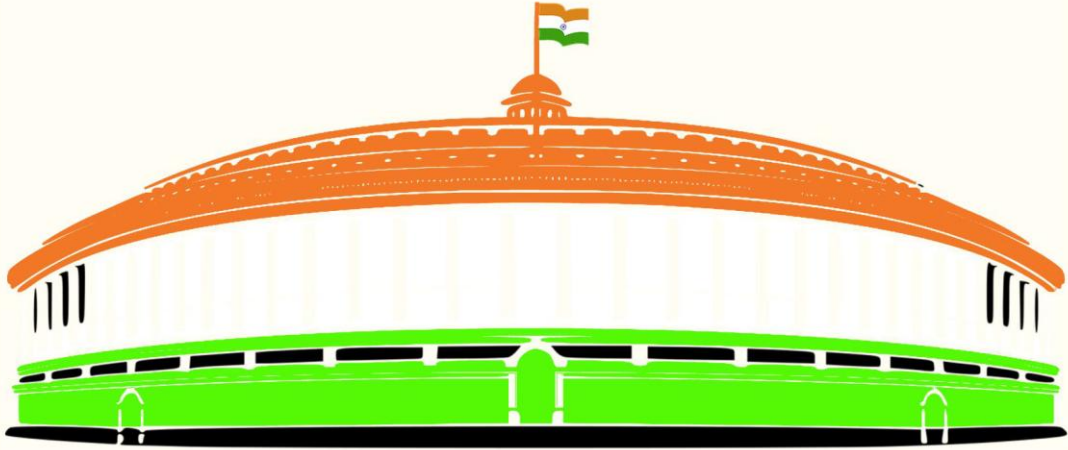


Şansad Râtnâ SPEAKS



Compilation of select speeches

Dr. S K KHARVENTHAN

**Member of Parliament
14th Lok Sabha
(2004-2009)
Sansad Ratna Awardee**

Prime Point Foundation | Chennai

Table of Contents

Publisher’s Note	9
About this ebook	10
About Prime Point Foundation and Initiatives	11
Foreword by Shri Hansraj G Ahir	13
Foreword by Shri C T Ravi	14
Dr S K Kharventhan – Brief Profile	15
Need to check the pollution caused due to discharge of industrial effluents into Noyyal River, Tamil Nadu.	16
Resolution regarding Reservation for SC/STs and OBCs in Private Sector	17
Combined discussion on the Budget (General) 2004 -2005 Demands for Grants on Account for Budget (General) and Demands for Excess Grants of Budget (General)	20
Need to release a Commemorative Stamp in Honour of Dheeran Chinnamalai of Tamil Nadu who fought against the Britishers.	23
Discussion on the resolution regarding to relief Measures for Workers in Agrarian Sector	24
Need to grant early clearance to the proposal of Government of Kerala for laying a new approach track and strengthening the existing track to Sabarimala Temple.	28
Motion of Thanks on the Hon’ble President’s Address	30

Discussion on the Budget (Railways) 2005-2006, Demands for Grants on Account (Railways) 2005 -2006 and Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways) 2004-2005	33
Regarding the Coastal Aquaculture Authority Bill – 2005	38
Discussion on the Code of Criminal Procedure Amendment Bill 2005	40
Need to permit other selected categories of persons to run telephone booths on railway stations besides handicapped persons in Tamil Nadu.	45
Need to clear the proposal of the Government of Tamil Nadu for development of Arupadai Vedugal Tourist Circuit.	46
Need to fill up the vacancies in Supreme Court and all the High Courts for speedy disposal of pending cases.	47
Discussion on the Payment of Wages (Amendment) Bill – 2004 as Passed by Rajya Sabha	48
Need to release a commemorative stamp on 14.1.2006 in honour of great farmer ‘Kalingaraya Gounder’ of Erode district, Tamil Nadu.	53
Discussion on the motion for Consideration of National Tax Tribunal Bill – 2004 Government Bills	54
Discussion on the motion for consideration of the Constitution Bill – 2005 (104th Amendment)	58
Need to set up a full-fledged Passport Office at Madurai, Tamil Nadu.	61
Combined discussion on Railway Budget and Demand for Grants on Account – Railways	62
Combined discussion on Statutory Resolution regarding Disapproval of National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (Amendment)	

Ordinance, 2006 and National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (Amendment) Bill, 2006.	67
Regarding Flood Damage Fund Allocation, Farmer's Welfare	70
Issue regarding imposition of 16% Central Excise Duty on rural industries including brick chambers in the Union Budget – 2006-07.	71
General Discussion on the Demands for Grants on Under the Control of the Ministry of Agriculture 2006 -2007	72
Issue of raising the water level in Mullai Periyar Dam, Kerala.	76
Need to take steps to protect the Poultry Industry affected due to spread of Bird Flu in Tamil Nadu.	77
Need to give permanent appointment to the casual employees of L.I.C. of India.	78
Need to expedite the work of laying a new railway line connecting Erode-Palani via Chennimali, Kangayam and Dharapuram	80
Need to reduce pendency of cases in Higher and Subordinate Judiciaries	82
Discussion on the supplementary Demands for Grants in respect of Budget (General) for 2006-2007	83
Discussion on the Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways) for 2006-2007.	87
Discussion on the motion for consideration fo the Safai Karamcharis Insurance Schemes Bill 2005	90
Discussion on the motion for consideration Wild Life (PROTECTION) Amendment Bill – 2006	93

Need to opening up of a Sub Divisional Office of Employees Provident Fund	96
Discussion on the motion for consideration of the Abolition of Capital Punishment Bill 2004	98
Need to open Regional Passport Office	102
Further Discussion on the motion for consideration of the Agricultural Workers Welfare Bill – 2006	104
Discussion on the motion for consideration of the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admission) Bill 2006	109
Further discussion on the motion of thanks on the President's Address to both Houses of Parliament assembled together on 23.02.2007	112
Need to withdraw the Service Tax on Legal Profession	117
General Discussion on the Budget (General) for 2007-2008	118
Need to release a 'Postal Stamp' and a 'First Day Cover' in memory of Thillaiyadi Valliammai, an associate of Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa	123
Need to conduct the proceedings of Madras High Court in Tamil Language	125
Need to set up a Central University	127
Discussion on the resolution on Formulation and implementation Comprehensive Food and Nutrition Security Scheme	128
Discussion on the motion for consideration of the Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2005	132

Need to withdraw Value Added Tax (VAT) on Tobacco and Tobacco products	136
Need to allocate funds to Tamil Nadu Agricultural University	138
Need to include Malayali Tribe of Erode district, Tamil Nadu and Dhobi community in Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Castes lists respectively under the provisions of the 'Constitution'	140
Discussion regarding Price Rise	142
Sethu-Samudram Canal Project and reported controversy regarding its Alignment	149
Need to build a monument at Virupakshi in honour of Shri Gopal Naicker, a Great Warrior and Freedom Fighter from Tamil Nadu	151
Need to release a Commemorative Postage Stamp and First day Cover in the Honour of Shri P. Kakkan	153
Need to protect the interests of the OBC employees	155
Need to fix a higher Minimum Support Price for paddy	157
Discussion on the All India Institute of Medical Sciences and the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (Amendment) Bill – 2007	158
Need to protect the Cattles	161
Discussion regarding Indo-US Nuclear Agreement	162
Discussion on the motion for consideration of the Inter-State River Water Regulatory Authority Bill, 2005	164
Discussion on the Sashastra Seema Bal Bill, 2007	167

Need to protect the rights of women, young girls and children suffering from HIV.AIDS	169
Need to allocate adequate funds under various schemes meant for the welfare of OBCs	170
Need to protect the interests of Linguistic Scholars by permitting them to offer prayers in temple by singing songs in their Mother tongue throughout the Country.	172
Need to implement Shri E.M. Sudharsana Nachiappan Committee's recommendation providing for reservation to SCs, Sts and OBCs in Higher Judiciary	173
Discussion on the Demands for Grants under control of the Ministry of Rural Development (2008-2009)	174
Need to review the closure of vaccine manufacturing Pasteur Institute, Coonoor; BCG Vaccine	178
Discussion on the Resolutions, Legislation For The Overall Development Of Persons Belonging To Denotified Tribes And Nomadic Tribes	180
Discussion on the motion for consideration of the maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Bill – 2007	183
Discussion on the motion for consideration of the Indira Gandhi National Tribal University Bill – 2007	187
Discussion on the motion to consider Science and Engineering Research Board Bill – 2008	189
Need to revamp the legal education system and prevent the recurrence of violent incidents in law colleges	192

Discussion on the motion consideration of the Unorganised Worker's Social Security Bill- 2008	194
Regarding need to bring peace and to protect the interests of Tamils in Srilanka	197
Combined Discussion on the Statutory Resolution regarding Disapproval of Central Universities Ordinance, 2009 and Central Universities Bill, 2009	201
Discussion on the High Court and Supreme Court Judges Salaries and Conditions of Service (Amendment Bill - 2008)	205
Need to permit the tapping of Coconut-Palm milk from Coconut and Palmyra trees for its use as a herbal drink in the Country	208
Index	209



Publisher's Note

Prime Point Foundation, in association with eMagazine PreSense, Sansad Ratna Awards Committee and Next Gen Political Leaders is honouring top performing Parliamentarians with Sansad Ratna Awards since March 2006, on the suggestions of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, who himself launched the first edition of the Award event. Till 2021, we have conducted 11 editions and 75 Parliamentarians have received the Awards in person. This includes some of the Members who have received the Awards more than one, two or three times.

When we are celebrating the 21st Anniversary of Prime Point Foundation, we decided to compile the select speeches of Sansad Ratna Awardees and publish as eBook for the benefit of Political Science Students and young politicians cutting across party lines,

In this eBook, we are bringing out the select speeches of Shri S K Kharventhan, an outstanding Parliamentarian and Member of Parliament in 14th Lok Sabha representing Palani (Tamil Nadu) Constituency). I thank all our team members who have helped us in bringing out this ebook.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Prime Point Srinivasan'.

Prime Point Srinivasan
5th July 2021

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About Prime Point Foundation and Initiatives



Prime Point Foundation, a Non-Profit Trust and NGO was founded in December 1999 by Shri K Srinivasan (popularly known as Prime Point Srinivasan), a former Senior Banker and a Digital Journalist and Communication Professional, to promote leadership and communication skills among the youth. Very eminent persons are associated with the Foundation.

In the past 20 years, the Foundation has organised several seminars, workshops, training and interactive sessions, both offline and online, on various subjects of national interest. The Foundation manages various online discussion groups and podcasts on communication, and digital journalism.

The Foundation has formed 6 initiatives to create awareness in various domains. All these initiatives are managed independently by passionate experts. These initiatives are non-commercial, and focussed on youth.

PreSense: The eMagazine PreSense was started in March 2006 on the suggestion of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam to promote positive journalism. Till June 2021, the Foundation has published 172 editions. This is a digital-only magazine. Digests, containing select articles upto 150 editions of the eMagazine, have so far been published. Dr Abdul Kalam has written the foreword for the Digest of articles upto 100 editions. PreSense publishes the cartoon character Prince, which was launched by Dr Abdul Kalam in 2008.

Sansad Ratna Awards: This is a flagship initiative started in 2010 to honour top performing Parliamentarians every year,

Şaṅśad Rātnā®
AWARDS COMMITTEE

based on various performance parameters, and selected by a Jury Committee of eminent Parliamentarians. Dr Abdul Kalam himself inaugurated the first edition of the Awards event in May 2010. Till 2021, the Foundation has conducted 11 editions and presented 75 Awards.

Next Gen Political Leaders (NGPL) is an off-shoot of Sansad Ratna Awards. This is a registered NGO operating since 2018. NGPL has organised several workshops online and offline, for young political leaders and aspirants. Ministers, parliamentarians, legislators and retired constitutional authorities have participated and shared their views. NGPL will shortly be instituting Awards for young promising politicians.



Education Loan Task Force (ELTF) was started in 2010 to create awareness about education loans, among students and parents. More than 30,000 queries have been responded to, through email, and more than 5000 serious complaints have been taken up with the top management of the banks concerned, for redressal. Many policy issues have been taken up by Sansad Ratna Awardee MPs, in the Parliament for solution. ELTF does not facilitate loans.



Digital Journalists Association of India (DiJAI): DiJAI is an independent NGO founded in 2017 to create awareness about digital journalism and its implications, among the public and particularly among the journalists. DiJAI conducts several online and offline workshops and seminars, with panels of domain experts.



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Foreword by Shri Hansraj G Ahir

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HANSRAJ GANGARAM AHIR
EX-MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT



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Ref. No. :

Date : 04th July 2021

FOREWORD

I deem it pleasure to write few words as FOREWORD of the e-book compilation of select speeches of my good friend and erstwhile colleague in 14th Lok Sabha (2004 to 2009) Dr. S.K. Kharventhan.

During 14th Lok Sabha he was in Treasury Bench and I was in Opposition. Even though he was in treasury bench he never hesitated to put forth the demands to the then ruling government for the welfare of the public through various modes like Rule 377, Special Mention, Zero Hour and Debates, Discussions. We used to raise so many issues pertaining to State Level, National Level, International Level and Constituency Level. Dr. S.K. Kharventhan was one of the dedicated Parliamentarians. His deliberations are detailed and research oriented.

At the end of 14th Lok Sabha, in March 2009, Chennai based Prime Point Foundation honoured him with the first "SANSAD RATNA AWARD" for his outstanding performance. Former President of India Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam also appreciated him. Sansad Ratna Award concept was initiated by Prime Point Foundation on the suggestion of Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam.

Now Prime Point Foundation has come forward to release the select speeches of Shri. S. K. Kharventhan as e-book on 05.07.2021 and it is a Honour for me to release the same.

I hope certainly this e-book will be greatly useful to Political Science students and Political leaders.


Hansraj G. Ahir

Foreword by Shri C T Ravi

C.T. Ravi
National General Secretary



भारतीय जनता पार्टी
Bharatiya Janata Party

FOREWORD

Date: 04/07/2021

Very few MPs are active in Parliament through regular attendance, raising questions during question hours, debating on issues of public importance and participation in debates, legislative business and budget discussions. One of them is Thiru S K Kharventhan, Member of Parliament (Indian National Congress) from Palani, Tamil Nadu who emerged as one of the top 5 performers during 14th Lok Sabha (2004-09).

I consider it my privilege to write this foreword of the E-Book compilation of select speeches of Thiru S K Kharventhan who is also the recipient of prestigious Sansad Ratna by Prime Point Foundation, Chennai for his brilliant performance in the Lok Sabha.

Thiru S K Kharventhan has been an outstanding Parliamentarian who has worked relentlessly to serve his constituency, State and the Nation. During his 5 years tenure, he raised 377 public issues under Rule 377, asked 1200 questions during Question Hour and participated in 187 debates, an exceptional achievement by any standards.

