

**RAJYA SABHA**

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**\*SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE**

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**(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)**

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**Thursday, September 21, 2023/ Bhadra 30, 1945 (Saka)**

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**BIRTHDAY GREETINGS**

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Hon'ble Members, I take this opportunity to extend birthday greetings to hon'ble Member of Parliament, **Shri Vivek K. Tankha**.

A Senior Advocate, former Additional Solicitor General of India and Advocate General of Madhya Pradesh, Shri Tankha is a Member of this august House now in his second term since June, 2016. Shri Tankha is a social activist with deep empathy for the cause of challenged children. As the Chairman of Justice Tankha Memorial Institute of Special Children, he has been commendably running schools for the upliftment of differently-abled children in central India.

He is married to Shrimati Aarti Tankha, with whom he shares love for classical Indian music and ghazals. The couple is blessed with son, Varun and daughter, Vasundhara. On my own and your behalf, I wish him a long, healthy and happy life and extend greetings to his family and friends.

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**ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE CHAIR**

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Hon'ble Members, I have to inform that considering historic importance of the proceedings today, in addition to the existing panel of Vice-Chairpersons, I am seeking assistance of the following hon. Members, as Vice-Chairpersons for the day:

1. Shrimati P.T. Usha
2. Shrimati S. Phangnon Konyak
3. Shrimati Jaya Bachchan
4. Sushri Saroj Pandey
5. Shrimati Rajani Ashokrao Patil
6. Dr. Fauzia Khan
7. Sushri Dola Sen
8. Sushri Indu Bala Goswami
9. Dr. Kanimozhi NVN Somu

10. Sushri Kavita Patidar
11. Shrimati Mahua Maji
12. Dr. Kalpana Saini; and
13. Shrimati Sulata Deo.

They all will have occasion along with the Panel to be on the chair for some time and emanate a message to the larger world that they were in commanding position at a time when in this historic theatre, epochal change was taking place.

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### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE CHAIR

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Hon'ble Members, the copy of the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2023, as passed by Lok Sabha has now been laid on the Table of the Rajya Sabha and the copy thereof has been circulated to Members electronically through Members' Portal yesterday night itself, so as to enable them to peruse the Bill and prepare their amendments.

I have admitted the notice received from the Minister of Law & Justice for consideration and passing of the Bill in Rajya Sabha today by waiving of the requirement of two days notice period under Rule 123 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States. Accordingly, a Supplementary List of Business has been issued for today for taking up this Bill for consideration and passing.

In view of the short time period available to Members, I have decided that those Members, who desire to give notices of Amendments to the said Bill may do so now till 2.00 p.m., so as to enable the Secretariat to process and circulate the List of Amendments. Notices received after 2.00 p.m. will, however, not be processed.

As recommended by the Business Advisory Committee in its meeting held yesterday, Lunch Hour will be dispensed with during the discussion on the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2023.

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### GOVERNMENT BILL

**The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2023,  
*as passed by the Lok Sabha***

**THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE;  
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY  
AFFAIRS; AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE  
(SHRI ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL), moving the motion for consideration of the Bill,  
said:** This very important Constitutional Amendment Bill is a step forward in the direction of women empowerment. The Bill will also show direction to the world. This is also an important step towards making India a developed India in the era of Amrit Kaal. Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar ji had said that we would get political equality, but there will be inequality in the social and economic fields - it will be the responsibility of the future Governments to remove it. The present Government, through its various schemes, has been continuously trying to remove the inequality prevailing in the economic and social fields and especially to give equality and respect to women. Jan Dhan accounts

