1959, the State Bank of Hyderabad Act, 1956 and further to amend the State Bank of India Act, 1955. For the purpose of rationalization of resources, reduction of costs, better profitability, lower cost of funds leading to better rate of interest for public at large, improved productivity and customer service, the State Bank of India (SBI) with the sanction of the Central government and in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had entered into negotiations with the State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur, State Bank of Mysore,



State Bank of Patiala, State Bank of Travancore and the State Bank of Hyderabad, referred to as subsidiary banks, and acquired their business, assets and liabilities. After the acquisition of the subsidiary banks by SBI, as per the orders of the Central Government published in February 2017, they ceased to exist which, therefore, necessitated the repeal and amendment of the said Acts.

The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 21st July 2017 and was passed by that House on 10th August 2017. The Bill, as amended, was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 18th July 2018. As many as fourteen Members took part in the discussion and Shri Shiv Pratap Shukla, Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance replied to the discussion on the Bill. The Bill as passed by both Houses of Parliament received the assent of the President on 2nd August, 2018 and became Act No. 19 of 2018.

(ii) The Requisitioning and Acquisition of Immovable Property (Amendment) Bill, 2017 sought to further amend the Requisitioning and Acquisition of Immovable Property Act, 1952 which empowered the Central Government to requisition, for the purposes of the Union, any immovable property, and to acquire such requisitioned property under certain specified conditions. The Bill sought to amend section 7 of the Act to enable the Central Government to re-issue the notice of acquisition to the owner or such other person interested in the property, for the purpose of giving opportunity of being heard. The person would also be entitled to annual rate of interest till the final payment of compensation. Further, it proposed that any enhanced compensation with or without interest awarded by the Court or other authority shall be subject to the re-issuance of the proposed notice of acquisition and applicable to the cases of property being acquired for national security and defence purpose.

The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 18th July 2017 and was passed by that House on 20th December 2017. The Bill, as amended, was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 18th July 2018. A total of seven members took part in the discussion and the Minister of State (Independent charge) of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Shri Hardeep Singh Puri replied to the discussion of the Bill. The Bill as passed by both Houses of Parliament received the

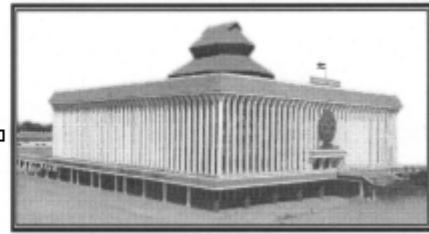


assent of the President on 9th August, 2018 and became Act No. 21 of 2018.

(iii) The Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill, 2013 sought to amend the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 to bring the domestic anti-corruption legal framework in conformity with current international practices laid down by the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) which has been ratified by India. The Bill, *inter alia*, sought to substitute the definition of offence with a new comprehensive definition which covered all aspects of passive bribery, including the solicitation and acceptance of bribe through intermediaries; to make the offence of giving bribe a criminal offence; to provide punishment for the offence relating to bribing a public servant by a commercial organization; to provide punishment for abetment of all offences under the Act; and to safeguard a public servant from vexatious prosecution for any bona fide omission or commission in the discharge of his official duties and to lay down clear criteria and procedure for sanction of prosecution, including the stage at which sanction can be sought, timelines within which order has to be passed, etc.

The Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill, 2013 was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 19th August, 2013. The Bill was referred to the Department- related Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice on 23rd August 2013. The Committee presented its Sixty-ninth Report on the Bill to the Rajya Sabha and laid on the Table of Lok Sabha respectively on 6th February, 2014. The Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice had also sought the views of the Law Commission on the amendments and the Law Commission made several recommendations in its 254th Report in February 2015. In the light of the recommendations made in those Reports, the Government proposed as many as thirty-one official amendments to the Bill in 2015, which were substantive in nature and had far reaching impact on the Bill. The Bill was referred to a Select Committee of Rajya Sabha on 11th December, 2015 and the Committee presented its Report on 12th August 2016.

The Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill, 2013, as reported by the Select Committee of Rajya Sabha was moved for consideration on 4th April, 2018. Further consideration of the motion continued on 19th July 2018 and the Bill, as amended, was passed on the same



day. In all, 23 members took part in the discussion and the Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region and Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Department of Atomic Energy and Department of Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh, replied to the debate. The Bill, as passed by Rajya Sabha, was passed by the Lok Sabha on 24th July 2018. The Bill as passed by both Houses of Parliament received the assent of the President on 26th July, 2018 and became Act no. 16 of 2018.

(iv) The Specific Relief (Amendment) Bill, 2018 sought to further amend the Specific Relief Act, 1963 which conferred wide discretionary powers upon the courts to decree specific performance of contracts and to refuse injunction because of which the courts in majority of cases awarded damages as a general rule and granted specific performance as an exception. It was felt that the Act was not in tune with rapid economic growth and the expansion of infrastructure activities that are needed for the overall development in the country. Keeping all that in view, the Bill proposed to do away with the wider discretion of courts to grant specific performance and to make specific performance of contract a general rule than exception subject to certain limited grounds. It further proposed to provide for substituted performance of contracts as an alternative remedy to the party who suffers a broken contract. It also sought to enable the courts to engage experts on specific issues and to secure their attendance, etc.

The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 22nd December, 2017 and was passed by that House on 15th March, 2018. The Bill, as passed by the Lok Sabha was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 23rd July 2018, Nine Members took part in the discussion on the Bill and the Minister of Law and Justice and Minister of Electronics and Information Technology, Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad replied to the discussion. The Bill as passed by both Houses of Parliament received the assent of the President on 1st August 2018 and became Act No. 18 of 2018.

(v) The Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018 provided for measures to deter economic offenders from evading the process of Indian law by remaining outside the jurisdiction of Indian courts and ensure their return to India to face



action in accordance with the law. The Bill, *inter alia*, provided for the definition of the fugitive economic offender as an individual who has committed a scheduled offence or offences involving an amount of one hundred crore rupees or more and has absconded from India or refused to come back to India to avoid or face criminal prosecution in India; attachment of the property of a fugitive economic offender and proceeds of crime, etc. The Bill sought to replace the Fugitive Economic Offenders Ordinance, 2018.

The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 12th March, 2018 and was passed by that House on 19th July, 2018. The Bill as passed by the Lok Sabha, was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 25th July 2018. Twenty Members took part in the discussion and the Minister of Railways, Minister of Coal, Minister of Finance and Minister of Corporate Affairs, Shri Piyush Goyal, replied to the discussion on the Bill. The Bill as passed by both Houses of Parliament received the assent of the President on 31st July, 2018 and became Act No. 17 of 2018.

(vi) The Negotiable Instruments (Amendment) Bill, 2018 sought to amend the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881 with a view to address the issue of undue delay in final resolution of cheque dishonour cases so as to provide relief to payees of dishonoured cheques and to discourage frivolous and unnecessary litigation which would save time and money. The proposed amendments sought to strengthen the credibility of cheques and help trade and commerce in general by allowing lending institutions, including banks, to continue to extend financing to the productive sectors of the economy.

The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 2nd January, 2018 and was passed by that House on 23rd July, 2018. The Bill, as passed by the Lok Sabha, was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 26th July 2018. Fifteen Members took part in the discussion and the Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance, Shri Shiv Pratap Shukla, replied to the discussion on the Bill. The Bill,



as passed by both Houses of Parliament, received the assent of the President on 2nd August, 2018 and became Act No. 20 of 2018.