He urged the central government to intervene and direct the Kerala government to raise the water storage level of Mullai Periyar dam from 136 feet to 142 feet for the welfare of Tamil Nadu farmers. In order to provide job opportunities for the SC/ ST and OBC youth, Thiru S K Kharventhan fought for reservation in the private sector for these marginalised sections. His concern for the health and welfare of Safai Karmacharis or the manual scavengers impressed law makers cutting across party lines.

This compilation of the numerous speeches, debates and issues raised by Thiru S K Kharventhan in the Lok Sabha is inspiring and will be an enlightening guide to current MPs and also to those who want to serve people in future. We are indeed very proud about his track record and contributions. I congratulate Prime Point Foundation for bringing out this brilliant achievement into the public domain.

Dhanyavad.

C.T. Ravi



National General Secretary
Bharatiya Janata Party

Dr S K Kharventhan – Brief Profile



Dr S K Kharventhan, an outstanding Parliamentarian of 14th Lok Sabha representing Palani Constituency has received several National and International Awards for his contribution towards social justice and his Parliamentary services. Prime Point Foundation featured him in Cover Story in March 2009 edition as an outstanding Parliamentarian in their eMagazine PreSense. Dr APJ Abdul Kalam also appreciated him for raising maximum number of Questions (1177) in the 14th Lok Sabha.

As a Senior Lawyer, He has held top positions including Member, Vice Chairman and Chairman, Bar Council of India, an Apex body of Legal Fraternity from 1995 to 2005. He is the First Bar Council of India Chairman from Tamil Nadu. He has been honoured with 'Life Time Achievement Award' for his contribution to the Legal Profession and National Law Day – 2000 Award for the Improvement of Legal Education.

He was the Member of National Commission for Backward Class (NCBC), now a Constitutional Body during the years between 2010 and 2016. Presently, he is the Honorary Chairman for the National Confederation of OBC Employees Welfare Association, a non political organisation.

Presently, he is the National General Council Member and Official Spokesperson of Bharatiya Janata Party, Tamil Nadu.

He can be reached at skkharventhan@yahoo.co.in

Date : 15-07-2004

Need to check the pollution caused due to discharge of industrial effluents into Noyyal River, Tamil Nadu.

Matter Under Rule-377

SHRI . S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI) :

The Tamil Nadu Agricultural University has confirmed that water in the Orathupalayam reservoir in Kangayam Taluk my Palani Constituency is contaminated and suggested an end to the indiscriminate effluents and municipal waste into the Noyyal. The University took water samples from the reservoirs and it was found that the percentage of Total Dissolved Salts (TDS) is high. It was 6003 mg. a litre against the permissible limit of 2100 mg. a litre and lead concentration in the water was 2.7 mg. a litre against the permissible limit of 0.1 mg. a litre. This contamination of the reservoir has been due to indiscriminate huge amount of discharge of industrial effluents and waste. High levels of contamination would adversely affect the quality of groundwater and salinity would severely hamper crop growth. In fact, an earlier study showed that fish samples contained harmful levels of lead and cadmium.

The Minister of Environment and Forests should also ensure that there is no discharge of effluents into the Noyyal river. I demand that urgent steps be taken to protect the human lives and also the fishery. Adequate financial assistance may also be provided for desilting the river.

Date :16.07.2004

Resolution regarding Reservation for SC/STs and OBCs in Private Sector

Private Member Bill

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak on the resolution moved by our hon. Member, Shri. S. Ajaya Kumar with respect to the reservation for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward communities in the private sector.

Why this Resolution is necessary? It is for three reasons – one, the young boys of SC/STs and OBCs are not able to get entry into professional colleges; two, they are not able to get Government jobs; and third, they are not able to start private business.

If you go down to South, those students who are able to get 297 to 299 out of 300, are able to get admission into medical colleges, and those students of SC/STs and OBCs who get lesser marks are not able to get professional courses, since a medical college seat costs Rs.25 lakh. They are not able to get seats. Next comes the question of seeking Government jobs. They are not able to influence; they are not able to spend money; they do not have any recommendation and so, they are not able to get jobs.

There are unemployed Medical Graduates and there are so many Government hospitals which are running without doctors. In Natham and Kangayam which are in my constituency, there are 50-bedded Government hospitals in those towns and there is no doctor for a number of years, since the Government wants to downsize, and decided not to appoint any one. There are many schools which are

running without teachers. The Government is not ready to appoint anybody, and there are very many young graduates from SC/ST and OBC categories who are wandering for jobs. If they are appointed in Government hospitals and schools they can serve the society better, but they are not being appointed.

For the information of the House, I would like to say that there is a scheme in the Department of THADCO in Tamil Nadu, whereby they are providing loans for SC/ST youths, under PMRY. They are selecting the candidates according to the educational qualifications, and are sending the list to the nationalised or lead banks. What are these banks doing? They are calling the candidates to come today or tomorrow; they are dragging them and finally they refuse; they are not able to get loans, and they are also not able to start the profession. Thus, the youths from SC/ST and OBC categories have become jobless.

I want to say one more thing for the information of this House. Throughout this country, most of the Governments are not willing to give suitable Ministries to the SC/ST persons. Late Shri K.Kamaraj was the first Chief Minister in this country who appointed one SC/ST MLA, Shri Parameswaran as the Minister for HR&CE.

In those days, SC/STs were not allowed to enter into the temple; and those temples where SC/ST people were not allowed entry, they gave a warm reception to the SC/ST man. Late Shri K.Kamaraj appointed one Mr. Kakkan as the Home Minister, who was one of the signatories to the Constitution, he had served in that position for a number of years.

In the present day, we are speaking many things, but we are not ready to accept SC/ST youths. I want to make only one reference here to Ramayana. When Rama, Sita and Lakshmana were going out from their Kingdom to forest, they were helped by Guha, to cross the river. He belonged to a fishermen community; but Rama called him that he was his another own brother. Nowadays, we are using Rama

for only election purposes, but we are not following the footpath of Rama to help the poor and downtrodden people. So, the time has now come after 57 years, when we have to think about the youths of SC/ST and OBCs. This Government has to pass a suitable Act, giving job opportunities in private institutions.

In my constituency, there are a number of industries. Those industries are not giving even a single job to SC/ST candidates. There are textile industries, dairy industries and so many others. But they are not giving jobs to them. So, we have to pass suitable orders to help the youths from SC/STs and OBCs. Thank you for giving me this opportunity.

Date : 20.07.2004

**Combined discussion on the Budget (General)
2004 -2005 | Demands for Grants on Account for
Budget (General) and Demands for Excess Grants
of Budget (General)**

- **General Budget – 2004-2005**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity. I rise to support the Budget for 2004-05.

Our hon. Finance Minister, Shri Chidambaramji, submitted a very excellent Budget upon the advice of our leader, hon. Soniaji, and our hon. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singhji. He has covered all the areas, like agriculture, health, textiles, education etc. He has given more importance to agriculture. He announced a number of schemes to agriculturists. In this connection I want to mention one point, which is about the launching of "National Horticulture Mission" to double the horticulture production and also to encourage horticulture, it is decided to set up a State-level Cooperative Society in Anand Model for promoting horticulture. This has to be applied to medicinal plants and other important crops also.

In my constituency, there is a plant by the name '*Gloriosa Superba*'. It's root is exported to Italy, France, Germany and Swiss. It is called as "KANNUVAZHI KILANG". It is purchased by one Altica International New Delhi through the agents in Mulanur, Markampatti, Rajapalayam and Jayakondam. They are purchasing it from the agriculturists by paying Rs. 400 per one kilo, but Exporting to foreign countries at the rate more than Rs. 2,400. They are sucking the blood of the agriculturists. The agriculturists are investing huge money for

developing the above plant. Hence, these kinds of medicinal plants have to be purchased by the Government of India through the State level Cooperative Societies Union of India has to set up State level Co-operative Society like Horticulture. It is only then that the growers of "Gloriosa superba" will get a price not less than Rs.2000 per kilogram.

There are more than a lakh of "Tapioca" planters and thousands of "Sago" factories in Tamil Nadu. The previous Government entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Thailand to import starch at a customs duty of 30 per cent. To safeguard the interests of the Tapioca planters and Sago factory owners, this Government has decided to raise the customs duty from 30 per cent to 50 per cent. It is a welcome step and it must be implemented immediately. Customs duty on Palm oil is increased from 70 per cent to 75 per cent. In our area and in Kerala, coconut and other oilseeds are in abundance. So, customs duty on Palm oil must be increased to 100 per cent. Then only coconut growers and other oilseed producers will be saved.

My next point relates to Pensioners and Senior citizens. They are mainly depositing their money in the nationalised banks. They live on the interest accrued on their deposits. Now, the interest rates are reduced. Hence, they are affected badly. The senior citizens must be given 12 per cent rate of interest on their deposits.

I thank the hon. Finance Minister for safeguarding the power loom owners and handloom weavers in my Constituency, and also particularly in my area, by cancelling the 'Cenvat', the tax imposed by the previous Government.

Another important decision announced in the Budget 2004 is setting up of a Desalination Plant at Chennai. For a number of years, people residing in Chennai have been undergoing many troubles due to lack of water. The residents of Chennai are thankful to the Finance Minister for this. That scheme has to be started immediately.

Hon. Finance Minister is a senior Advocate in the Supreme Court. So, he would appreciate this well. State Governments are responsible for funding the judicial institutions. However, no State Government is giving any money for construction of buildings and providing infrastructure facilities to the *mofussil* courts. So, the Ministry of Finance of the Government of India has to allocate special funds for development of infrastructure facilities in courts in Talukas and Districts.

Finally, I request the hon. Finance Minister to waive the interest and penal interest payable by the poor farmers to cooperative institutions. With these words, I extend my total support to the Budget.

Date : 06.12.2004

Need to release a Commemorative Stamp in Honour of Dheeran Chinnamalai of Tamil Nadu who fought against the Britishers.

Matter Under Rule 377

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Mr. Chairman, Sir, **Tyagi Dheeran Chinnamalai** was born in 1756 in Melappalayam, Kangayam Taluk, Erode District, Tamil Nadu which falls under my constituency and was known for his valour and fame. He was instrumental in stopping of collection of taxes by the then ruler, Hyder Ali in Kongu region which was brought under the Mysore ruler. After this incident, he was called as "Dheeran Chinnamalai" since he hailed from a place between Chennimalai and Sivanmalai, both abodes of Lord Karthikeya. Dheeran Chinnamalai gathered a strong army consisting of Kongu youths in and around Kangayam and trained them vigorously to fight against the Britishers. He was captured by the British army treacherously at Karumalai Hills in Palani region in my constituency and was hanged to death in 1806 at Sankagiri.

Tamil Nadu Government honoured him by establishing a transport corporation after his name with Trichy as its headquarters. Moreover, the building of the Collectorate at Erode has also been named after him. Every year 17th April is observed as Memorial Day in his honour. His 200th death year falls on July, 2005 and 250th birth year falls on April, 2006. It will be a befitting tribute to the First Great Leader who fought against the Britishers and was known for his valour and sacrifice if a commemorative stamp is released in honour of Tyagi Dheeran Chinnamalai. I urge upon the UPA Government to take necessary action at the earliest.

Date : 10.12.2004

Discussion on the resolution regarding to relief Measures for Workers in Agrarian Sector

- **Private Member's Resolution**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Sir, I thank our senior leader, Shri Vasudevan Nair for bringing this important subject before this august House. When this country obtained freedom in 1947, we used to purchase foodgrains from erstwhile Burma and other countries. But now we are exporting foodgrains throughout the world. The reason behind that is the hard work of the farmers of this country and also the Green Revolution introduced by our former Minister of Agriculture, Shri Subramaniam.

The problems of both the farmers and farm labourers are inter-connected. There are so many reasons for that. The main reason is that in some areas, there is non-availability of water and in some areas there is flood situation. In the areas adjoining Ganga and Brahmaputra rivers, there is more water. If you go down to South, in Tamil Nadu, without water in Cauvery and other rivers, there is very meagre successful paddy crop in Thanjavur and other regions because they are not able to get adequate water. But there is monsoon failure for the past three years. There is a famous Thirukkural in Tamil which says:

***"Uzhudundu vazhvare vazhvar matrellam
Thozhudundu pin selvar."***

It means those who are doing farm work, they alone would live peacefully and others have to go behind the farmers. But the pathetic situation in this country is that the farmers and farm labourers are going after the cooperative institutions and nationalised banks for getting loan for cultivation .

Another important thing is that the farmers are not able to get appropriate price for their production. Suppose a pen is being sold for Rs.10 by manufacturer, he is calculating before production. Its manufacturing cost is Rs.5 plus Rs.2 for tax. In total, it is costing Rs.7. But he is selling it at Rs.10 with a profit of Rs.3. Is it possible for an agriculturist to fix the price at Rs.700 per bag of paddy before it is produced? All the sugarcane factories are not giving money to the sugarcane farmers. The sugarcane is lying everywhere. The farmers have been fighting for a number of years for getting good price. Some State Governments had given free electricity to the farmers. The farmers in Tamil Nadu had organised an agitation 20 years ago for supply of free electricity.

At that time, 64 persons were died due to police firing and thousands were imprisoned and I was one among them. During 1980, when Shri Kalaighinar Karunanidhi was the Chief Minister, he gave free electricity to the farmers for the first time. But due to a new Act enacted by the previous Government at the Centre, supply of free electricity was stopped by present government and restored from 13th May this year.

The farmers of this country are producing paddy or wheat. They are not producing it for themselves alone, they produce it for others also. But even then they are not able to live happily. For the past three years, there is no rain at all in Tamil Nadu. A drinking water pot is costing Rs.5 and a lorry of water is costing Rs.450.

That is the situation. Only now we had some rains in the last few months. For everything they are begging from the cooperative banks. What ate the cooperative people doing? They just say that some previous loan is there, therefore, you first pay that money. Unless that money is paid, they are not giving further loan. Those who paid loan properly also not provided loan by co-operative Banks. Even the nationalised banks are not giving any money. Our Finance Minister visited number of banks in Tamil Nadu and instructed all the bank

officials to give loan to farmers. But they are not giving loan. They are asking them to get a No Objection Certificate from all the banks. After getting NoC from ten banks, he goes to the same bank. But what do the bank authorities say? They say: `Rs.1,000 of IRDP loan is outstanding against you. Therefore, we will not give the loan'. Then he is compelled to go to the private moneylender. If the private moneylender gives Rs.5000, he charges Rs.3 per day as interest. But he is not able to pay either the interest or the principal amount on time. In the end, he has no other option but to commit suicide.

The Government has to take effective steps to see that long-term, interest free loans are made available to poor farmers. Existing loans to be wiped off. Any industrialist could get a loan to the tune of rupees two thousand crore and his loan is waived off because his business did not take off and everything became a Non-Performing Asset. But to recover a loan of just Rs. 5,000/- or Rs. 10,000/- the bank officials visit the house of that poor farmer and snatch away the *mangalsutra* of his wife in the name of attachment and humiliate him. What, other than committing suicide, could the poor farmer do in such an event? About 70 per cent of our population comprises of agriculturists. But their condition is very pitiable and pathetic.