were opened for women, women got ownership rights in PM Awas. It is also mentioned in the Preamble of the Constitution that along with political, social and economic justice, we will also provide equality of status and opportunity. We have provided dignity and equal opportunities to all women through access to toilets, "Ujjwala" scheme, "Nal se Jal" scheme etc. About 68 percent of the beneficiaries in "Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana" are women. "Stand-up India Scheme" has also been introduced. The "Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Scheme" has been brought to provide nutrition to pregnant women. Apart from this, schemes like "Sukanya Samriddhi Scheme", "Mission Nutrition", "Mission Shakti", "Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan" have also been introduced. Women have been given permanent commission in the Armed Forces. The efforts were made for the economic upliftment of women through self-help groups. Today, around 1.5 lakh women vendors are registered on the GeM portal. The participation of women from India in the Tokyo Olympics was 49 percent. The Constitution (Amendment) Bill introduced today in the House seeks to amend Article 330, One clause each will be inserted in Articles 332 and 334. These new Articles 330A, Article 332A and Article 334A will be included in the Constitution respectively, through which one-third of the seats in the Lok Sabha and all the Legislative Assemblies of the country will be reserved for women power. This reservation is both horizontal and vertical. There is also a provision for reservation of women belonging to Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes, hence census and delimitation is necessary. There is a provision for delimitation system in the Constitution and the delimitation is freezed till 2026. This is a constitutional process. The Delimitation Commission will decide which seats will be for women. This commission will also consult with all the stakeholders. This Bill has been brought in the same series of schemes that I mentioned earlier for the development and empowerment of women power under the leadership of the present Government.

**SHRIMATI RANJEET RANJAN:** I welcome the Women's Reservation Bill. I am also a woman, and we want the participation of women to increase in the House, in the political arena and in the field of public representation. However, I want to lodge an objection. You have named this women's reservation Bill as Nari Shakti Vandan Bill, but I feel that reservation in legislature is a constitutional right of women, and the word 'right' should have been used in the name of this Bill. With this name it seems that an attempt is being made to end the history of the movement. Apart from this, there was no need to call a special session for women's reservation, it could have been passed earlier in any ordinary session. Also, to include a clause on caste census and delimitation in the Bill makes it an election agenda only, Government could have taken a decision and implemented it. I just want to ask the Government why you do not want to give reservation to women by bypassing the caste census delimitation rotation? This means that you do not want to give women a share out of the men's share. You will do delimitation, increase seats, after that you will give a separate share to women. After all, why don't you want to give share to the women out of today's share? This Bill should be named as 'Right to Equality Bill' instead of 'Nari Shakti Vandan Bill' as we do not want to be worshiped and adored. We want this Bill to be passed, but along with SC/ST women, OBC women should also get their rights.

**SHRI JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA:** We all know that the new Parliament building became functional on the day of Ganesh Utsav and yesterday this '*Nari Shakti Vandan Bill*' was passed without any hindrance in the Lok Sabha. I not only hoped but was fully confident that this Bill will be passed unanimously in Rajya Sabha as well without any hindrance. I would like to thank our Prime Minister, who has tried to bring the long pending issue of women's reservation, to a decisive turn by bringing this Bill. He has taken very effective steps to improve the condition of Indian women and to strengthen their position and direction in the society. Many people may have their own view regarding the

name of the Bill, but the wording of '*Nari Shakti Vandan Bill*' itself clarifies the vision of our Government, our Prime Minister and our view towards the women in the society. I want to make it clear here that women have played a huge role in Indian culture. It is not ours or yours, the way our ancestors, our culture placed women in the society, shows that the place of women has always been bright in our culture. That's why they are 'backward', they are 'helpless', they are 'powerless women' - this terminology is not ours. That is why when the Prime Minister says - 'women empowerment', he always talks about 'women-led development'. Women have always had a place in economic autonomy in Indian culture. There has been economic autonomy in her social life. From spirituality to teaching, women have made special contributions. When we went through the period of slavery, the medieval period, at that time from the purdah system, the position of upliftment of women, got a jolt. Even during the Vedic period, there was no dearth of women scholars. I would also like to say that even in today's era, if we look at it, the 21st century is the century of women. Be it knowledge, science, military education, military, security or the economic world, we are happy that today the women of our India have brought themselves into leadership roles. Today in the software world we have 21 percent women who are in leadership roles. Therefore, when we are empowering them by bringing '*Nari Shakti Vandan Bill*', we are not doing a favor to them, rather it is their respect, it is their empowerment, it is an act of increasing their participation. I also want to say here that we should change some perceptions. I am not saying this on my own basis, but on the basis of research. Research has shown that women are more sensitive, and they have a stronger ability to take decisions on sensitive issues. Research also shows that women are more accessible than men as public representatives. Where there are women representatives, the level of corruption is lower. On the issue of implementation this Bill from now on I would like to clarify that there are some constitutional arrangements and some constitutional way of working. The decision regarding which seats are to be reserved for women will be taken by a quasi-judicial body and not by the Government. It has to be nominated. Bharatiya Janata Party has no intention of taking political advantage out of the Bill, rather our aim is to truly empower the women.