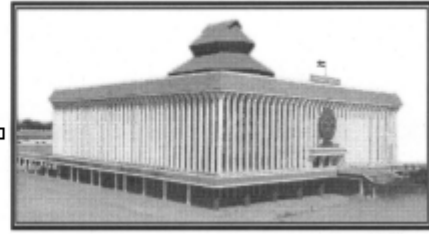
(vii) The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-third Amendment) Bill, 2017 - Returned by Lok Sabha with alternate amendments and further amendments and

(viii) The National Commission for Backward Classes (Repeal) Bill, 2017, as passed by Lok Sabha

These two Bills were discussed together. On 6th August, 2018, Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot, Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, moved the motion that the amendments alternative to the amendment made by the Rajya Sabha and further amendments made by Lok Sabha in the Bill, be taken into consideration. The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-third Amendment) Bill, 2017 sought to insert a new article 338B in the Constitution providing for a Commission for the socially and educationally backward classes to be known as the National Commission for Backward Classes. The Commission would have the power to regulate its own procedure and its duty would include, *inter alia*, to investigate and monitor all matters relating to the safeguards provided for the socially and educationally backward classes under the Constitution or under any law for the time being in force or under any order of the Government and to evaluate the working of such safeguards.

The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-third Amendment) Bill, 2017 returned with alternate amendments and further amendments by Lok Sabha was adopted by a majority of the total membership of the House and by a majority of not less than two thirds of the Members of the House present and voting. The Bill, as amended by the amendments agreed to, was passed by the required majority. The Bill as passed by both Houses of Parliament received the consent of the President on 11th August 2018 and became the Constitution (One Hundred and Second Amendment) Act, 2018.

The National Commission for Backward Classes (Repeal) Bill, 2017, as passed by Lok Sabha sought to repeal the National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993. The Bill was

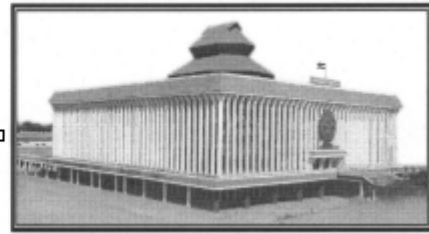


introduced in the Lok Sabha on 5th April, 2017 and was passed by that House on 10th April, 2017. The Bill, as passed by Lok Sabha, was passed by Rajya Sabha on 6th August, 2018. Twenty-four Members including Shri Ramdas Athawale, Minister of State in the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment participated in the discussion and Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot, Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment replied to the debate. The Bill, as passed by both Houses of Parliament, received the assent of the President on 14th August, 2018 and became Act No. 24 of 2018.

(ix) **The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2018** sought to further amend the Indian Penal Code, Indian Evidence Act, 1872, the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012. Incidents of brutal sexual assaults in recent years, especially those perpetrated on minor girls, fuelled demands from various sections of the society to make the penal provisions more stringent and effective. The Bill sought to replace the Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance, 2018 promulgated on 21st April, 2018. It, *inter alia*, provided to increase minimum punishment for the offence of rape from seven years to ten years and to provide for maximum death penalty for rape of a woman under 12 years of age; not less than twenty years of rigorous imprisonment which may extend to life and with fine for rape of a woman under sixteen years of age; completion of inquiry or trial relating to the offence of rape, within a period of two months, etc.

The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 23rd July 2018 and was passed by that House on 30th July 2018. The Bill, as passed by the Lok Sabha was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 6th August 2018. Sixteen Members took part in the discussion on the Bill and the Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Shri Kiren Rijiju replied to the debate. The Bill as passed by both Houses of Parliament received the assent of the President on 11th August 2018 and became Act No. 22 of 2018.

(x) **The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Bill, 2018** sought to further amend the Scheduled Castes and the



Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. The Supreme Court in a recent judgement upheld the need of a preliminary enquiry by a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) to find out whether allegations made out a case under the said Act before registering a First Information Report (FIR) relating to commission of an offence. It also held that approval of an appropriate authority had to be obtained before arrest of any person connected with the offence.

The Bill sought to provide that preliminary enquiry shall not be required for registration of FIR against any person; or the investigating officer shall not require approval for the arrest, if necessary, of any person against whom an accusation of having committed an offence under the Act has been made and no procedure other than that provided under the Act or the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 shall apply; and the provisions of Section 438 of the Code shall not apply to a case under the Act, notwithstanding any judgement or order or direction of any Court.