Sir, a farm labourer has to die as a farm labourer only. If a farm labourer wants his children to enter the educational arena, it does not become possible for him to do so. I will give an example. In my constituency, the son of a poor farmer scored more than 1000 marks out of a total of 1200. He approached the bank for loan to pursue higher education. The Bank Manager asked him as to which community he belonged to. On knowing his community, that student was denied the loan. This is very unfortunate.

Sir, I am an agriculturist and we are largely an agrarian society. I would like to submit that without inter-linking of rivers, the problems faced by the farmers cannot be solved. We are getting more waters from rivers like the Ganges and the Brahmaputra but we are not getting any water from rivers like Amravati Cauvery and other

parannial rivers in the South. So, the Government must allocate huge funds for inter-linking of rivers throughout the country and until this is done, the problems faced by the farm sector cannot be solved in this country.

Sir, I once again thank you for giving me this opportunity.

Date : 02-03-2005

Need to grant early clearance to the proposal of Government of Kerala for laying a new approach track and strengthening the existing track to Sabarimala Temple.

- **Matter Under Rule 377**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

In Southern India, the Balaji Temple at Tirupathi, Karthik Temple at Palani and Ayyappa Temple at Sabrimala are the famous hill shrines. At Sabarimala, the temple of Lord Ayyappa is situated on a hilltop in the dense forest which is a part of the Western Ghats. The ancient hill shrine attracts pilgrims of all faiths from all over the world and 2 to 3 crores of pilgrims visit here. There is a steady increase of 20% devotees every year between mid-November and mid-January. The pilgrims are facing a lot of problems due to lack of road, toilet, clean water, food, medical facilities, etc.

The 7 km. Distance from Pampa to hill temple (Sannidhanam) is having only two ways of footpath and the tracks are not sufficient for the movement of 4 crore pilgrims in a year. The Pampa area is allotted for parking of vehicles and the site is also very small. During the season, lakhs of pilgrims sleep on the footpath and stampede occurred many times in the past leading to death of devotees particularly on the stretch leading to temple due to narrow and rough track.

Sir, the Ministry of Environment and Forest has already clarified that Sabrimala does not fall in the core area of the sanctuary but is situated in the buffer zone. Hence widening and strengthening of the hill tracks from Pampa to Sannidhanam is urgently required and new

tracks should also be constructed to decongest the existing traffic. Particularly a separate track to be formed for donkeys taking luggage and dolyees lifting old, disabled and sick persons. The matter is pending for a number of years with the Ministry of Environment and Forests for permission. I, therefore, urge upon the Minister to do the needful at the earliest.

Date : 09.03.2005

Motion of Thanks on the Hon'ble President's Address

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Sir, I am thankful to you for giving me this opportunity to support the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address.

On 26.12.2004, it was a shock and surprise to the entire nation, particularly to the people of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry and Andaman & Nicobar Islands, due to Tsunami. The UPA Chairperson, Respected Madam Sonia Gandhi, our hon. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and other hon. Ministers visited the entire area and immediately took all the measures to safeguard the interests of the affected people and other victims.

The hon. Prime Minister also announced that we would not accept any foreign assistance in any way, either in kind or cash. This was a bold and welcomeable step taken by this Government. This Government also took immediate steps for the benefit of those people who are affected in Jammu & Kashmir due to recent avalanches.

The Government has also decided to constitute a National Disaster Management Authority. In this regard, the Government has also decided to bring forward a Central legislation. This was announced by our hon. President in his Address to the nation.

Sir, in this country lakhs of youths are not getting any jobs, particularly youths belonging to SC/STs and OBCs. The Government has already decided to constitute a Group of Ministers to have a dialogue with the industry in this regard, particularly with the private sector for giving job opportunities to these youths. With regard to SC/STs it has also been mentioned in the President's Address, but I would request the Government to consider OBCs also in this regard.

The present Reservation Bill is under consideration of the Committee on Home Affairs for giving reservations to SC/STs and OBCs in the civil services. I would request the Government to expedite the matter.

Now, the Government has decided to give a new deal to rural India to expand health care, education, promoting rural electrification and rural roads. The hon. President has also announced setting up of a North-East Valley Authority to find out permanent solution to the problem of seasonal rains in the Brahmaputra Valley.

India have to divide the southern part and the northern part. The entire northern part is affected due to water. The southern part is suffering due to lack of water. So, the Government has to take steps for inter-linking, at least, the peninsular rivers in southern States and solve the problem of the people of the southern part of the country.

Also, to develop the Panchayati Raj institutions, to give more powers to the Panchayati Raj institutions and to solve the problems in the rural areas, the UPA Government has created a new Ministry of Panchayati Raj. The Ministry has drawn up a 150-point Action Plan covering 18 aspects of Panchayati Raj.

I want to mention another important thing. The UPA Government is committed to provide electricity to all the villages by the year 2009. Another particular important aspect is that our hon. Prime Minister had inaugurated the National Food-for-Work Programme in 150 backward districts. It was launched in Andhra Pradesh on the birthday of our hon. former Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The Government had decided to issue Antyodaya Cards to benefit two crore people and 50 lakh additional families.

With respect to education, during his Address, our hon. President announced the policies of this Government, particularly about the Education Cess which will form the *Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh*. This will enable better funding of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, the Mid-day Meal Scheme and Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls. Also, the National Mission for Sarva

Shiksha Abhiyan has been constituted for the first time. Further, a very important scheme announced is EDUSAT, an educational satellite, and Doordarshan's Direct-to-Home television facility to develop education.

In this regard, I want to mention that in all the Kendriya Vidyalayas throughout the country, the student and teacher ratio is 1:30. The student and teacher ratio in thousands of schools in the villages, at the panchayat level, is 1:40. Like in Kendriya Vidyalayas, this has to be modified to 1:30 in all the panchayat schools to develop rural education. Also, the teachers who are working in the rural areas, in primary schools throughout the country, want to travel from the southern part to northern part and from the northern part to southern part of India for Education Tour. But they are getting concession in the Railways only up to 25 per cent. The Government has to increase this to 50 per cent for those teachers who are attending seminars or going on education tours. Also, based on the Report of the Commission headed by Prof. D.B. Chattopadhyaya, the Indian Education Service is to be constituted to develop education in this country.

I want to mention particularly about the minority institutions, unaided and self-financed institutions where the teachers are not paid salary. They are giving them only Rs.500 or Rs.1000. That malady has to be removed. A Tribunal has to be constituted to hear the grievances of the teachers working in the minority, unaided and self-financed institutions. Then only the problem of those teachers who are suffering in the rural areas will be solved.

Date : 14.03.2005

**Discussion on the Budget (Railways) 2005-2006,
Demands for Grants on Account (Railways) 2005 -
2006 and Supplementary Demands for Grants
(Railways) 2004-2005**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Mr. Chairman Sir, I rise to support the Railway Budget on behalf of my Party, the Indian National Congress, and on behalf of my leader, Shrimati Sonia Gandhi. First of all, I want to thank the hon. Minister of Railways, Shri Lalu Prasad, for the presentation of this populist Budget which is being welcomed by one and all in this country. More importantly, I want to thank the hon. Minister, Shri Lalu Prasad, Shri R. Velu and Shri Naranbhai Rathwa for sanctioning the new line between Erode and Palani. It was the long-pending demand of the people of that region, that is, Dharapuram, Kangeyam and Chennimalai

Sir, I want to mention here that during 1950, the length of the Indian Railway lines were 54,000 kilometres. After 50 years, that is, in the year 2000, it was developed only to 63,000 kilometres. So, the progress is only 17 per cent. As compared with the road development, in the year 1950, we had only 9 lakh kilometres and after 50 years in 2000, it was extended to 36 lakh kilometres, that is, 400 per cent development. The reason being that all the Government had concentrated on allocating funds for the development of roads. I would like to point out here that the National Highways Authority was created and Rs. 62,000 crore were allotted exclusively for the road development.

In the same manner, sufficient and necessary funds have to be allocated for Railways. Then only the Railway lines will increase in

this country. Why I am saying this is because the people residing in the villages are thinking that rail journey is like air journey to them. For example, I want to mention that if one person wants to travel in a train he is paying 13 paise per kilometer whereas when he travels by bus he is paying 25 paise. That is the situation in this country. The railway lines can only connect throughout the North, South, East and West of the nation. Hence, the Government has to allocate specific funds for the development of the railway lines.

I would request that our Government has to aim to achieve the goal of two lakh kilometer broad gauge lines without converting the meter gauge lines into broad gauge. Throughout the country, in six States, there are 15,000 kilometers of meter gauge which is 25 per cent of the total railway line available in this country.

Without taking steps to convert these 15,000 kilometers of meter gauge lines into broad gauge, we have to construct new broad gauge lines. Then, automatically the total rail length of 63,000 kilometers of the country will be raised to 78,000 kilometers. When compared to converting the faulty meter gauge into broad gauge, for the construction of new broad gauge lines the expenses will be less. Moreover, by using these meter gauge lines, we can operate passenger trains. Hence, instead of converting meter gauge into broad gauge, we should have new broad gauge lines to be constructed throughout the country.

For example, I want to mention that instead of taking out the meter gauge line between Trichy-Dindigul-Madurai, if we can form a new broad gauge line between Trichy-Viralimalai-Natham-Melur-Madurai, it would give more income and also the traffic will decrease. If this line is formed, then it will be easier for the goods to reach Tuticorin port. The distance and the transport expense would be reduced. The traffic on Trichy-Dindigul-Madurai line would also be reduced. In the meter gauge, by not removing the Trichy-Dindigul-Madurai section, we can operate passenger trains and the people of this region would reach Palani, Quilon and Rameshwaram easily from

Trichy. Hence, a new broad gauge line as suggested above is to be formed without gauge conversion.

In Tamil Nadu the total length of meter gauge is 4,010 kilometers and that of broad gauge is 3,195 kilometers. The gauge conversion will not increase the length of railway lines. But the new broad gauge line should be formed early. I would like to mention that certain important new lines are to be formed in Tamil Nadu. They are :

Coimbatore-Palladam-Kangeyam-Karur connecting two textile cities. Coimbatore is the Manchester of South India.

Palladam-Dharapuram-Karur-Trichy

Dindigul-Natham-Karaikudi

Madurai-Natham-Trichy

Palladam-Dharapuram-Oddanchatram-Dindigul. Oddanchatram is famous for vegetables which are exported throughout the country.

The long-pending request of the people of Mayiladuturai, Tiruvarur, Pattukottai, Peravoorani, Aranthangi and Karaikudi is to have a new broad gauge line between Mayiladuturai and Karaikudi. The survey work is already completed between Dindigul and Sabarimalai, that is 201 kilometers. That work has to be taken up immediately. Lakhs of devotees from throughout the country are going to Sabarimalai every year.

The gauge conversion of Dindigul-Coimbatore line is to be completed. I want to particularly congratulate the hon. Minister for Railways for the implementation of the Paranjpe Committee recommendations, which is Railway Traffic Enquiry Committee for rationalisation of tariffs in this year. The budgetary support to complete the pending schemes need Rs. 50,164 crore. The funds

have to be generated for completing the schemes. The Indian Railway Finance Corporation has to mobilise funds.

The Railways have tried the 'Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT)' method with Konkan Railway Corporation. This has to be extended to all pending railway schemes and for new schemes. I would submit to the hon. Minister of Railways that unnecessarily keeping unprofitable projects cost unnecessary expenses to the Railways. Those unprofitable projects are to be scrapped.

I would like to make another important request on behalf of the people of my constituency - the railway over-bridge in Engiyur in Kangeyam taluk is already sanctioned. The tender is also over and contract is also given. For the past one-and-a-half years the work is not taken up. This has to be taken up immediately.

In between Dharapuram and Palani, there is a railway crossing in Palani. Lakhs and lakhs of devotees visit the Palani hill temple. Therefore, a Rail Over Bridge (ROB) is necessary in Palani. I am ready to allocate necessary funds for construction of the over-bridge in Palani from the MPLAD Scheme. I request the hon. Minister to consider this proposal and accord sanction immediately.

The doubling line in Tamil Nadu has reached up to Chengalput only. I would request that it must reach till Madurai. The Electrification of the line is extended only till Villupuram. I would request that it should be extended till Tuticorin.

Surveys for more than 112 ROB's and RUB's were completed for Tamil Nadu, but last year only 32 were undertaken. The remaining are yet to be taken up.

I want to mention another point on behalf of the people residing in Delhi. It is about the Nizamuddin Rajdhani Express, which is plying two days in a week, that is, on Friday and Wednesday at 15.30 hours. It is impossible for the Personnel in the Government service to travel

in this train. Hence, the days on which this train runs has to be changed to Saturday, and the time at which it starts has also to be changed. Increasing the frequency of this train is also necessary.

I would like to mention another very important point. "Tirupur" Kumaran died in Tirupur. I have already written a letter to the Government requesting to rename the Tirupur Railway Station as "Tirupur Kumaran" Railway Station.

The first freedom fighter in South India, Thiyagi Dheeran Chinnamalai, was hanged to death by the Britishers at Sankari Fort. I would request that the station should be renamed as Thiyagi Dheeran Chinnamalai Railway Station. This is also one of my requests.

Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak here. I am supporting this Railway Budget.

Date : 05.05.2005

Regarding the Coastal Aquaculture Authority Bill – 2005

- **Government Bills**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Sir, I rise to support this Bill.

Sir, with respect to Aquaculture and Shrimpculture, the hon. Supreme Court has given clear directions as to what steps are to be taken to safeguard the interests of the public, how public demands have to be formed and aquaculture to be developed.

Actually, Sir, in Tamil Nadu, from Madras to Cape Comerin nearing to 500 kms. of coastal area, Nagapattinam, Karaikal, Tharangambady, Poraiyar, Thanjavur, Pudukottai, Tuticorin, Kanya Kumari, Kancheepuram and Pazhaverkadu – the people were obstructed in so many places for the reason the wastes are coming from these kinds of industries affecting the drinking water, particularly borewell due to chemicals. A number of chemicals were identified by the hon. Supreme Court. It also banned nearly 20 chemicals. Another important thing is that the farmers are afraid of this development of Aquaculture and Shrimpculture. In this area, the coconut, banana and all plants are affected. Moreover, they were purchasing the agricultural lands at lesser prices and using them for this purpose. They are afraid that their houses and lands would be affected. There are so many Government lands that can be used for this purpose. Between Nagapattinam and Kancheepuram in Tamil Nadu, so many agitations were there, people were arrested and cases were also filed against them for opposing this thing.

Aquaculture and Shrimpculture are other industries that are giving more money to the Government. One such variety is available in Rameshwaram. It is "TIGER PRAWN." They are exporting very large number of varieties throughout the world. It would give a very good income. This Bill will go in solving all such problems as per hon. Supreme Court directions. Hence, I welcome this Bill.