As the President of Bharatiya Janata Party, I also want to make it clear here that Bharatiya Janata Party has always been at the forefront in giving place to women. We are the first party and the only party which, constitutionally, gives 33 percent reservation to women in every committee. Under the leadership of Modi ji, Madam Sushma Swaraj ji became the first woman Foreign Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman ji became the first woman Finance Minister. Talking about *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao*, the Prime Minister had said that we worry about boys, but do not worry about girls. We should worry about them too. There was a lot of criticism on this too, but today I am happy to tell you that we have moved ahead by 19 points in the level of sex ratio at birth. The sex ratio of women has increased. Today 12 crore sisters have been given *ijjat ghar*. Prime Minister, Narendra Modi ji has done the work of giving them respect. You will be happy to know that in '*Pradhanmantri Awas Yojana*', 69 percent ownership is with women, jointly or individually. There are 9.58 crore sisters who have been given LPG gas connections. Today through '*Jal Jeevan Mission*' ten crore houses have been provided water connections coverage. They used to do appeasement politics, they used to do vote bank politics. This was the will power of Prime Minister Modi ji. Today triple talaq has ended and if anyone has given Muslim women the right to live with dignity, then Prime Minister Modi ji has given it. Through all these women empowerment programs, work has been done to take the country forward. Today a new link is being added in it. I want to say that everyone should come together, in supporting and passing of this Bill. With these words, I support it and seek everyone's support.

**\*MS. DOLA SEN: (Spoke in Bangla.)**

**DR. KANIMOZHI NVN SOMU:** Hon'ble Deputy Chairman, Sir, first of all, I would like to express our support to the Women's Reservation Bill, under the leadership of our Chief Minister, M.K. Stalin. Periyar, a visionary social reformer who fought for the rights of women a century back, had proclaimed that only a society that does away with slavery of women can grow, and that is real growth. Tamil poet, Bharathiyar proclaimed a hundred years back that women's reservation is a matter of right and not a favour to us. He also hailed the bravery and character of women. As per belief in the concept of *Ardhanarishvara*, without woman power, there is no life. Tamil Nadu stands first in many initiatives meant for the welfare and development of women. The Government of Tamil Nadu has framed various policies, designed specific interventions and implemented many programmes to empower women. The nation and its growth is in the hands of women and all-round efforts are being made for their empowerment. The Dravidian Movement growth is all-inclusive, and it includes both men and women. Nothing is planned excluding women in Tamil Nadu. The plethora of welfare programmes has engineered the empowerment of women in Tamil Nadu. The sad part is that the women in this country will have to wait further a long way, at least, till 2029 to rise to their fullest potential to force their way into Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies even if the Women's Reservation Bill is passed in our Parliament today. I appeal the current Government to pass the Bill for 2024 parliamentary elections without fail, not keeping it pending for delimitation or the census which has to be taken.