The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 3rd August 2018 and was passed by that House on 6th August 2018. The Bill, as passed by the Lok Sabha, was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 9th August, 2018. Seventeen (17) members took part in the discussion on the Bill and the Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot replied to the discussion. The Bill as passed by both Houses of Parliament received the assent of the President on 17th August, 2018 and became Act No. 27 of 2018.

(xi) The National Sports University Bill, 2018 sought to establish and incorporate a National Sports University in the State of Manipur, a specialised University first of its kind, to promote sports education in the areas of sports sciences, sports technology, sports management and sports coaching besides functioning as the national training centre for select sports disciplines by adopting best international practices.

The Bill sought to replace the National Sports University Ordinance, 2018 promulgated on 31st May, 2018. The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 23rd July, 2018 and was passed

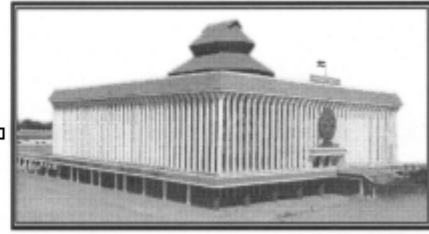


by that House on 3rd August, 2018. The Bill, as passed by the Lok Sabha, was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 9th August, 2018. Eleven Members took part in the discussion on the Bill and Col. Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore, Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, replied to the discussion. The Bill as passed by both Houses of Parliament received the assent of the President on 17th August, 2018 and became Act No. 25 of 2018.

(xii) The Homoeopathy Central Council (Amendment) Bill, 2018 sought to further amend the Homoeopathy Central Council Act, 1973. The Act was amended in the year 2002 to check the growth of sub-standard Homoeopathy Colleges by making provisions to seek the permission of the Central Government for establishing new colleges or starting new courses of study or increase of admission capacity in existing colleges. However, many Homoeopathy Medical Colleges are still struggling to meet the required standards to impart quality education. Besides, instances of malpractices in the Council and charges of serious misconduct against the President of the Council had cropped up.

The Bill, which sought to replace the Homoeopathy Central Council (Amendment) Ordinance, 2018, *inter alia*, provided for (a) the constitution of a Board of Governors by superseding the Central Council of Homoeopathy till a new Central Council is duly reconstituted within a period of one year from the date of supersession of the Central Council; and (b) any person who has established a Homoeopathy Medical College or a Homoeopathy Medical College has opened a new or higher course of study or training or increased the admission capacity on or before the commencement of the Act, such person or Homoeopathy Medical College shall seek within a period of one year from the said commencement permission of the Central Government.

The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 23rd July 2018 and was passed by that House on 30th July, 2018. The Bill, as passed by the Lok Sabha, was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 9th August, 2018. Seven Members took part in the discussion on the Bill and



Shri Shripad Yesso Naik, Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH), replied to the discussion. The Bill as passed by both Houses of Parliament received the assent of the President on 13th August, 2018 and became Act No. 23 of 2018.

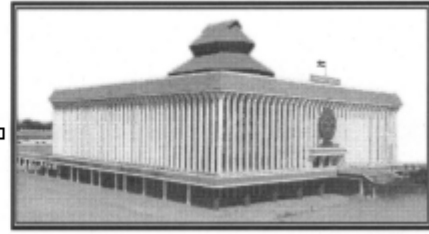
(xiii) The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Second Amendment) Bill, 2018 sought to further amend the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016. The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 was enacted, *inter alia*, to consolidate and amend the laws relating to reorganisation and insolvency resolution of corporate persons, partnership firms and individuals in a time bound manner.

The Bill sought to replace the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Ordinance, 2018, promulgated on 6th June 2018. It *inter alia* sought to balance the interests of various stakeholders in the Code especially interests of home buyers and micro, small and medium enterprises, promoting resolution over liquidation of corporate debtor by lowering the voting threshold of Committee of Creditors and streamlining the provisions relating to eligibility of resolution applicants, etc.