Date : 09.05.2005

Discussion on the Code of Criminal Procedure Amendment Bill 2005

- Government Bills

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Sir, I rise to support the Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2005. First of all, I want to congratulate our hon. Home Minister for bringing this Bill. He has taken up this task for the speedy disposal of criminal cases, helping under-trial prisoners and for safeguarding the interest of women.

Actually, this present Bill was brought before the House by the former Home Minister Shri S.B. Chavan in the year 1994. Then it was vetted by the Committee in the year 1996. After 1996, the Congress Government was not in power. Now, our hon. Home Minister has presented this Bill with certain modifications.

First of all, I want to welcome the amendment to section 46. Section 46(4) says:

“Save in exceptional circumstances, no women shall be arrested after sunset and before sun rise...”

My suggestion is that males should also be added to it. I want to mention about two cases. The former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Dr. M. Karunanidhi was arrested at midnight around 1 O’Clock and he was taken round to the police stations throughout night. Police authorities failed to follow Section 50 Cr PC. Then, Kanchi Mutt Chief, Shankaracharya was arrested in Andhra Pradesh at midnight on 11th November, 2004. After one month, the junior Pontiff was arrested. My suggestion is, except in exceptional circumstances, even no man should be arrested after sunset. It is a welcome step taken by the Government.

Another important section is section 50. It is a new provision based on the report of the Joint Committee. Now this has been amended as section 50A(1) to 50A(4). Article 21 about human dignity is covered by this amendment. In the present amendment, the Police officer must immediately bring the fact about the arrest of a person and place where he was kept to the family members, relatives and friends of the person so arrested. Secondly, the Police must inform the rights of the accused. While remanding him to the Judicial Custody, the Magistrate must check up whether the Police has complied with section 50(A)(2), 50A(3) or not before remand. It is a welcome step taken by our hon. Home Minister.

Other important sections are section 53, insertion of 53A and also section 164 and insertion of 164A They relate to examination of accused as well as victim by medical practitioners. Previously, Registered Medical Practitioners, serving in a Government hospital or a local-body hospital, were permitted to examine the victim as well as the accused. Now, any Registered Medical Practitioner, within an area of 16 kms., can check up the accused and can check up the victim also. But, my request is, and it has to be clarified also, whether an *Ayurvedic* or a *Homeopathic* Registered Medical Practitioner is eligible to examine the accused or not.

Another important amendment is with regard to Section 176. This Section deals with inquiry by Magistrate into custodial death. Now, the present amendment provides that the words “where any person dies while in the custody of the police or” shall be omitted. Sir, I may be permitted to speak two or three minutes more. Now, the following is being added:

“(a) any person dies or disappears, or

(b) rape is alleged to have been committed on any woman...”

In this amendment, sub-section (5), is being added. There is a lacunae

in this that is why I want to mention it.

“(5) The Judicial Magistrate or the Metropolitan Magistrate or Executive Magistrate or Police Officer holding an inquiry or investigation, as the case may be, under sub-section (1A) shall, within twenty-four hours of the death of the person, forward the body with a view to its being examined to the nearest Civil Surgeon....”

But, it does not mention about rape victims - whether they are sending them for examination immediately or not. It is not there. The present Bill is intended to prevent the rape cases. In this country, for example, two rapes take place every hour. One out of five victims is a child below the age of 12 years. Nineteen out of 20 rape accused were let free. In 2002, 132 policemen were tried for custodial rapes, of whom only four were convicted.

The punishment must be stringent. Death punishment must be given to rapists; it cannot be reduced.

I would also like to mention the amendments to Sections 292 and 293. These are very good amendments to avoid any delay in counterfeit coinage and explosive cases. For expert opinion, it is taking number of years. It leads to unnecessary harassment to the accused also. So, it is a welcome thing. An important amendment is being made to Section 436. Now, it is amended as 436(A). Suppose the case of a person, who is in jail and completed one half of the period of imprisonment specified for the offence under law.

He can be released with or without surety. This is a very good amendment. Why I am saying is because 2.17659 lakh people were undertrials, who were in prison as on 31-12-2003. Most of them are the people booked for petty and small cases. Mr. Chairman, you better know the case of Sayyed Nazar Madani. He was arrested in April, 1998. He is in Coimbatore Jail. No bail has been given to him. I contacted the Jail authorities. I asked one Mr. Selvin, Assistant Superintendent of Jail, “You please tell me as to when Shri Madani

was remanded in your Central Prison.” He refused to tell. He said, “I do not know.” This is the situation. I am not supporting Madani’s case but his case has not been completed the trial till date. So, this is a very good amendment and would help the undertrial prisoners. Then, another important amendment is with respect to anticipatory bail.

MR. CHAIRMAN : (**Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan**)You see, there are two types of detentions. One is detention without trial and one is detention without arrest. People are detained in police stations and their arrest is not recorded. That is in case of detention without arrest. The other is detention without trial.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI): I am talking about detention without trial. Being a criminal lawyer, I would like to raise one point with respect to section 438 regarding anticipatory bail. It says, "The presence of the applicant seeking anticipatory bail shall be obligatory".

A number of conditions have been imposed. Suppose, the accused is a Government servant. Nowadays, it is very easy to file false cases. You, Sir, also know that a false case can be filed under section 506(1) or 326 IPC. He can move a District Court for the anticipatory bail. He will have to appear before the District judge as per new provision in 438 and if bail is rejected, he will be arrested. If he is remanded for 48 hours, he will lose the job. He will be suspended and then he cannot go to the High Court or the Supreme Court. Accused are deprived of their rights. So, this has to be reconsidered as it will affect the entire Criminal Justice Delivery System of the country.

Moreover, a large number of cases are pending in various Magistrate Courts. All the Magistrate Courts do not have the buildings or clerks. One of the magistrates in Tamil Nadu had staged an agitation for want of a typing machine. They do not have much facility. There is a provision to amend the Directorate of Prosecution. It is very good. Prosecutors must be given all the facilities.

Another humble submission is, most of the police officers are recording statements contrary to the FIR. If the statements are contradictory then the benefit automatically goes to the accused. So, all the State Governments must be requested to appoint one junior advocate with less than five or ten years of service as a Police Prosecutor in the police stations to file the charges. This will not only give job opportunity to young lawyers but also will improve the criminal justice delivery system. I support the Bill and thank you for the opportunity given.

Date : 12-05-2005

Need to permit other selected categories of persons to run telephone booths on railway stations besides handicapped persons in Tamil Nadu.

- **Matter Under Rule 377**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Sir, during the year 1999, throughout Tamilnadu, the railway authorities selected handicapped persons, unemployed youths, SC/ST youngsters, NGOs and war widows to run STD/ISD/PCO/Fax booths in all the railway stations in the State. Initially, they have given three year's permission. Thereafter, they have extended it for one more year and that period expired on 27-04-05. But, now, unfortunately, railway authorities extended the period only to handicapped persons.

This has not been extended to other categories of persons and the authorities have abruptly closed rest of the booths on the same day whereas it seems that in other parts of the country, there were allowed to function for a period of ten years more. Those booths were used to function all the 24 hours in the railway stations. Now, because of the closure of the booths, throughout the State, the passengers are very much suffering for making their phone calls from the stations and at the platforms. The above request is genuine.

Hence, I urge upon the Hon'ble Minister of Railways to immediately direct the authorities concerned to permit all the unemployed youths, SC/ST youngsters and war widows to continue to run the above booths without any delay and to render justice and livelihood to them.

Date : 03-08-2005

Need to clear the proposal of the Government of Tamil Nadu for development of Arupadai Vedugal Tourist Circuit.

- **Matter Under Rule 377**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

In Tamil Nadu, Lord Muruga blesses the devotees in six places. They are viz., Palani (Near Madurai and Coimbatore), Tiruchendur (Near Toothukudi), Swamimali (Near Kumbakonam/ Thanjavur), Tiruthani (Near Kancheepuram and Chennai), Palamuthircholai (Near Madurai). Apart from domestic tourists, the foreign tourists especially from Malaysia and South Africa visit the above six abodes of Lord Muruga in their tour itinerary. Moreover, most of the temples are located near major tourist centres like Madurai, Coimbatore, Thanjavur, Kumbakonam, Kancheepuram and Chennai. The development of these places would facilitate the foreign and domestic tourists to visit these places in large numbers thereby extending their duration of stay in the above mentioned places.

Considering the importance of the visit of "Arupadai Veedugal" by foreign tourists, the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation, an undertaking of the Government of Tamil Nadu has also included the above places in its "14 day Sunny South Tour". The 'Arupadai Veedugal Tourist Circuit' should be developed by allocating necessary funds from the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.

For the development of Tourist Circuit the Commissionerate of Tourism, Government of Tamil Nadu has already sent a proposal to the Union Government for the grant of Rs. 798.97 lakhs.

I urge upon the Hon'ble Minister of Tourism to make immediate necessary action on the above proposal.

Date : 11-08-2005

Need to fill up the vacancies in Supreme Court and all the High Courts for speedy disposal of pending cases.

- **Matter Under Rule 377**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Sir, the sanctioned strength of judges in various High Courts in India is 668. Out of the 21 High Courts, number of vacancies are 147. Proposals received from the Chief Justice of various High Courts are 78. More particularly in Madras High Courts there are 25 vacancies out of 49 Judges, in Calcutta High Court 15 vacancies and in Allahabad High Court there are 17 vacancies.

The pendency position of cases in the High Courts as on 1.3.2005 is very alarming. In Allahabad High Court 5,44,655 civil cases and 1,75,993 criminal cases are pending. In Mumbai High Court total 3,25,784 cases are pending. In Madras High Court 2,75,730 civil cases, 23,029 criminal cases, totaling 2,98,759 cases are pending.

Even though this Government has taken effective steps to improve the judicial system in the country still large number of cases are pending in various High Courts and Subordinate courts.

In Supreme Court the sanctioned strength is 26 and three vacancies are pending. Hence I urge upon the Government to take effective steps to fill the vacancies in all the High Courts and Supreme Court as early as possible and more posts should be created for speedy disposal of pending cases in all the courts.

Date : 17-08-2005

Discussion on the Payment of Wages (Amendment) Bill – 2004 as Passed by Rajya Sabha

- **Government Bills**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Sir, the Payment of Wages Act, 1936 is a beneficial legislation to regulate the payment of wages to certain classes of persons ...
(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Kharventhan, you are not in your seat. You have to obtain the Chair's permission to speak from a different seat.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN : Sir, I may be permitted to speak from this seat.

MR. CHAIRMAN: For the time being, you proceed. Do not repeat it hereafter because there is a strict rule that a Member should speak from his seat only.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN : Sir, the Payment of Wages (Amendment) Bill was introduced in Rajya Sabha on 16 May, 2002. After it was referred to the Standing Committee on Labour, the Committee submitted its report on 21st November, 2002. Even though this amendment was introduced during NDA Government, the Group of Ministers then opposed this amendment and this Bill was put in cold storage. On 2nd December, 2004, this Bill was introduced in Rajya Sabha and was passed. First of all, I want to thank the Labour Minister for this. The UPA Government has taken the bold step to bring this amendment forward for the welfare of the labour of the country.

The Payment of Wages Act was introduced in the year 1936 and it came into force on 28th March, 1937. At that time the ceiling was only Rs.200 which was revised upwards in 1947 to Rs.400; in 1976 to Rs.1,000; and in 1982 to Rs.1,600. The proposed amendment to Section 1 sub-section (6) says:

“This Act applies to wages payable to an employed person in respect of a wage period if such wages for that wage period do not exceed six thousand five hundred rupees per month or such other higher sum which, on the basis of figures of the Consumer Expenditure Survey published by the National Sample Survey Organisation, the Central Government may, after every five years, by notification in the Official Gazette, specify.”

Why I read out this provision is to emphasise the fact that it is only during a Congress Government that the welfare of labourers was taken into consideration, whether in 1957, 1976, 1982 or now in 2004-2005. Our friends on the other side said that this Bill was brought during the NDA regime. However, following the objections from various quarters, they had put it in the cold storage. They were not able to pass this Bill.

This Bill basically has two major amendments. The first one is to enhance the ceiling from the existing level of Rs.1,600 per month to Rs.6,500 per month and the second one is to enhance the existing penalty to five times. I would like to make a particular mention of certain provisions like Section 15, sub-sections (3), (4)(a), (4)(b); Section 20, sub-section (1), sub-section (2). These are all amendments proposed in this Act for the penalty. Powers are given to the inspectors appointed under the Factories Act, inspectors appointed by the State Government and other authorities. It is a very important amendment and I would like to thank the Minister for this.

The amendment in Section 2 says:

“appropriate Government means, in relation to railways, air transport services, mines and oilfields, the Central Government and, in relation to all other cases, the State Government.”

This is another step. We are all aware that most of the contractors and sub-contractors are not giving any benefit to the employees. That hurdle is removed through this amendment to Section 3, sub-section (1) which says:

“(d) in the case of contractor, a person designated by such contractor who is directly under his charge; and

(e) in any other case, a person designated by the employer as a person responsible for complying with the provisions of the Act,”

We have a federal set up. In some of the areas labourers are not protected. For example, in Tamil Nadu. In Tamil Nadu, when the Congress regime was in power, for the welfare of the rural labourers, the Government started seven cooperative spinning mills. The NABARD had given huge funds for the welfare of seven mills. Seven thousand persons were working in those seven mills.

Suddenly, all the seven mills were closed and the persons working came to the streets. Two sugar cooperative mills were closed by the present Tamil Nadu Government. Thousands of labourers are wandering in the streets.

The Union Government should take over and sell the property. States are under the domain of the Central Government. Hence, I urge upon the Government and the hon. Minister to sell the seven cooperative mills and the 50% of sale proceeds should be given to the labourers. When the DMK Government was in power, Dr. Kalaignar Karunanithy got the Central aid for the welfare of the workers of the seven mills. Now, those cooperative mills were closed.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The contract labourers also come within the purview of this amendment.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN : Yes, Sir.

Another important matter is this. For example, when the DMK Government came into power in 1996, it had given jobs to 10,000 *Salai Paniyalargal* between the age group of 25 and 30. Since they were appointed by the DMK Government, all the 10,000 persons were removed by the present Tamil Nadu Government. They have been agitating everyday. Even the High Court directed the State Government to give employment to them but the State Government refused to do so and approached the Supreme Court. That is the situation prevailing in Tamil Nadu. Nearly 69 persons committed suicide. Union of India has to direct the Tamil Nadu Government to restore the jobs. That is the situation of not only the labourers working in the factories but also other labourers in Tamil Nadu. The Central Government should take steps to protect the interests of those persons and see that they are not removed all of a sudden for political reasons.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The time is over. Please conclude.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN : Sir, it is pertaining to the Act. For the past 20 years, Extra Department Employees (EDE) in the Postal Department throughout the country were previously receiving Rs.150 only. This was the situation even when the NDA Government was in power. All were agitated. At present, persons working in Postal Department EDE are getting Rs.1,500. But the person working as a regular Postman is getting Rs.6,500 or Rs.7,000. The EDE employees working in villages must be included and must be given the same salary.