**SHRI SANDEEP KUMAR PATHAK:** On behalf of my party, I support the reservation Bill. Due to the social system and many circumstances, women have not been able to get the proper place they should have in politics. Therefore, this Bill is very important for the country and the society. Rajiv Gandhi formed a committee, and the National Perspective Plan was formulated. In this formulation, women's reservation was kept first. After that, in 1992, by way of 73rd and 74th amendments 33 percent reservation to women was given in panchayat and corporation elections. There are three parts to this Bill. The first is reservation, which talks about 33 per cent reservation and also 33 per cent reservation in the reservation given to SC and ST communities. After that, the second part is when it will be implemented - it has been said that first there will be a census, then there will be delimitation and after that it can be implemented. The third part is rotation. Rotation is a very important issue when it comes to reservation. This time it has been written that rotation will be done every time after the delimitation. My next important point is women's respect. There should be no difference between words and deeds on the issue of women's respect. Women are worshipped as goddesses in our country, this is the culture of our religion. The slogan 'Save Women' seems to be just packaging. But even after all these circumstances, this Bill is very important, so we will not oppose the Bill. Because when the first Lok Sabha was formed, about 5 percent women were elected and now it has increased to about 15 percent. This is not the first time that 33 per cent reservation is being talked about in our country. There is reservation in Panchayati Raj and Corporation. Of the more than 15 lakh women elected through the panchayat, only about 15 per cent have been re-elected. This means a limited number of women are being re-elected, which needs attention. Another issue is proxy leadership. Many times, if you reserve a seat for the women, big leaders make their relatives stand from there. You have to think about what to do so that proxy leaders do not get elected.

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

**\*SHRIMATI MAMATA MOHANTA: (Spoke in Odia.)**

**DR. K. KESHAVA RAO:** The Government has put two conditions. One is regarding the census after the Bill is passed. This House could have accepted the 2011 census as we have accepted 2001 in many cases. The Delimitation Commission is necessary because we don't want to do it on our own, which will perhaps be mistaken as discrimination. But this Delimitation Commission has to be appointed, not by the State Government. It is to be appointed by the CEC, under the guidance of the CEC, but, for God's sake, not under the proposed, politically-motivated CEC. Let there be a CEC which is honest, which is truthful, which we all of us accept in true sense.

**SHRI H.D. DEVEGOWDA:** The Prime Minister has endorsed the letter which I had written to him on April 10, 2023. I may read that letter or if you permit, I lay it on the table of the House. I brought the Women's Reservation Bill when I was the Chief Minister of Karnataka. It was passed in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly and the same was introduced in the Parliament when I became the Prime Minister.

**SHRI V. VIJAYASAI REDDY:** I request the hon'ble Minister of Law to extend the reservation for women even in the Rajya Sabha and also in the State Legislative Councils. In this regard, Article 80 and Article 171 of the Constitution may also be amended to provide reservation for women in one-third seats in the Rajya Sabha and also the State Legislative Councils. Coming to the performance of Andhra Pradesh, the Constitution 73rd and 74th Amendment of 1992 mandate the reservation of one-third of the seats for women in panchayats and municipalities. Andhra Pradesh has exceeded the limit. Therefore, our contention is that women's reservation could be even more than one-third. It could be even 50 per cent.

**PROF. MANOJ KUMAR JHA:** I don't know whether gods live where women are respected, but despite this verse, we have seen exploitation of women and domestic violence in India. Most of the rapes have been seen in an organization called family, the figures of which are given by the government itself. This contradictory character of our country should also be discussed. The Constitution talks about rights. Rights cannot go with mercy. According to the Delimitation Commission, 2008, we have 412 unreserved seats, 84 scheduled caste seats and 47 scheduled tribe seats. Now what we are doing through this Bill is making one-third within 84 and 47. Is this not injustice? This 33 percent, which currently amounts to 136 seats, should include provisions for Scheduled Castes, Tribes and Other Backward Classes. Especially women from backward classes and Scheduled Castes and Tribes are more deprived than others. By sending it to the Select Committee, Scheduled Castes, Tribes and Other Backward Classes should be incorporated in it.

**SHRI ELAMARAM KAREEM:** I support this Bill on behalf of my party. The situation compelled the BJP to bring such a legislation in the Parliament. In 2010, the UPA Government introduced the Bill in the Rajya Sabha, and it was passed. This happened because of the strong and united struggle by women's organizations since decades. This is not for Nari Shakti Vandan, this is for political achievement only. Women are working in several sectors. Their situation is not good. Particularly, agricultural workers, unorganized sector workers, scheme workers -- there are lakhs of scheme workers like MNREGA workers -- they are not getting wages timely. There is no social benefit for them. Our party had already implemented women reservation in panchayats in Kerala and West Bengal. In all aspects, females are backward.