The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 23rd July, 2018 and was passed by that House on 31st July, 2018. The Bill, as passed by the Lok Sabha, was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 10th August, 2018. Eight Members took part in the discussion on the Bill. Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Railways, Minister of Coal, Minister of Finance and Minister of Corporate Affairs replied to the discussion. The Bill as passed by both Houses of Parliament received the assent of the President on 17th August, 2018 and became Act No. 26 of 2018.

(xiv) The Commercial Courts, Commercial Division and Commercial Appellate Division of High Courts (Amendment) Bill, 2018 sought to amend the Commercial Courts, Commercial Division and Commercial Appellate Division of High Courts Act, 2015.

The Bill sought to replace the Commercial Courts, Commercial Division and Commercial Appellate Division of High Courts (Amendment) Ordinance, 2018 promulgated on 3rd May

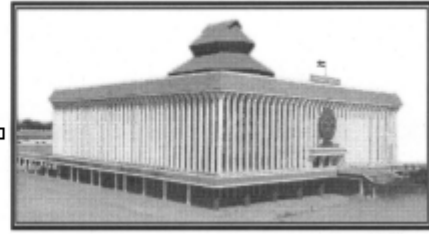


2018. It *inter alia* sought to provide reduction of the specified value of commercial disputes from the existing one crore rupees to three lakh rupees; enable the State Governments, with respect to the High Courts having ordinary original civil jurisdiction, to constitute commercial courts at District Judge level; provide compulsory mediation before institution of a suit; and introduce the Pre-Institution Mediation and Settlement Mechanism.

The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 23rd July, 2018 and was passed by that House on 1st August, 2018. The Bill, as passed by the Lok Sabha, was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 10th August, 2018. Six Members took part in the discussion on the Bill and Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister of Law and Justice and Minister of Electronics and Information Technology replied to the discussion. The Bill as passed by both Houses of Parliament received the assent of the President on 20th August, 2018 and became Act No. 28 of 2018.

As regards **Private Members' Bills**, sixteen (16) Bills were introduced during the Session. One Bill, namely, *the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2017* (amendment of article 366) was withdrawn. The discussion on another Bill namely, *the Parliament (Enhancement of Productivity) Bill, 2017* remained inconclusive. One **Private Members' Resolution**, namely, *the need to have a policy framework for the welfare of widows in the country* was part discussed and one Resolution moved by Shri Vishambhar Prasad Nishad on 10th August, 2018 regarding need to formulate a uniform list of SC/ST sub-castes across the country, was negatived for the first time by division in the House. (Ayes -33, Noes - 66).

The 16 Private Members' Bills which were introduced in the House by Members were: (i) The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2018, (insertion of new article 21B), (ii) The Companies (Amendment) Bill, 2018, (iii) The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Amendment) Bill, 2018, (iv) The Contempt of Courts (Amendment) Bill, 2018, (v) The Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2018, (vi) The Prevention of Gender Pay Gap Bill, 2018, (vii) The National Tribal Education- Board Bill, 2018, (viii) The Farmers' Right to Guaranteed Remunerative Minimum Support Prices for Agricultural Commodities Bill, 2018, (ix) The Universal Health Insurance and



Healthcare Coverage Bill, 2018, (x) The Illegal Immigrants (Identification and Deportation) Bill, 2018, (xi) The Information Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2018, (xii) The National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Bill, 2018, (xiii) The Constitution Amendment) Bill, 2018 (amendment of article 19), (xiv) The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2018, (xv) The Agricultural and other Rural Workers (Protection and Welfare) Bill, 2018, and (xvi) The Downtrodden, Backward and Oppressed Youth (Development and Welfare) Bill, 2018.