With regard to the unorganised workers, for example, persons in tailoring sector, are getting Rs.30 or Rs.40 only per day. Five crore people are working as tailors. Their condition is very poor. Our

Government has to extend help not only to the persons working in the industry but also to the persons working in the unorganised sector like tailors. Thirty crores people are working in the unorganised sector in this country. The Government must bring a comprehensive Act for helping those persons. This is a very important matter.

Nearly Rs.2,000 Crore is due as wages to be paid as salaries to the labourers working in PSUs. We want the Government to implement this Act. Government organisations are not paying salaries to the labourers properly. Salary dues have to be cleared immediately. This Bill is a bold step to amend the Act. Anyhow, I would like to state that changing the ceiling and the bringing in penal provisions are not sufficient.

We have to bring further amendments to help the employees throughout this country. It should also be ensured that they must get a salary of Rs.10,000. Those are drawing salary of Rs. 6500 now are not getting the benefit under this Act at present. Hence, I would request the hon. Minister that it must be raised to Rs.10,000. In 1982, it was Rs.1,600. We are now in 2005.

What would the poor people do with Rs.6,500? It must be raised to Rs.10,000. This is my submission.

With these words, I support the Bill.

Date : 29-11-2005

**Need to release a commemorative stamp on
14.1.2006 in honour of great farmer 'Kalingaraya
Gounder' of Erode district, Tamil Nadu.**

- **Matter Under Rule 377**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Sir, in the 13th century one "Lingaiyan" was born to Nanjaigounder and Pappayee at Kanagapuram in Vellore, Erode District. During AD 1251-1271, the whole of Southern India was ruled by the ruler Sadayavarman Sunderapandiyan. During his regime Kongu region was ruled by Veerapandiyan. The Kongu region was situated on both sides of the River Cauvery. Kalingarayan was appointed as Member, Advisory Committee in Veerapandiyan kingdom.

During that time, the Kongu region was a dry area. There were no irrigation facilities. Kalingarayan explained the necessity of constructing a Dam at the juncture of Bhavani and Cauvery River. The Dam was constructed with 1840 vents for irrigating 3459 acres. Now the Dam is called as "Kalingarayan Dam" and the canal is called as "Kalingarayan Canal." The work was appreciated by national and international technicians and experts.

Before 740 years, Kalingarayan was able to construct the dam and convert the dry lands into wet lands. 740th year of the Dam falls on 14.1.2006. While appreciating the great achievement of Kalingarayan, he was honoured as "Kalingaraya Gounder" by the public. To appreciate his venture for developing the agriculture in this country, I request the hon. Minister of Communications and Information Technology to release a commemorative stamp and First Day Cover on 14.1.2006 and honour the great farmer "Kalingara Gounder."

Date : 29-11-2005

Discussion on the motion for Consideration of National Tax Tribunal Bill – 2004 Government Bills

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN

Sir, I thank you very much for the opportunity.

First of all, I would like to thank and congratulate our hon. Minister of Law and Justice to bring forward this Bill to constitute the National Tax Tribunal, to pave way to dispose of cases speedily. There is a long list of pending cases in 21 High Courts throughout the country. It is not helping the departments and it is also not helping the taxpayers also. In these 21 High Courts, a lot of vacancies are pending. The civil appeals are pending, criminal appeals are also pending and original jurisdiction cases are pending. In the same way, the tax cases are also pending. So, to avoid this problem, our Government has come forward to bring this Bill to constitute the National Tax Tribunal. It is not a new proposal.

Here I would like to mention before this august House that when our hon. Prime Minister was the hon. Minister of Finance during 1992-93, he mentioned in his Budget Speech and I quote:

“The Government was planning to set up the National Court of Direct Taxes in order to ensure that litigation in direct tax matters is settled expeditiously”

Also, the Law Commission of India in its 115th Report also favoured to form this kind of a National level Appeal Tribunal.

In this present Bill I want to mention only certain provisions. First of all, Clause 5 (1) deals with the constitution and jurisdiction of the Benches. Wherever these Benches of the National Tax Tribunal are going to attend any of the State, the time is given only 15 days,

sitting for a period not exceeding 15 days. This restriction has to be removed and the time has to be given according to the convenience of the Chairperson. A lot of cases are pending in 21 High Courts. When the Bill is passed and the National Tax Tribunal is constituted, all the cases will be transferred to it. But instead of constituting one Tribunal at Delhi, I request the hon. Minister of Law to consider at least four Benches, that is,

Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkata and Delhi, instead of taking the Benches there. ... (*Interruptions*) This is my humble suggestion. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI K.S. RAO : In Hyderabad also.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN : Yes, in Hyderabad also.

Sir, with respect to Sections 6 and 7, they deal with the appointment of Chairperson and other Members. Section 8 deals with the terms of office of Chairperson and Members. In the case of Chairperson, the age of 68 years is mentioned for service. They have also given importance to the advocates, legal practitioners and accountants in Clause 13. On behalf of the lawyers of this country, I am thanking the hon. Minister of Law to include this provision.

Here I would like to quote from 13 sub-clause (I):

“... any person duly authorised by him”

It must be removed and only the legal practitioners and Chartered Accountants may be permitted to appear. I am also welcoming the Clause 13(ii). I quote:

“The Government may authorise one or more legal practitioners.”

So, this opportunity is given for the lawyers. I am welcoming this provision also.

I would like to quote Section 15 sub-clause ii:

“Provided further that the National Tax Tribunal may entertain the appeal within sixty days after the expiry of the said period of one hundred and twenty days.”

So, this condonation of delay has to be removed and modified.

I am also having a reservation with respect to Section 15 sub-clause (iv). Those who lost the case want to file an appeal before the National Tax Tribunal. The assessee or the aggrieved person, as the case may be, shall not be allowed to prefer appeal unless he deposits at least 25 per cent of such tax or duty payable on the basis of the order appealed against.

Most of the departmental cases are filed by the department people. They are also deciding in favour of the department. So, to pay 25 per cent is not proper on the part of the affected party. Even in this proposed Bill, disputes with respect to the determination of the rates of duties of Customs and Central Excise are also to be decided

I want to mention about one case. For example, in Chennai, for a person bringing a watch from abroad, the customs officials fix it at Rs. 30; for the same the DRI fixes it at Rs.140 For the goods, the customs people fix it at Rs. 3.5 lakh and the DRI people fix it at Rs. 7.5 lakh. For this, the person is arrested and he is put behind the bar and the Government is spending Rs. 150 per day on him. Recently, seven poor, innocent people lost their goods. They were arrested, they were remanded to custody. This is the mindset of the officials. If the officials are filing false cases against the persons and are asking to deposit 25 per cent of the tax or duty before filing appeal is improper, that has to be removed. That provision has to be cancelled. That is my suggestion.

With respect to the constitution of the National Tax Tribunal, I wholeheartedly welcome it. I request the hon. Minister that the Benches may be constituted in four parts of the country and not in 15

High Courts. The Benches are to be constituted in the four regions of the country. The poor people of Kanyakumari or Kashmir cannot reach Delhi and approach the Tribunal. To avoid the expenses and to help the poor litigants and the taxpayers also, this is to be considered. The Government has to seriously think over the erratic valuation by the departmental people of the property and on filing of the cases. So many innocent people are affected. In these circumstances, a way has to be found out. Some modification has to be made to the Bill. I welcome this Bill.

Date : 21-12-2005

Discussion on the motion for consideration of the Constitution Bill – 2005 (104th Amendment)

- **Government Bills**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN :

I support and welcome the proposed Amendment Bill. First of all, I want to congratulate the UPA Chairperson, Smt. Sonia Gandhiji Hon'ble Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Ji and Hon'ble Arjun Singh Ji bringing the landmark amendment in the Constitution.

Article 15(4) of our constitution enunciates 'nothing in this Article or clause (2) of Article 29 shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes'.

Originally there was no such provision in Article 15. In the case of "Champakam Dorairajan Vs. State of Madras" set aside reservation of seats in educational institutions on the basis of caste and community. Then only Dr. Ambedkar, the Law Minister of India piloted the amendment in Article 15 in the Constitution in the year 1951. Article 15(4) provides a blanket provision that nothing shall prevent the State from making special provisions for the advancement of SC/ST and backward Class people. After a number of years, Indira Sawhney's case of 1992 set aside the projection of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe interests by abolishing reservation in promotions wherein it was held that reservation should be confined to the initial appointment and cannot be extended in the matter of promotion.

Initially this resulted in the 77th Amendment to the Constitution which restore the provisions Post-Mandal Judicial

pronouncements have adversely affected the interests of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the civil services. In the year 2000, clause 4(B) was inserted into Article 16 by the 81st Amendment to the Constitution again to neutralise Indira Sawhney Judgement on the issue of filling up of backlog vacancies. In the Year 2001, Article 16(4)A was amended by virtue of 85th Amendment to provide consequential seniority in promotion to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes which they had lost as result of Ajit Singh Janju case. Article 335 was amended by the 82nd Amendment in the year 2000 to provide for relaxation of standards in the matter of promotions.

“P.A. Inamdhari and others Vs State of Maharashtra and others” case the Judgement of Hon’ble Supreme Court of India dated 12.08.2005 was a logical continuance of the TMA Pai Foundation Case on the issue of Admissions and Administration in Minority Educational Institutions. The Constitution of India makes special provision for the minorities under Article 30 to establish and administer their educational institutions.

In the Inamdhari Case, the Supreme Court extend the projection awarded to minority institutions to non-minority institutions. Based on this judgement, unaided minority institutions have been equated with the unaided non-minority institutions. The judgement extends the rights available under Article 19(1) (g) “practice a profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business” to non-minority institutions. The above judgement under sub-heading ‘Backdrop’ – Education was described as an occupation and as an industry. The judgement also mentions that the State can not ‘appropriate’ seats to provide them to reserve categories that given admissions with lower marks. According to the above judgement, the State cannot insist on Private Educational Institutions which receives no aid from the State to implement State policy on reservation for granting admission on less percentage of marks i.e on criterion except merit.

The serious implications of the judgement are that natural powers available to the State under Article 19(6) to impose reasonable restrictions have been abrogated. The judgement has far-reaching consequences even on the issue of reservation in the private sector where the provision of equal employment opportunities in the private sector will be imposed as a reasonable restriction through Article 19(6) trade, business, occupations in the private sector under Article 19(1)(g). The judgement of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India blocks the State from imposing in reasonable restriction for any purpose as deemed fit by the State.

This has largely curtailed the power of the State in using Article 19(6). The Judgement of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India will affect the poor, downtrodden people of this country. On considering this serious situation only, the UPA Government come forward with this amendment to the Constitution Article 15(5). Even though, this proposed amendment gives power to the State for making special provision by law for admitting the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and OBC students in educational institutions including private aided in aided institutions, I feel, the reservation must be extended to linguistic minority institutions also. Most of the institutions running in the name of linguistic minorities are admitting the students according to their whims and fancies particularly in medical and engineering colleges. They are collecting hefty amounts from the students as Capitation Fees. Till last minute without admitting the students from the linguistic minority community, they waited and finally they are admitting the financially rich students.

Hence, the reservation must be extended to linguistic minority institutions also. Furthermore, I request the Hon'ble Minister in the Amendment after the word 'SC and ST', it has to be specifically added 'Other Backward Classes.

Hence, I welcome and support the Bill and once again thank the UPA Government for bringing forward this landmark Constitution Amendment Bill.

Date : 01-03-2006

Need to set up a full-fledged Passport Office at Madurai, Tamil Nadu.

- **Matter Under Rule 377**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Sir, every year from Tamil Nadu thousands of skilled and semi-skilled labourers go to various countries for employment and send huge amount of foreign exchange to the country. Likewise, businessmen have to visit various countries in connection with their business. Similarly, IT professionals and students are going abroad every year for the purpose of job and education. The people of Tamil Nadu particularly from southern districts are facing lot of difficulties in getting their passports due to lack of adequate number of passport offices.

There are only two passport offices functioning in the State – one at Chennai and the other at Tiruchirappalli. Tiruchy Passport Office is served with 16 districts with bulk volume in issue and renewal of passports whereas in the neighbouring State of Kerala, there are three passport offices to serve its 14 districts. Though passport applications are submitted through District Collection Centres which are manned by State Government employees, they are not able to do their job effectively. In the year 2002, the number of applications received by Tiruchirapalli passport office was 1,94,282 out of which 1,02,413 were from southern districts. In the year 2003 the proportion was 2,52,210 and 1,25,428 and in the year 2004 it was 2,42,506 and 1,24,419 and in the year 2005 upto July it was 1,53,100 and 78,663. There is a constant increase for issue of passport over the years and there is much delay in the issue of passports. This delay may be avoided by upgrading the existing Passport Collection Centre at Madurai into a full-fledged passport office. Hence, I urge upon the Central Government to take immediate necessary action for opening up of the Passport Office at Madurai.

Date : 01-03-2006

Combined discussion on Railway Budget and Demand for Grants on Account – Railways

- **Budget Railways – 2006-2007**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

I thank you, Sir, for giving me this opportunity. On behalf of my Congress Party and on behalf of my respectful leader, Shrimati Sonia Gandhi, I congratulate our hon. Railway Minister, Shri Lalu Prasad, hon. Velu ji and hon. Rathwa ji, for presenting a popular Budget.

In this country, the first train was flagged off on 16.4.1853 between Bombay and Thane covering a distance of 84 kilometres. Now, the trains cover around 65,000 kilometres and nearly 1.6 crore people travel everyday in these trains. Fourteen lakh employees are working in Railways, and this year, the dividend is Rs. 11,000 crore. It is the success of this Government. I want to mention certain special features in this year's Budget.

- (f) There is no increase in the passenger fares;
- (g) Charges on monthly and quarterly season tickets have been reduced in super-fast trains;
- (h) Reduction in First and Second A.C. fares by 18 per cent and 10 per cent respectively;
- (i) Over 200 Mail and Express trains to be made super-fast;
- (j) Four popular trains to have world-class passenger amenities;
- (k) No across the board increase in freight rates;

- (l) Ceiling for booking luggage in brake vans removed;
- (m) Air-conditioned '*Garib Rath*' introduced as a pilot project;
- (n) Grameen ticket booking service for unemployed rural youth;
- (o) Jan Sadharan Ticket Booking Scheme introduced and unemployed youth to man prepaid UTS counters
- (p) 50 per cent concession to farmers and milk producers travelling for training purposes;
- (q) 50 per cent concession to victims with loss of limbs for transplantation of artificial limbs; and,
- (r) Upgradation of passengers to next higher class extended to in all Rajadhani, Mail and Express trains;

Moreover, the number of coaches in passengers trains are going to be increased. There are so many other important features in this.

- The contribution to staff benefit raised nine times, from Rs. 26 to Rs. 226 per employee; and,
- Food made available to running staff at nominal rate.