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

**SHRI VAIKO:** I support this Bill. In the first decade of last century, women in England did not have voting rights. So, women fought against the Government to get voting rights and finally got the voting rights. The Bill provides for the provision of 15 years initially but I should suggest that it should be extended because it is too short a period. Similarly, delimitation exercise for constituencies should be undertaken at the earliest so that these provisions can be implemented as soon as possible. I would suggest that some provision should be made for providing reservation to women belonging to weaker sections.

**SHRI RAM NATH THAKUR:** Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia had started giving representation to women. Today, Bihar is the only state in India in which work has been done to provide 35 percent reservation to women in every department. Today there is concern about women but earlier at the time of demonetization there was no concern. This bill has been brought much late by this Government. We all together request the Government of India to soon do the work of providing reservation to women at the national level.

**SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA:** In our independence movement, women played a strong leadership, and many women lost their lives including a 14-year school girl from Assam. The Bill has come at the proper time. With confidence and with strong determination for the empowerment of women, this Bill is coming. I am sure that this Bill is going to be implemented this time. In 2010, when the Bill came in the House. The House was adjourned due to want of quorum. The Government has decided to give reservation to the women in the States also. I compliment the Government for bringing this Bill on completion of 75 years of our Independence.

**MS. SAROJ PANDEY:** I thank our top leadership for respecting our femininity, our motherhood and trying to give place to half of the country's population through this Women's Reservation Bill. There was objection to the word 'Vandan'. But we always do 'Vandan' of Bharat Mata. Today, with the awakening of Shakti, in this 'Amrit Kaal', the Nari Shakti Vandan Act will be passed and along with it, a new history will be written in India. At one time the Cabinet of the country was such that Home and Finance were handled by men, Defence and Foreign were handled by women. It was a happy coincidence. This is proof of how the Prime Minister of the country utilized our talent. This occasion should be celebrated rather than the question of not bringing it till 9 years. Politics on every subject takes India far backward. I will mention a scheme '*Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao*' which has a very poignant objective. The daughter definitely came to this Earth, but she used to be sent away. This time India has improved by 8 points in the Global Gender Index and has reached 127th position out of 146 countries. Many things including '*Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana*' happened for us. Our Prime Minister wants today's woman to be recognized as a human being. Today, with this reservation bill, a new celebration will begin, and women will get their place in the country. It is a matter of good fortune for me that today I have the honor of being a witness to this historic moment.

**SHRIMATI RAJANI ASHOKRAO PATIL:** I stand here on behalf of my party Indian National Congress to extend support for the Nari Shakti Vandan Bill, 2023 i.e., The Constitution (128th) Amendment Bill. Today I am feeling proud and remember my leader and former Prime Minister of this country, late Shri Rajiv Gandhi whose vision helped to extend reservation for women. Because of his profound vision, 15 lakh women like us are working at different levels in the country, be it panchayats or municipalities and are standing as part of the foundation of this country. Rajiv Gandhi ji had brought this bill for the first time in the year 1989. Secondly, if Honorable Draupadi Murmu ji had been called here, it would have been a matter of even greater joy for us. In this context it is necessary

to take the name of Baba Saheb Ambedkar. But for him and Congress party, we would have to struggle to get the right to vote which the Constitution provides to us. The congress party has given this country its first woman Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, first woman President, Mrs. Pratibha Devisingh Patil and first woman Speaker, Mrs. Meira Kumar. I want to say only one thing with folded hands not to make us deities, rather let us live simply as human beings with dignity.

**SHRIMATI MAUSAM NOOR:** I come from a party called the All India Trinamool Congress whose founder gave 41 per cent of Lok Sabha tickets to women way back in 2014. I come from a party which already has 40 per cent of women MPs in the Lok Sabha. I come from a party that already has 50 per cent women elected in the Panchayats and in the Municipalities. I come from a party founded 25 years ago which spoke in Parliament for the Women's Reservation Bill way back in 1998. If you are really serious about this Bill, please give 33 per cent tickets to women in the five upcoming State elections in November this year and in general elections, 2024, next year. Of course, we support this Bill. But, this Bill is fundamentally flawed because this Bill is linked to both delimitation exercise and the Census. It is like writing a cheque with no balance in your account.