As mentioned earlier, on 3rd August, 2018, in a significant move under the Private Members' Legislative Business, Shri Naresh Gujral moved the motion for consideration of *The Parliament (Enhancement of Productivity) Bill, 2017*. The Bill sought to provide for the establishment of an effective system to prevent and address the decline in productivity of Parliament due to disruptions of sittings, by means of an appropriate legal framework to fix the minimum number of days in a year for which Parliament shall be in Sessions, introduction of special Session in addition to the existing three Sessions, and compensation for the hours unutilized due to disruptions, among others. Seventeen Members including Shri Ramdas Athawale, Minister of State in the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment took part in the discussion. Shri Rakesh Sinha, newly elected Member also made his maiden speech on the issue. However, the discussion remained inconclusive.

As mentioned earlier, on 10th August, 2018, Shri Vishambhar Prasad Nishad moved a Private Members' Resolution regarding *the lack of uniform reservation system in the country for the people belonging to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes or Denotified Castes*. The resolution urged upon the Government to: (a) provide uniform facilities, by amending the articles 341 and 342 of the Constitution to include the homonymous and synonymous sub-castes of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes according to the castes registered State-wise in the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order 1950 in all the States; and (b) amend the Constitution so that the persons belonging to SC/ST category in one state may be treated as the person of that SC/ST category all over the country to get the benefit of the reservation. After Shri Vishambhar Prasad Nishad replied to the discussion, the Resolution was put to the vote of the House



and the House divided. The Resolution got 32 votes in favour and 66 against and was therefore, negatived by the House.

Valedictory Remarks by Hon’ble Chairman

The Chairman made valedictory remarks on the conclusion of the 246th Session on 10th August 2018 stating that it was time to take stock of what the august House could do and could not do during the Session. He said:

“ ... Of the 18 scheduled sittings, the House decided to take leave on the occasion of Guru Purnima day and so, we had 17 sittings at our disposal. On another day, the House was adjourned for the day as a mark of respect to former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, late Dr. M Karunanidhi after making obituary reference. Going by the trend of the previous two sessions, the media forecast for this Session had been that this too would be a washout with election fever setting in. I am glad and so would all of you that for once, media has been proved wrong. I compliment all of you for the same. ”

Stating that the Monsoon session of Parliament brought new tidings marking a break from the last two Sessions, he said:

“With productivity of more than 73 per cent, measured in terms of the functional time against the total time available, this session proved to be about three times more productive than the last Budget session whose productivity was only about 25 per cent. This is a remarkable improvement and the credit goes to all of you.”

Regarding the legislative output of the House, the Chairman said:

“this august House has passed 14 Bills during this Session, while only 10 Bills could be passed during the last two Sessions put together. This in effect means, legislative performance during this session has been 140 per cent of the previous two sessions combined. During this Session, the Hon. Members could collectively address a range of issues with far-reaching implications. These include positioning the cause of social justice on a higher pedestal by conferring Constitutional status on the National Commission for Backward Classes and restoring the original statutory position in respect of prevention of atrocities against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, by addressing judicial



impediments. I compliment all the sections of the House for unanimously passing these two historic Bills. This august House also demonstrated its resolve to check corruption by passing the pending Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill and more importantly, enabling hot pursuit of economic offenders, who swindles resources and leaves the country, by passing the Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill. A few other Bills sought to address issues related to easing the hurdles to economic activities were also passed. In summary, this august House could address some issues of socio-economic justice during this Session, which is the mandate and sacred duty of Parliament. This session has proved that a performing Parliament can deliver on its mandate and let us always be reminded and guided by this principle for the future as well.”