These are all the important schemes. During the NDA regime, in the Budgets presented between 1999 and 2004, Tamil Nadu was totally neglected. For example, I want to mention that in 1999-2000, 14 new trains were sanctioned, but none to Tamil Nadu. In 2000-01, 19 new trains were sanctioned, but no project was sanctioned for Tamil Nadu. In 2001-02, 24 new trains were sanctioned, but none was given to Tamil Nadu. Same is the case in 2002-2003 out of 27 additional Express trains that were sanctioned, only one was given to Tamil Nadu.

In this way, Tamil Nadu was totally neglected. I want to thank the hon. Railway Minister, Shri Lalu Prasad, for sanctioning at least nine new trains and extension of seven trains. The frequency of the trains also increased. He also sanctioned gauge conversion of three new projects, and also two new railway line survey works were sanctioned. Last year, 2005-06, six survey projects were sanctioned for Tamil Nadu, out of which, one pertains to my constituency, that is, Erode-Palani *via Dharapuram*. This survey is in progress. I would request the hon. Minister to expedite the survey and sanction the project immediately. Furthermore, I would request that the survey of Madurai-Kottayam Project be completed as early as possible. More funds have to be allocated for the on-going projects like doubling of broad gauge line between Madurai to Dindigul; then broad gauge conversion work on Tenkasi-Sengottai-Punaloor line should be completed at the earliest.

I would request the Minister to extend a few Express trains, that is, Jodhpur-Chennai Express to be extended up to Nagercoil; Hyderabad-Chennai Express to be extended up to Madurai. The frequency of certain trains has to be increased, that is, Kanyakumari-Howrah Express, at least, three times in a week; Madurai-Nizamuddin Sampark Kranti Express, at least, thrice a week; and Chennai-Tenkasi-Pothigai Express daily.

On behalf of my constituency, I want to mention only one point.

I would request the hon. Railway Minister to introduce a Jan Shatabdi Express between Chennai and Madurai. A new super-fast express train between Madurai and Bangalore is very essential and it must be introduced. Mangalore and Tuticorin are important ports. Therefore, an Inter-Port express train between Tuticorin and Mangalore must be introduced.

Electrification work on Trichy-Tuticorin and Maniachi-Kanyakumari lines should be completed. Doubling work on Maniachi-Kanyakumari and Chengalpattu-Tuticorin lines, and gauge conversion work on

Mayiladuthurai- Karaikudi and Thiruthuraipoondi-Agasthiampalli lines must be sanctioned. Agasthiampalli is also known as Vedaranyam where salt Satyagraha movement took place. A lot of salt is exported from here. This is an important project. Coimbatore is an important textile centre of India. People here are suffering badly because of non-completion of over-bridge work in Ondipudur for a long time. This work has to be completed at the earliest.

There is a proposal to widen the railway gate near Hopes College in Coimbatore town The State Government has already allocated Rs.3.5 crores for this work but the work is yet to be started. I would request the hon. Minister to sanction this work as early as possible.

I would like to thank the hon. Minister of Railways for sanctioning 100 community halls throughout the country for railway employees. One such community hall must be sanctioned in my Constituency and it should be constructed in Palani Town.

Oddanchatram is an important town in my Palani Constituency where Gandhi Nagar is on the other side of the railway land with nearly 25,000 people residing there. They are reaching their houses from NH-209 through the railway land only. A proposal is pending to lease out portion of the land for the purpose of construction of a road. I request the hon. Minister to sanction this lease keeping in view the welfare of Gandhi Nagar people. I once again thank the hon. Minister for sanctioning this year at least a few projects for Tamil Nadu. Thank you.

*Dindigul-Palani-Udumalpet-Pollachi-Palaghat and Pollachi-Coimbatore gauge conversion work is a long pending demand of the public. Palani is a holy place and abode of Lord Karthik. A large number of devotees are coming to this temple throughout the country. The hon. Minister announced to include this project in this Budget. I would request the hon. Minister to include this project and allocate necessary fund to complete the gauge conversion work. In my constituency, Nandavanappatty is one of the wards in Ayakudi

Special Village Panchayat. In between Nandavanapatty and NH 209, there is a railway line. Through the railway line only people are reaching their dwelling houses. Now the Southern Railway has put a gate and locked. People are suffering. I would request the Hon.Minister to pass an order to open the gate for road traffic and help the public of Nadavanapatty Village*.

..... This part of the speech was laid on the Table.

Date : 10-03-2006

Combined discussion on Statutory Resolution regarding Disapproval of National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (Amendment) Ordinance, 2006 and National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (Amendment) Bill, 2006.

- **Statutory Resolution and Government Bill**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Madam Chairperson, I rise to support the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (Amendment) Bill introduced by our Government. I would like to mention only certain legal points and extend my support to this Bill.

The National Commission for Minorities Act was passed in 1992 and it came into force on 17.5.1992. That Act empowered the constitution of the National Commission for Minorities. That Commission served only as a recommendatory body.

After the assumption of office of the UPA Government, the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions Bill was introduced in 2004. It was passed in the Lok Sabha on 16.12.2004 and by the Rajya Sabha on 21.12.2004. That Act came into force on 6.1.2005. In the original Act, Section 2, Sub-clause (A) deals with the affiliation to be granted only by six universities, which are mentioned in the Schedule. They are, the University of Delhi, the North Eastern Hill University, Pondicherry University, the Assam University, the Nagaland University and the Mizoram University. Now, that Schedule has been taken away. Then, Section 18 has also been omitted through this Bill.

In the present Bill, Section 10 (A) gives the right to a Minority Educational Institution to seek affiliation from any university situated anywhere in the country and more particularly, Section 10, Sub-clause (1) says that any person who desires to start a Minority Educational Institution may apply to the competent authority for getting NOC. Section 10, Sub-clause (2) authorises the competent authority to verify and hear the person who makes the application.

Section 10, Sub-Clause (3) says that the application has to be disposed of within 60 days from the date of his application. Some of our hon. Members commented as to why only 60 days time is given and more time may be given.

If more time is given for verifying the application seeking NoC to affiliate with any university, it will only lead to corruption. We are all aware of what is happening in the Medical Council of India, Dental Council of India, Pharmacy Council of India and AICTE. If a Committee is appointed for inspection, it will only lead to corruption. So, to avoid that, Section 10, Sub-clause (2) provides for verification of the application on a personal hearing and dispose of the application. If the application is not disposed of within 60 days, if the person is not granted NOC or if his application is not rejected within that period, then it is presumed that that application is accepted and he can start the institution.

Suppose his application is rejected, he can go for an appeal in the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions within 30 days. This is provided for under Section 12 (A)(i). It gives the right to the affected person to prefer an appeal and seek remedy before the Commission within 30 days.

This Bill gives more power to the Commission to decide the minority status by way of section 12B, sub-clause (I). The Commission is vested with the power of cancellation of the minority status under Section 12C. In the previous Bill that is not there as only permission was

there. Affiliation and deaffiliation are given. If there are any irregularities section 12D authorises the Commission to take action.

Another important matter in this Bill is section 12 sub-clause F is that nobody can file any suit before any civil court. If they want any remedy, they can go to the High Court and the Supreme Court. Bar on civil jurisdiction is an important matter. There should be some provisions to safeguard the interests of the poor students.

While discussing this Bill, I want to mention one important point. This Bill was referred to the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee gave its observation: "That the Committee feels that the Bill must provide adequate safeguard of preventing the misuse of minority status by an institution." I humbly request the hon. Minister, that in this country among the minorities, there are so many poor people. While giving admissions to students, 50 per cent of the admissions must be given to the poor students in all these minority institutions.

With these views, I support this Bill.

Date : 11-03-2006

Regarding Flood Damage Fund Allocation, Farmer's Welfare

- **Special Mention**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN :

Sir, I would like to raise a very important matter concerning my State. In the month of November 2005 due to heavy rain and floods in Tamil Nadu, the farmers and others were badly affected. ...
(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: This is a country of diversity - hailstorm, heatwave, floods etc.

... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN : Minor tanks, canals, wells and agricultural lands were washed away. The Central Government has already allocated the Calamity Relief Fund of Rs. 209.08 crore and National Calamity Contingency Fund of Rs. 1,000 per hectare.

Now as per norms of Calamity Relief Fund and National Calamity Contingency Fund, Rs. 1,000/- per hectare for rainfed areas and Rs. 2,500 per hectare for irrigated areas – agriculture, horticulture and annual plantation and Rs. 4,000 per hectare for perennial crops are to be given. But Tamil Nadu Government, till date, has not allocated the fund for the affected farmers and poor people.

Hence, I urge upon this Government to take necessary action and direct the authorities to disperse the amount to the flood victims of Tamil Nadu. It is already delayed. This is my humble submission.

Date : 13-03-2006

Issue regarding imposition of 16% Central Excise Duty on rural industries including brick chambers in the Union Budget – 2006-07.

- **Special Mention**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN :

Sir, I would like to bring to the kind attention of the Government the plight of brick chamber industries and the workers engaged in this industry throughout the country, particularly in Tamil Nadu, due to the imposition of 16 per cent highest rate of excise duty on the rural industry in the Finance Bill 2006.

There are more than 2,500 brick chamber industries in Tamil Nadu and they give employment to more than 50 lakh people belonging to the downtrodden community and OBCs. The districts of Dindigul, Erode, Salem, Namakkal, Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Sivagangai, Dharapuram and Chennai are having more brick chambers providing employment to over 50,000 people and the imposition of excise duty to the tune of 16 per cent in the Finance Bill will affect the industry drastically.

Since bricks are the basic requirement of the building industry, this unrealistic rate of excise duty will slow down the building industry, which will affect the economy also. The exemption from excise duty given to brick chambers with annual sale up to Rs.1 crore does not help in any way. This is the only rural industry which is labour intensive and employs a good number of women.

In view of the above facts, I appeal to the Union Government to drop this proposal and do the needful at the earliest.

Date : 14-03-2006

**General Discussion on the Demands for Grants on
Under the Control of the Ministry of Agriculture
2006 -2007**

- **Budget (General)**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Mr. Chairman, Sir, at the outset I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak on the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Agriculture.

This country, with a population of 110 crores of people, has got more than 75 per cent taking up agriculture as their occupation and livelihood. But it is a sorry state of affairs that both the agriculturists and the agricultural labour are not breathing free.

Farmers are not able to get quality seeds and that continues to be a major problem that affects the agricultural sector as a whole. Fertilizers are also not up to the mark and still wanting in quality. Even though we have Pesticide Act in place, we are not able to get quality pesticide that can help overcome the problem of crops perishing. Pesticides and insecticides are being sold and used even after the date of expiry. These are the main problems the farmers are faced with. Due to these lacunae in the system, agriculturists could not get good yield and they cannot increase the production, though they put in extra labour.

In case of farmers manage to get good yield enhancing the production, they could not get remunerative price for their agricultural produce. The other major problem that affects the farmers is debt burden. Farmers go for loan to take up their cultivation and they take loans from cooperative societies. When they take such loans, it becomes a conditional loan in the sense that

they are forced to spend at least Rs. 1,000 out of every loan of Rs. 5,000 that they take on fertilizers and pesticides that are thrust on them. Such fertilizers and pesticides are usually not of good quality and they remain either adulterated or out-dated.

With the mounting loans and the mounting pressures on them, they have to somehow continue with their toiling and moiling. To take up cultivation of next crop or to spend on any agricultural need, they have to go to the moneylenders in the open market and they have to pay higher rate of interest, more than 20 per cent and beyond.

Since the credit facilities are not streamlined, both in the cooperative and public sector financial institutions, farmers are forced to take loans from the moneylenders at exorbitant rates. Thus they are sucked into the whirlpool of debt burden.

Since there is no viable mechanism to ensure remunerative price for the agricultural produce, farmers' debt burden seldom ease out. They are forced to commit suicide and agricultural labourers are driven to meet their ends with starvation deaths.

Our Agriculture Minister Shri Sharad Pawar is himself a farmer. He has felt the pulse of the farming community and knows thoroughly the prevailing condition there in farming activity. He alone can champion the cause of farmers. He must strive to ensure supply of quality seeds and quality fertilizers that would help the farming community to augment food production.

While their main occupation is being ignored, their diversified occupation, that is, their off-season activities like running poultry farms and dairy farms are not getting the needed support from the Government. Both in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, these agro-based or agriculture-related enterprises were considered to be fully part of agricultural sector. Now we find both poultry and hatchery removed from Section 80 JJ of Income Tax Act. Thus, those who are taking up these subsidiary agricultural activities have been put under tax net.

This affects the farming community in a big way because they are neither here nor there, but are seriously affected by the burden on them caused by the taxmen. They should have some relief from the income tax. Hence, I urge upon the hon. Minister of Agriculture to save the farmers who have taken up poultry and hatchery.

In the farming community, we find vegetable growers whose condition end up mostly as pitiable one. The State Governments are not providing them with quality seeds and necessary pesticides and insecticides. Not all of them could get extension services from the respective Agriculture Departments in the States. Oddanchathram in my constituency is famous for vegetable growers, especially those who cultivate brinjals which are transported to several parts of the country.

Drumsticks are also grown in a big way in this area and are sent to many parts of the country. They get just one rupee for 10 drumsticks, whereas in Delhi one drumstick costs Rs. 10. This is unfair and the poor vegetable farmers are unfortunate.

It is necessary to raise adequate infrastructure facilities to benefit the farmers, especially the vegetable growers. If cold storage facilities are established, the vegetable-growing farmers can get remunerative prices by way of systematically releasing for sale their agricultural produce. During the time when there is no Minimum Support Price or no remunerative price, farmers must be provided with subsidies.

Abundant water in the North affects crops, but in the South serious drought affects crops. So, the Government must attach importance to systematic irrigation and effective water management. The only way-out before us would be to nationalise all the rivers and link them. Linking of rivers must begin first with the linking of Southern rivers.

For instance, we have a sigh of relief after the Supreme Court's intervention in the dispute between Tamil Nadu and Kerala which has

given a favourable direction permitting to raise the height of water level in Mullai Periyar Dam which will augment irrigation facilities in the Southern Districts of Tamil Nadu without disturbing environment and without causing ecological imbalance. Its height has to be increased from 136 ft. to 142 ft.

The agricultural occupation is basically a humanitarian job in the sense that the toiling farmer puts in labour only to benefit his fellow human beings. According to the great Tamil Saint Thiruvalluvar,

“Uzhudhundu vazhvaare vazhvaar matrellam

thozhudhundu pin selbavar.”

This means that those who resort to farming alone lead a life of their own whereas all others have to go behind them.

Sir, expressing my support to the Demands for Grants I conclude my speech.

(* English Translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.)

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Date : 18-03-2006

Issue of raising the water level in Mullai Periyar Dam, Kerala.