**SHRI R. GIRIRAJAN:** We welcome the Women's Reservation Bill. For 75 years Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam has been fighting for women's rights. But, even if the Bill is passed now, the implementation of that will take many more years after delimitation of constituencies is done. Delimitation of Lok Sabha constituencies in various States and Assembly constituencies will be drawn only after 2026. The next election after delimitation will be held in 2029. The delimitation of constituencies has got its own problems and grave issues which need to be thrashed out thoroughly before arriving at the total number of Lok Sabha constituencies and Assembly seats in States in the country. The ploy to reduce the representation of the people of South India, especially from Tamil Nadu in the Lok Sabha in the name of constituency re-delimitation must be nipped in the bud. The BJP-led Government should consider rationale behind the demand for reservation for women from backward and most backward communities. There should an inner reservation for women from OBCs while implementing 33 per cent reservation. Tamil Nadu has become the role model State in the country due to the continuous efforts of our great leaders. Through Dravidian Model Government, State Government has fulfilled all our poll promises. But, at the same time, we have the Union Government led by Shri Narendra Modi for almost a decade. We have seen that this Government never bothered to fulfil their poll promises. They promised to bring back all the black money stashed in foreign countries by Indians. This remains as the greatest *jumla* of BJP. The BJP has promised that they will provide two crore new jobs every year to people of this country. The Prime Minister had promised the linking of rivers. But nothing happened so far. All these promises still remain as electoral *jumlas*. The current Women's Reservation Bill is being passed and President's assent will be given. However, the implementation of this Act will have to wait several years and pass through several ordeals. I only wish that the people of India teach this Government a lesson in the 2024 polls.

\***SHRIMATI SULATA DEO:** On behalf of my Party, the Biju Janata Dal, I support this Bill. Our Party leader had supported this idea in the year 2008 regarding the Women's Reservation Bill. As a special initiative, he also set up an independent Department at the state level to empower women. In the field of business and innovation in the state, our Hon'ble Chief Minister has also provided incentives to women under various types of schemes. He has always been a strong supporter of women empowerment.

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\* Spoke in Odia.

**\*SHRI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE PILLI:** I wish to speak on The Women's Reservation Bill in Telugu language, which is my mother tongue. I would like to congratulate the Hon'ble Prime Minister on this important Bill and support this Bill on behalf of my Chief Minister. The thing worth noting in this Bill is that nothing has been made clear in this Bill regarding women of OBC category. A positive review should be made about this. Apart from this, the waiting period of 7 years in the name of delimitation is very high. If this happens, the eligible people will be deprived of benefits. Therefore, I humbly request the Prime Minister and this august House that OBC women should not be discriminated against and at the same time, proper representation of OBCs should be ensured in the judiciary. In fact, the Indian reservation system aims to improve social and educational opportunities for disadvantaged communities and uplift their quality of life. You should implement reservation for other backward classes as well.

**\*SHRI RAVICHANDRA VADDIRAJU:** On behalf of myself and my party, I support this Bill. The women power has been given utmost respect in our Vedic texts and ancient culture. It is said that "*Yatra Naryastu Pujyante, Ramante Tatra Devta*". The contribution of women in the movement for the creation of our Telangana state has been equal to that of men. Today, the 33% reservation has been provided to women in the field of Education and Employment in Telangana. The Financial and other types of incentives are also being given to women entrepreneurs. The women who have claimed special achievements in sports and other fields are being rewarded and honoured. Our Chief Minister desires that the State Government should implement this reservation even before the Women's Reservation Bill is implemented after its passage in the Parliament. In this era of unprecedented scientific progress, there should not be so much delay in implementing this Bill on the pretext of delimitation and census.