Referring to his meetings with leaders of parties to ensure a productive Monsoon Session, the Chairman said:

“Deeply pained by the state of affairs during the last two Sessions, I thought it necessary to sit with leaders of various parties and did so a day before the start of this Session. At that meeting, I could clearly sense a certain intent and commitment to ensure a productive Monsoon Session. A message has been sent out that “Enough is enough. Two sessions have been wasted and the standing of legislators and the Parliament has taken a massive hit and it can’t repeat during this session. On this occasion, I would like to particularly compliment the Leader of the Opposition, Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad for effectively articulating the growing public concern over dysfunctional Parliament on more than one occasion. While the productivity of this Session at more than 74 per cent is a welcome relief let us remind ourselves of the 26 per cent deficit. Going by the indications, I am sure that this deficit would be wiped out as soon as we continue to walk on the path of this realization. I once again compliment all sections of the House for this turnaround. ”

Expressing his concerns about the functioning of the House, he said:

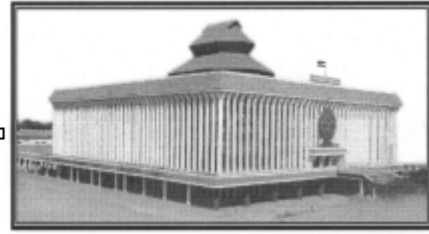
“During my daily meetings with the leaders of different parties, some leaders said more than once that I am getting very emotional and sentimental about whatever is happening or not happening in the House and should not be so. Out of their concern for my health, some of the leaders even personally advised me not to take it so seriously and personally. They perhaps meant that disruptions



are a part of parliamentary democracy and even strategy. I am grateful to those leaders for their concern about me and my health. I am asking them to be more concerned about the health of the Parliament and the nation. My problem is that I can't take whatever happens inside the House as a matter of deja vu, which means that it is not new and was happening earlier too, though it may be a fact also. I know that Parliament, to some extent, is a political institution resulting in heightened tempers and altercations at time. But there cannot be a pattern to it. The pattern of disruptions is a matter of serious concern and I am glad that there has been a perceptible change this time around. I do hope that it further improves and stays like that. All that I like to stress is that our Parliament is more a Constitutional institution and the weighty responsibilities cast upon all of us should outweigh the political considerations, if any. Functioning of Parliament should not be seen as a mere ritual of meeting thrice in a year irrespective of the outcomes. As was stated in the morning by the Leader of the Opposition that each Session, which I also hope, should sit far more days. That is possible only if we utilize the Sessions that are available in a constructive manner and then I can also take up the matter with the Government for more extended Session. My emotional attachment is because the supreme Legislature has deep connect with the future and fortunes of 130 crore Indians. ”

Reminding the Members that any session of Parliament is aimed at ensuring the functioning of our Constitution and the polity and their convergence, he said:

“Hon. Members, Parliament sometimes sits longer than the usual time. That means we are all concerned. Today also, we are sitting beyond the non-official day. The reason is that we are all concerned that we must make up the losses that have occurred. I like to go beyond giving a statistical summary of the number of Bills passed, time lost, gained etc., though they are important and necessary. Any session of Parliament, in my view, is, our Constitution and our polity at work. At the end of each session, we need to know whether we were able to make these two work in convergence or in divergence. We need to aim at ensuring convergence of these two by minimizing divergence. I am glad that this Monsoon session has demonstrated our collective intent to maximize the convergence and the results are there for all of us to see. ”



Giving a statistical summary of the Session as a measure of the productivity of the House, he said:

“As a barometer of its productivity, this august House has recorded a productivity of more than 74 percent as against about 53 per cent of Winter Session of last year and 25 per cent of Budget session this year. Against the time lost of 27 hours and 42 minutes during this Session on account of disruptions, the House sat beyond the scheduled time on four days, gaining about three hours. Fourteen Bills have been passed, including five pending Bills, while only 10 Bills could be passed during the last two Sessions.