- **Special Mention**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN :

Sir, Mullai Periyar Dam is one of the oldest dams in Tamil Nadu. The Dam was constructed to safeguard the interests of the farmers in southern Tamil Nadu at the Western Ghats. Originally, the Dam was having the capacity to store water up to 152 feet and, presently, the water is stored only up to 136 feet.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN : Since it was alleged in some corners that the Dam would leak if more water is stored, the Tamil Nadu Government spent a huge amount of money and thoroughly strengthened the Dam. After that, the Dam is having the capacity to store water up to 152 feet. Since the Kerala Government has not allowed us to store water beyond 132 feet, a Public Interest Litigation was filed in the hon. Supreme Court. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN : The Supreme Court sent a Committee to check the Dam, and the Committee filed a report stating that the Dam is in good condition and having the capacity to store water up to 152 feet. After hearing both the States, both the parties, the hon. Supreme Court, very recently, directed that the water which can be stored should be raised from the present level of 136 feet to 142 feet. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN : However, instead of following the Supreme Court judgment, the Kerala Government illegally passed a Resolution in the Assembly which will affect the interests of the farmers of southern Tamil Nadu. Hence, I urge upon the Union Government to intervene and direct the Kerala Government to raise the water level from 136 feet to 142 feet for the welfare of the farmers of Tamil Nadu.

Date : 20-03-2006

Need to take steps to protect the Poultry Industry affected due to spread of Bird Flu in Tamil Nadu.

- **Matter Under Rule 377**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Sir, in India landless labourers often comprises of more than 50% of their income from livestock especially from poultry. The value of output from poultry sector is nearly Rs. 15,000 crore and the sector provides direct and indirect employment to over 2 million people. With the output of 45 billion eggs in 2004-2005, India ranks among the top 6 egg producing countries in the world. Furthermore, poultry today is one of the fastest growing sectors in the economy. India is among the five top chicken meat-producing countries in the world. Around 1.65 metric tonne of chicken meat was produced in 2004. For poverty alleviation, nutritional nourishment and gender empowerment, Government is promoting the development of the poultry sector particularly of the rural backward areas. In view of the threat of Bird Flu throughout the country, the industry has collapsed. Government has taken various steps for prevention of the spread of the disease in the country. In Tamil Nadu, Coimabtoore, Erode and Namakkal districts are the main centres for poultry and hatcheries. Sir, due to this Bird Flu, the Poultry Industry in Tamil Nadu is also very badly affected and has financially collapsed.

To safeguard this industry, I request the Government to start an International standard research laboratory in Tamil Nadu either at Coimbatore or at Namakkal and furthermore, cold storage facilities should be provided to protect 8 to 10 crore eggs and an insurance scheme has to be introduced for the chicken. Moreover, those industrialists who have borrowed loan from the nationalised banks, the interest should be waived off and the loans must be converted into a long term loan and the industry must be protected.

Date : 20-03-2006

Need to give permanent appointment to the casual employees of L.I.C. of India.

- **Special Mention**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Sir, the Life Insurance Corporation of India employed temporary employees to carry out the backlog of work in various divisions throughout India. The above persons were appointed initially for a period of 85 days. After an artificial break of two or three days, they were again appointed for a further period varied from 85 days to 500 days. They are not appointed permanently. They have to be given first preference to any vacancy in Class III posts and Class IV posts in their respective divisions in terms of Award passed by the National Industrial Tribunal.

Sir, I want to bring to the kind notice of the House that National Industrial Tribunal passed an Award in the previous circumstances directing the LIC to absorb those who have completed 85 days in Class III posts within a period of two years. and 70 days in Class IV category within a period of three days.

The above Award would be applicable only for the period from 01.01.1982 to 20.05.1985. Against the Awards, the LIC went to the Supreme Court and based on the compromise, the hon. Supreme Court directed to hold a formal examination and to solve the issue. Based on the direction, almost all the employees were absorbed by the LIC after 20.05.1985.

Similarly, hundreds of employees worked for the period ranging from 85 to 500 days, and most of them are graduates. The Union Labour Ministry also referred the above dispute to the Central Government Industrial Tribunal for adjudication. Hon. Central Government Industrial Tribunal also passed an Award on 18.06.2001 and directed

to absorb all the temporary employees working in LIC.

Hence, I urge upon the Government to absorb all terminated full time temporary LIC employees on permanent basis and save the lives of 30,000 employees of the country.

Date : 25-07-2006

Need to expedite the work of laying a new railway line connecting Erode-Palani via Chennimali, Kangayam and Dharapuram..

- **Matter Under Rule 377**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Sir, during the Budget Speech for the year 2005-2006, the Railway Minister had announced laying of a new railway line connecting Erode – Palani via Chennimali, Kangayam and Dharapuram and later allocated necessary funds for survey. Survey was also undertaken by the Southern Railway and was completed. However, the project is yet to be materialized.

Palani is one of the abodes of Lord Karthik. A famous temple is situated in the Palani hillock. Lakhs of devotees are coming to this temple every year. Besides, devotees going to Sabarimalai (Kerala) also make it a point to visit this hill town. Palani town is in the bottom of Kodaikanal Hill an important Tourist spot and Munnar Hills, with Tea and Coffee estates are important places of tourist attraction. Further Amravati Dam, Thirumoorthy Falls attracts tourists during all seasons.

In Erode district 450 Modern rice mills are located. Out of this, 250 Modern are situated in Kangayam. Besides, 6 ghee manufacturing units are also located in Kangayam which exports ghee.

In Chennimali, nearly 10,000 powerloom and handloom industries are functioning. Nearly 32 lorry booking offices are also located. Daily hundred tonnes of finished goods are transported throughout the country.

Hence, laying of Erode – Palani new line is utmost important to promote trade and industry and to facilitate the travelling public in the region. I, therefore, urge upon the Hon'ble Minister to allocate necessary funds for acquisition of land besides taking immediate steps for the implementation of the project.

Date : 08-08-2006

Need to reduce pendency of cases in Higher and Subordinate Judiciaries.

- **Matter Under Rule 377**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Sir, in our country the backlog of pending cases and vacancies in the higher judiciary and subordinate judiciaries are alarming. Nearly 33,635 cases are pending in the Supreme Court. In various High Courts 33,41,040 cases are pending and in subordinate courts nearly 2,53,06,458 cases are pending. Even though the Union of India has ordered to set up Fast Track Courts in district level, the pendency is still alarming.

There are number of vacancies in High Courts, Supreme Court and in subordinate courts. Unless the vacancies are filled up, the pendency cannot be reduced. Moreover, large number of courts are not having proper infrastructural facilities particularly in taluk level courts. Union of India has to earmark certain funds for the development of courts. The strength of the judges in various High Courts should be raised. The present system of selecting judges for High Courts causes inordinate delay for the speedy disposal of cases, and also meritorious candidates from SC/ST and OBC are not being considered. Hence the present system is to be changed.

Hence, I urge upon the Union of India to take effective steps for reducing pendency by creating courts in taluk level and appoint more judges to fill the vacancies. Also necessary funds may be allocated for the development of infrastructural facilities in various courts throughout the country.

Date : 08-08-2006

Discussion on the supplementary Demands for Grants in respect of Budget (General) for 2006-2007

- **Budget (General)**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Sir, I rise to support the Supplementary Demands for Grants (General).

First of all, I would like to thank the hon. Minister of Finance for bringing in important proposals in the Supplementary Demands for Grants (General). There is the main thrust upon the farmers.

At this juncture, I want to mention that the Supplementary Grants for Appropriation are required for meeting the expenditure in connection with organic farming, which is also considered based on the judgement of the Central Government Industrial Tribunal. I want to mention furthermore that for agricultural research, Supplementary Grant is sought for meeting the additional expenditure of nearly Rs.200 crore. It is for strengthening and development of agricultural education, vermiculture and for the coffee growers. These aspects were all sufficiently discussed in the Budget. It is considered here additionally.

In this connection, I want to mention about the problems of the farmers. Our friends previously discussed the subject elaborately. More particularly, I want to mention that the farmers in Tamil Nadu are facing so many problems. They are not able to get any good seeds, fertilizers and pesticides. Even a few days back, I mentioned in this House with respect to the onion growers.

When our hon. Finance Minister Shri Chidambaram, our hon. Minister Shri EVKS Elangovan and ourselves visited Oddanchattiram, the agriculturists raised an important issue. The point is that they are not able to get good price for the onions.

What happened in Tamil Nadu is that farmers borrowed huge money from the cooperative banks, nationalised banks as also from the private moneylenders. They purchased seeds from the seed companies. It turned out that all the seeds were spurious. After a great deal of agitation, all the seed companies paid Rs.2000 to all the farmers as compensation.

So is the case in respect of pesticides. They are not able to get genuine pesticides. This is the situation not only in respect of onion growers but also in respect of all the farmers. The agriculturists are not able to get any help from even the nationalised banks, the cooperative banks. I would, therefore, request the hon. Finance Minister to direct the nationalised banks to help the poor farmers by giving timely loans.

Recently, our Government in Tamil Nadu announced the withdrawal of cooperative loans running into nearly Rs.6782 crore. The total cooperative loans were wiped out. Even if the nationalised banks are not coming forward to wipe out the entire loans, at least they can wipe out the interest part of it to help the poor farmers. It is one way of helping the farmers.

Another area in Tamil Nadu is the textiles sector, particularly it is pertaining to the handloom weavers. Our Government and the hon. Finance Minister announced so many schemes for the welfare of the textile industry. That is why, the textile industry people are very happy in Tamil Nadu.

They developed the infrastructure facilities. They are getting very good income. They are giving very good salaries and all the benefits to the employees. But the handloom industry is getting spoiled.

Particularly, in my constituency, a large number of handloom weavers are residing and doing handloom profession. Health-wise, economy-wise, they are suffering a lot. They are not able to get good yarn and good income. Even though our Government announced the Insurance Scheme for the weavers, those projects and programmes have not reached the needy people. So, this is another area which is to be concentrated on and helped. We have to help the weavers in this country.

Today, previously also, I mentioned about the infrastructure facilities for the subordinate judiciary. A few minutes back, I raised it under Rule 377. Our hon. Finance Minister is one of the senior advocates in this country. He better knows the position of the legal profession and the position of the lawyers in this country. I humbly request the hon. Finance Minister to consider the pathetic situation of ten lakh lawyers in this country.

Most of the persons are residing in the villages. They are suffering a lot even to get five rupees or ten rupees per day by way of earning in the court. So, the Government of India has to come forward to help the lawyers particularly in the mofussil areas by introducing an Advocates' Welfare Fund Scheme by providing finance. The Union Government has to provide this for the entire country. This is the first point.

Secondly, those advocates who are practising in the mofussil areas are not having even a court building; they are not having any library and any infrastructural facilities. They are not having bar rooms. Our Government proposed a 10-year perspective plan for them and sought opinion from various High Courts, Law Ministers and Chief Ministers.

The Government convened a Conference also in this regard a few months back and the only State that was not represented in that Conference was Tamil Nadu and this happened when the previous Government was there in power in Tamil Nadu. At that time, neither

the Chief Minister nor the Law Minister from the previous Government of Tamil Nadu attended that Conference. So, the perspective plan drafted by our Government was not supported by the then State Government of Tamil Nadu.

The present Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Dr. Kalaignar Karunanidhi will fully cooperate with the Government of India in this matter. So, I request the hon. Finance Minister to specially earmark some fund for the improvement of the subordinate judiciary. Then only we will be able to help the poor lawyers in this country.

These are my views. With these words, I support the Supplementary Demands for Grants.

Date : 11-08-2006

Discussion on the Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways) for 2006-2007.

- **Budget (Railways)**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Sir, I am thanking the Hon'ble Speaker for giving me this opportunity to support the supplementary demands for Grants for Expenditure for the Central Government on Railways.

The supplementary Demands for Grants mainly thrust upon the Budget proposals 2006-07. During submission of budget proposals, Hon'ble Railway Minister announced to construct 100 community halls throughout the country. In this supplementary demands allocation is sought for the construction of above community halls. During Budget discussion I had requested to sanction one such community hall in Palani which is abode of Lord Karthik and it is a famous pilgrim centre but it is not included. In this juncture I request the Hon'ble Railway Minister to sanction one such community hall to Palani.

Sir, Indian Railway is one of the largest railway networks in the world with 63,122 kms of track, 7681 locos, 4476 coaches 2,14,760 wagons(unit) having 14 million passengers, 1.5 MT freight, crossing, 1 lack signals, 8081 stations, 40,000 level crossing and involving 6 lack front line operating and maintenance staffs by running 14761 trains daily. Even though Government has to spend more money for the improvement of the system particularly safety. The number of accidents had reduced drastically from 2131 in 1960-61 to 325 in 2003-2004. Safety index also reduced from 5.50 in 1960-61 to 0.39. Construction of Road over/under bridges is a joint venture of State Governments and Railways. Railways construct Bridges proper over the tracks and approaches are constructed by the State

Government. In some of the cases even though State Government completed approach road works Railways failed to complete the bridge work. For example Ondipudur Railway over Bridge work in Coimbatore and Engiyoor Railway over Bridge in Erode are long pending works. I urge upon the Railway Ministry to complete the above ROB works as early as possible.

Sir in my Palani Parliamentary Constituency in Vedachenthoor Taluk Nallamanaickenpatty village is situated near Dindigul – Karur BG Line. East of the above railway line Dindigul-Karur road is available. The people of that region have to go to Eriodu to purchase domestic goods, medicine and other things. Since there is no level crossing is available, people are going Thottanampatty and reaching Erode. It causes unnecessary hardships to public. Large number of Bakeries are also available. Transporting made goods also crossing long distance. Hence a level crossing is necessary near Nallamanaickenpatty.

Sir in Oddanchatram Gandhipuram is a part of the town. It is Ward Nos 5,6,7. Nearly 10000 public are residing in that area. They are not having any approach road from NH 209, since north of Gandhipuranmis totally railway land. A subway is necessary for Gandhipuram.

Sir, Erode is one of the famous junction connecting North and South. No facilities are available in that station. All the necessary facilities should be givent o Erode Railway Station.

I am thanking the Hon'ble Railway Minister Shri Lалуji, Shri Veluji and Shri Rathwasi for sanctioning new BG Line between Erode and Palani via Chennimalai, Karagayam, Dharapuram during budget 2005-2006. Now the survey is going to be completed. I request the Hon'ble Railway Minister to speed up the work and sanction necessary fund for further work in this new proposal.

Whole Tamil Nadu is thanking our Hon'ble Railway Minister Veluji to sanction the Salem Railway Division but it is not yet started. I request the Hon'ble Minister to allocate sufficient fund to speed up the work to from Salem Division. Sir, in my constituency Oddanchatram, Palani are oldest railway stations. No facilities are available in those stations. Oddanchatram is famous for vegetables. There is big market in Oddanchatram. Large quantity of vegetables are transported to Northern Indian and other parts. Hence I request the Railway Minister to allocate necessary fund to improve the railway station. The town Palani is a pilgrim centre. Large number of devotees are coming to Palani. Palani railway station is having very vast land. But those are lying vacant, Everywhere we can see only thorny bushes. People can't go in night time. I seek the intervention of railway ministry and allocate sufficient fund to develop the Palani Railway Station.