**SHRI KANAKAMEDALA RAVINDRA KUMAR:** This House has taken up for its consideration and passing the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth) Amendment Bill, 2023. After its passage, it will pave the way for reserving 1/3rd of seats for women in the Lok Sabha, State Assemblies and the Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory of Delhi. The true empowerment of women will require greater participation of women in the decision-making process as they bring different perspectives and enrich the quality of legislative debates and decision-making. One cannot forget the significant contribution made by our Telugu Desam Party founder, Shri NT Rama Rao way back in 1985 itself. He gave women equal share in the paternal property. Again, Shri Chandrababu Naidu implemented reservation for women in local body elections, both in rural and urban areas. He also appointed Smt. Pratiba Bharati as Speaker of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly in 1999. In past, the Women Reservation Bill was first brought by the Government led by Shri H.D. Devegowda in 1996. Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee also made sincere efforts and brought this Bill in 1998. Now, this Bill has made a provision for women reservation through Article 330A and 332A in the form of Constitutional Amendment. I urge the Government to bring this Bill into force at the earliest. I extend my support to the Bill on behalf of Telugu Desam Party.

**SHRI K. C. VENUGOPAL:** This journey for women empowerment started from 1931 onwards when Smt. Sarojini Naidu wrote a letter to the then Prime Minister for equal power between men and women. In 1989, Shri Rajivji brought an important legislation to empower women in local bodies. The entire BJP opposed that Bill. The record is available with Rajya Sabha Secretariat. In 2010, we had brought and passed the Bill in the Rajya Sabha. But, we were not in a position to pass the Bill in the Lok Sabha. For last 9 years no

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\* Spoke in Telugu.

one stopped you to bring this Bill. Perhaps, Hon'ble Prime Minister was waiting for this new building or an auspicious Muhurta to introduce this Bill. The life transforming legislations have to come from the heart of rulers, not from the brain of rulers. It is driven by political calculations. If the Government wanted to empower the women in financial terms, then why the MGNAREGA scheme was diluted. This scheme was providing an employment to 58 percent women. During the entire Covid period, the only one Scheme that benefitted the poor people of this country was the MNREGA. Self-Help Group was brought in 2011. The UPA brought that. Kerala started it earlier through 'Kudumbashree'. All these are economical empowerment of women. We need a clear-cut answer as to when is it going to be implemented, when will the Census take place, when would the Delimitation process start, when is it going to be completed, and when will the women get a representation as per this law. We have given the first woman Prime Minister, we have given the first woman President of India, we have given the first woman Lok Sabha Speaker of India. You speak about women safety, but thirty per cent Nirbhaya fund is unutilized. The price of LPG gas is thousand rupees. Women are in a very difficult situation in this country due to price rise. We need only two assurances from this Government. One is, this Bill has to be implemented quickly. Two, there should be an OBC Reservation provision in this Bill. If this Bill is going to be implemented only in 2029, there was no need for this Special Session. We could have passed it in Winter Session. They have brought this Bill now and they are trying to become champions of that. We are going to support this Bill. But such a life-transforming Bill has to come from the mind and heart.

**SHRI DEREK O'BRIEN:** I support this Bill. In a parliamentary democracy, you need cooperation, you need sharing. We were not told about the agenda of this Special Session. Parliamentary democracy with such secrecy hurts a democracy. One man's story is being told for three days. There was a demand made in the Lok Sabha on 14th of July, 1998 by someone to bring the Women's Reservation Bill with a specific time-frame. It was a woman MP. Today, she is the three-time Chief Minister of Bengal; she is the founder Chairperson of Trinamool Congress, and she has already got 40 per cent of our women MPs in the Lok Sabha. In 2019, she not only gave 40 per cent tickets to women, 39 per cent women Lok Sabha MPs are already sitting in the Lok Sabha. It is one thing to give the women tickets, it is another thing to make sure you give them tickets which are winnable constituencies. The Health Ministry, the Finance Ministry, the Land Ministry, the Industry Ministry, the Commerce Ministry of Bengal are all headed by women. All you need to do is to bring this in 2024 and to remove 334A from your existing Bill. Have proper discussion on the subject and then bring one-third women reservation also in Rajya Sabha. We will all support it. You can build the new building, but I request all of you to first change your mind-set.

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**P. C. MODY,**  
*Secretary-General.*

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\*\*\*\*Supplement covering rest of the proceedings is being issued separately.