Of the total 17 sittings held, there were no disruptions of any kind on five days. We had only seven such disruption on three days during the last two Sessions. We had Question Hour on 12 days during this Session, as against the total number of eight such days during the last two Sessions put together. A total of 91 oral questions were taken up in this Session, as against the total of 51 during the last two Sessions put together. Members made a record 120 Zero Hour submissions as against the total of 67 during the last two Sessions; and 61 Special Mentions were made as well, against the combined 68 during the earlier two Sessions. A total duration of 27 hours was spent on discussing Bills accounting for about 38 per cent of the total time. This comes to more than two hours discussing each Bill. A total of 146 Reports by various Committees have been presented to the House. One Calling Attention Notice on the issue of misuse of social media and the need for checking the same was taken up. One Short Duration Discussion on the implementation of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act and another special discussion on the issue of National Register for Citizens in Assam were also taken up. In all, a total of 496 Members have spoken on various issues under different windows like Zero Hour, Question Hour, Calling Attention Motion, Short Duration Discussion, discussion on Bills, including Private Members Bills/Resolutions, Special Mentions etc. I feel sorry that we could not discuss agriculture which is a very important issue. We could also not discuss about the state of economy which I had admitted. We could not discuss these two motions for a variety of reasons which are known to all of you.”

Highlighting the significant developments during the Session, he said: .

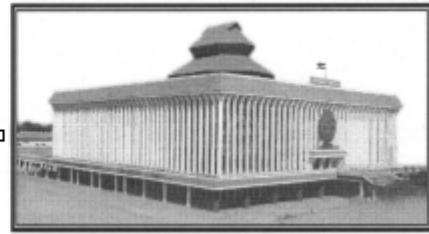
“Twelve questions were taken up for oral answers one day during this session. That means if you all cooperate, we can operate better. Submission of different



kinds of notices online i. e. e-Notice has been introduced. A total of 102 e-Notices have been received during this session from 22 Members. Shri Ram Vichar Netam has got the distinction of being the first Member to submit Zero Hour/Question notice online. The first-time Member, Shrimati Kahkashan Perween, has presided over the Question Hour, becoming the first to do so and within seven minutes into Question Hour, she asked a Minister to be to the point so as to give chance to Members to speak, which even the experienced hesitate to do normally. Simultaneous Interpretation Service has been made available in five more languages, i.e. Dogri, Kashmiri, Konkani, Santhali and Sindhi making such service now available in all the 22 scheduled languages. “

“For the first time, on behalf of this august House, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Senate of Rwanda for promoting bilateral exchanges. Earlier, that used to be signed by the Speaker. But this time we have taken the initiative that Rajya Sabha also can have direct Understanding of Memorandum with other countries. The Leader of the Opposition, Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad and former Deputy Chairperson, Dr. Najma A. Heptulla received the Outstanding Parliamentarian Awards; and, of course, Shri Harivansh has been elected as the Deputy Chairperson of this House.

“I am also happy to inform that the two-day Orientation Programme organized by the Secretariat for the benefit of new Members was very well received. I was sceptical about the attendance, but after I attended the inaugural function I felt very happy. Many of the new Members had turned up and they showed keen interest in the two-day Orientation Programme. They all enjoyed it. I could also find one Minister, Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, sitting through the entire two-day proceedings setting an example. Normally if one becomes Minister, they think they have full knowledge, but this Minister was available for two days in the Programme and also inquisitively followed up the proceedings. About 35 new Members have taken advantage of this Programme. I compliment the Government, the Leader of the Opposition, the leaders of various parties and all the Members for the new tidings during this Session. I also compliment the Secretary-General and his team for their hard work. I also thank the media for their sustained interest in the proceedings of the House. Still, the media is supposed to give more coverage to the august House, i.e. Elders’ House, which is discussing vital issues of national importance. ”



Concluding his remarks, the Chairman said:

“The Monsoon Session has been good and so is the Monsoon season. Let us look forward to the Winter Session with these happy memories ringing in our minds. Till then, hon. Members, I would like to thank you all. It is the completion of one year of my tenure in the office of Chairman as well as Vice-President of India. Now, before we adjourn the House sine die, we will have the National Song. “The National Song (Vande Mataram) was played and the House adjourned sine die.

The 246th Session of the Rajya Sabha was adjourned sine die on 10th August 2018 and was prorogued by the President of India on 13th August, 2018.