During the last budget conversion of Dindigul-Coimbatore BG Line was announced but necessary fund was not allocated.

I request the Hon'ble Railway Minister to allocate necessary fund for the conversion BG Line within short period.

Once again I am thanking the Railway Minister for taking effective steps to improve the Indian Rails.

I am supporting the demand and thanking the chairperson once again.

Date : 14-08-2006

Discussion on the motion for consideration fo the Safai Karamcharis Insurance Schemes Bill 2005

- **Private Member's Bill**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

First of all, I want to congratulate and thank our hon. Member of Parliament, Shrimati Krishna Tirath as she has come forward to bring this Bill, Safai Karamcharis Insurance Scheme Bill, 2005. It is about a neglected community, the neglected labourers, residing in the urban and village areas. Now, we are discussing the future of the Safai Karamcharis as to in which way we are going to help them.

The word 'Safai' means, those who are involved in cleaning. They are not only cleaning the streets, not only cleaning the public places but they are also engaged in cleaning the individual's houses. They are engaged in cleaning all the houses. Not only males are engaged, but, if you go to the villages or to the municipal areas or to the Panchayats, females are also involved in this job. Children, below the age of even 10 years, are also involved in this job. They are cleaning the houses. They all participate in cleaning. But either under the State Government or under the Central Government, if we are doing anything for their welfare, this is the time to think.

Our UPA Government and our hon. Prime Minister, Mr. Manmohan Singh under the guidance of Madam Sonia Gandhi, for the past two years, have introduced so many schemes for the welfare of the OBCs, SCs and STs. Our hon. Ministers, those who are in the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, are also concentrating on the upliftment of the poor and downtrodden.

Actually, by providing insurance to the Safai Karamcharis, can we help them? For example, if a person is working in the municipal

areas, he is going to clean the trenches. The trenches may not be cleaned for a number of months. Without taking drinks, he cannot work. Everyday, he is engaged in the job of cleaning the trenches. In some cases, due to formation of gases inside the trenches, they all die. We can see reports in the newspapers that four persons died or five persons died. Also, they are addicted to drinking. Without taking drinks, they are not able to attend the work. They are getting a meagre income. They are appointed as municipal employees. They are appointed as Panchayat Union employees. They are able to get only Rs.4,000 or Rs.5,000. With this salary, they are spoiling their entire life. They are not able to educate their children. It is not possible for them. Is it possible for them to purchase good dresses or good food for their poor children? It is not possible for them[m31].

Sir, in addition to providing insurance scheme, we have to think about their health also. I want to submit that the practice of cleaning the human waste by humans has to be abolished. Even the Government is taking so many steps to close this practice. But everywhere this is going on. We have to take effective steps to see that nobody is involved in this job to clean the human waste. That is the first step that we have to take and to help them. Also, with regard to their health, the males involved in this field are suffering from so many diseases.

We have to direct all the Government hospitals, municipal hospitals etc. to provide free and good medicines and facilities for them. That is the first thing. Also, in the villages, as I have already told you, the ladies are also involved in cleaning. That has to be stopped. If you see, every morning, whether we wake up or not, at 5 o' clock in the morning, those ladies who are involved in this Safai profession are coming to the houses of the individuals and are cleaning the toilets and cleaning everything. That has to be stopped once for all.

Also, with respect to the education of the children, it is a pathetic situation. The question is whether those who are involved in this Safai activity are treated as SC or ST. It differs from State to State,

taluka to taluka and district to district. In my District in Tamil Nadu they are called as *Kattunaickers*. The community is called *Kattunaicker*. If you go to Udumalpet, which is a part of Coimbatore district, the students born to these parents are able to get their ST certificate. If you go to Erode, he cannot get it. If you go to my district Dindigul, in the southern part of Dindigul those people who are involved in this *Safai* profession are able to get the S.T. certificate. It is so in southern part of Dindigul. In the northern part we are able to decide which community do they belong to – SC or ST or OBC or forward community.

This is the situation. If these people undertake an agitation throughout the country for a week, please imagine what will happen to the individual houses, what will happen to the bus stands and what will happen to the Government offices. This is a community that is totally spoiling themselves and they are doing the valuable service. But we are not even bothered to give them at least the community certificate. I would request the hon. Ministers in the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment – they are very powerful – to at least direct all the State Governments to give ST certificates to all the students born to these parents. Let them at least educate their children for higher studies. They are able to afford the purchase of the books or purchases of the dress or uniform for the children. The Government, the municipalities are able to give them only *Khaki* shirt and *Khaki* knicker which is identified as a uniform of a Safai Karmachari. Economically, socially and also health-wise the Government of India as well as the State Governments have to allocate necessary funds for their welfare. This Safai Karmahari Insurance Bill is a good Bill. I am totally supporting it. It has clearly discussed the nature of duties of these Safai Karmacharis and how insurance can be given. Not only that we should give them insurance but all the benefits must be given to them.

These are my views.

Date : 25-08-2006

Discussion on the motion for consideration Wild Life (PROTECTION) Amendment Bill – 2006

- **Government Bills**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

I rise to Support this Bill on behalf of my Congress Party and on behalf on my leader, Smt. Soniaji. Based on the recommendations of Tiger Task Force and Department – Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment and Forests, our Government has come forward with this Amendment Bill.

India holds over half the world's tiger population. Though referred to by experts as a 'guesstimate' the last all -India census in 1993 estimated a total of 3750 tigers. The figure was a sharp decline from the previous census four years earlier. Of these only 1266 (34%) of the total were found within the boundaries of the then 19 (there are now 25 covering an area of over 33000 sq. km) Project Tiger Reserves. The current estimate of the number of tigers in India is from 3000 to 3500 tigers. Many of tiger populations, particularly those outside protected reserves, are fragmented suffer from intense poaching pressure, a dwindling prey base and over-used habitat.

The strategy for tiger conservation in India revolves around ProjectTiger and the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Between the mid 1970's and mid-1980's many protected areas (66 national parks and 421 wildlife sanctuaries) were set aside, including large tracts of tiger habitat. This resulted in an increase in tiger densities at many locations. Tragically, these conservation successes were short lived. Rampant poaching for the trade in tiger parts – all destined for markets outside India's borders –now threatens the tiger's very existence.

Prevailing conservation efforts and Project Tiger are not geared towards, nor have they adequately addressed the new protection strategies i.e. better law enforcement, training and support. Few of the tiger reserves have an established intelligence network and nearly 80% of our tiger reserves do not have an armed strike force or basic infrastructure and equipment to combat poaching.

The forest guards are often out-gunned and out-manned by poachers. During December 1998, three forest staff were murdered in Manas Tiger Reserve and in the year 2005 from ten places in various States, tiger skins were recovered from the poachers. For the past one year, nearly in seven places in the same way tiger skins were recovered. The country's highest wildlife conservation policy planning body, the Indian Board for Wildlife which is under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister has met only once in the past ten years.

Large number of development projects such as mining and hydroelectric dams are also taking their toll on the tiger's habitat. In the past five years, thousands of square kilometres of forest land have been diverted and destroyed to facilitate such projects. Though mostly outside the protected network, the loss of this vital habitat will have serious repercussions on tiger conservation in India.

I want to bring to the kind notice of this august House Sir, there is a big National Park at Shivpuri in Madhya Pradesh called a Madav Vidyan named after late Leader Madhav Rao Scindiaji. All kinds of wild animals including tigers are available there. But illegal mining in nearby forest areas are affecting the animals. Mining and Extravacations are going on even Gazette Notified Area. In the case of T.N. Godhavarman, Hon'ble Supreme Court directed. Union of India to ensure that no forest activities are permitted within the 5 and 7.5 kms. Of Protected Forest and Reserve Forest.

Sir, there is no specific provision in Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to constitute a Body to prevent the wildlife crimes. For providing an

enabling provision, these amendments were put forth by the Ministry of Environment & Forests. The proposed amendments in this Bill pave way to constitute a Wildlife Crime Control Bureau. "Project Tiger" was introduced in this country during 1973. Madam Indiraji has taken steps to preserve the tigers in this country. Now this project has grown to 28 Tiger Projects in 17 States.

In the present Bill, there is an amendment u/s 38L(1) to constitute "National Tiger Conservation Authority" by Union of India. It is a welcomeable step. u/s38-O(1), the powers and functions of Tiger Conservation Authority is highlighted. u/s 38(U), the State Governments are empowered to constitute Steering Committee of Project Tiger in Tiger Range States under the Chairmanship of the Chief Minister. But in this Bill, nowhere there is mention about the functions of Steering Committee in States. Another important amendments in this Bill is about the notification of Tiger Reserve. Based on the recommendations of Tiger Conservation Authority, the State Governments can notify an area as Tiger Reserve.

For preserving the tigers, our Hon'ble Ministers has introduced these valuable amendments. I am congratulating both the Ministers, Shri Raja and Shri Namu Narain Meena for bringing these amendments.

With these words, I am concluding my Speech and supporting this Bill

Date : 23-11-2006

Need to opening up of a Sub Divisional Office of Employees Provident Fund Organisation at Erode in Tamil Nadu.

- **Matters Under Rule 377**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Erode District in Tamil Nadu is an industrially developed district having many industries including textiles, oil mills, leather factories, beedi companies and other varieties of tiny industries. Within the radius of 20 kms from Erode SIPCOT is functioning and hundreds of industries are situated there. I am proud to say that more than 1 lakh. Employees are working in various industries and enjoying the benefits under the schemes of Provident Fund Organisations (EPFO) is functioning at Salem. Salem Town is 160 kms. away from terminal ends like Dharapuram on southern side, Thalavadi, Bannari, Bhavanisagar on North Western side, 120 kms. from Uthukuli, S. Periapalayam, Kangayam, Vellakoil, Chennimalai on western side and 65 kms. away from Erode, Under the situation, members have to travel all the way to Salem by losing their one day's salary and one day's time. Furthermore, most of the employees are provident fund members of my Erode District and are working in the unorganized sector earning much less income and they find it very difficult to go to Salem to get their grievances redressed. According to the guidelines of Ministry of Labour, for opening a Sub-Regional Office, the required population must be more than 5 lakhs whereas the Erode District is having a population of more than 12 lakhs comprising of 11 Assembly segments. Three Parliamentary Constituencies viz., Gopichettipalayam, Thiruchengode and Palani are also come under the District.

In view of the above facts and also to render better service to the subscribers and to ensure immediate settlement of claims, sanction of advances and to immediate redressal of grievances, I urge upon the Hon'ble Minister to take necessary steps for opening up of a Sub-Divisional Office at Erode at the earliest.

Date : 24-11-2006

Discussion on the motion for consideration of the Abolition of Capital Punishment Bill 2004

- **Private Member's Bill**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Madam Chairman, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to participate in the discussion on the abolition of capital punishment. Capital punishment is the lawful infliction of death as punishment. It is prevailing for thousands of years. In the year 1500, in England, only serious offences like treason, murder, burglary, rape and arson carried death penalty. Even in India those days - Manu Smriti also enunciated about the death penalty - murderers were never tolerated in the society. Kautilya stated in Arthashastra about sentence to death by various means for murder.

Kalidasa stated in *Raghuvansam* that murder was legally punishable by death. In India, Section 354, sub-clause (5) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, reads:

“When any person is sentenced to death, the sentences shall direct that he be hanged by the neck till he is dead.”

There are so many directions in the Act. Section 235, sub-clause (2), Sections 368, 369 and 370 provide enough safeguards concerning death sentences. The matter will be referred to the High Court for confirmation. Appeal provision is there. Then, appeal provision to the Supreme Court is also there. Even according to Section 354, sub-clause (3), the court has to give a detailed explanation why instead of giving other punishments they are awarding the punishment of death. As per Article 72 of our Constitution, the President of India has the power to grant pardon and to suspend, remit or commute sentences imposed on persons convicted for capital punishment in certain cases.

For example, I want to mention one case of Boya Gundlayya S/o Gundlappa Hanumappa when hon. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was the President of India. Gundlayya was convicted for death. He filed a mercy petition before the hon. President of India. In that murder case, there were three witnesses. Except the complainant, three witnesses' names were not found in the FIR. After discussing the case elaborately, the hon. President of India referred back that case to the Home Ministry for re-look on 4.6. 1959. After receipt of the opinion on 10.6.1959, the mercy petition was allowed; the sentence was altered to life imprisonment since the witnesses' names were not found in the FIR. For that reason only, it was allowed. So, in those days, it was considered in a serious manner. Now, throughout the world, there is a debate to abolish capital punishment. Our hon. Member Shri Chandrappan has moved this Bill for abolition. The time has come to have a re-look at capital punishment. Either it has to be abolished or to be suspended. That is my view.

In this context, I want to mention that in the U.K., on October 28, 1965 in the Parliament, a Private Member's Bill was introduced by Mr. Sydney Silverman in the labour Government headed by Harold Wilson. The Bill was accepted and Royal Assent was received on 9.11.1965. Death penalty was suspended for five years and then it was taken away totally. In the year 1853, Venezuela abolished the death penalty, in the year 1867, Portugal abolished the death penalty. These were the countries which abolished the death penalty. In the United States of America, Michigan was the first State to abolish death penalty in the year 1847. Now, throughout the world, 104 countries have abolished death penalty. 35 countries - even though it is in their Statute Books - suspended it. In 57 countries, death penalty is continuing.

According to Mahatma Gandhi's version, "God alone can take life because he alone gives it". Why shall death penalty be suspended or removed? Nowadays, the trend of the criminal delivery system is that the police want to file charge-sheet within six hours and the Judges

want to deliver judgement within six days and give a Press statement saying that the District Judge delivered the judgement within six days. The point is that innocent people are not safe in the hands of the hurried Judiciary. That is my view. To support my view, I want to mention the case of Harbans Singh *versus* the State of Uttar Pradesh (1982). I want to mention this case and complete my deliberation. Hon. Justice P.N. Bhagwati observed this case for Judicial vagaries in the imposition of death sentence. In that case, there were three accused – one Jeeta Singh, one Kashmira Singh and one Harbans Singh. The three accused murdered four persons with common intention. It was the same occurrence and the overtacts were the same. All were convicted for death sentence. They preferred a Special Leave Petition before the hon. Supreme Court of India separately. They engaged separate lawyers. They filed separate petitions. Jeeta Singh filed a petition and that petition came up before hon. Justice Chandrachud, hon. Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer and hon. Justice N.L. Utwala. They dismissed the Special Leave Petition. Kashmira Singh's petition came up before Justice Fazal Ali, Justice P.N. Bhagwati.

The Special Leave Petition was allowed with regard to the question of death sentence and after the hearing, the death sentence was taken away and it was commuted as life imprisonment. Then, Harbans Singh filed a Special Leave Petition and that petition came up before Justice Sarkaria and Justice Singhla. They rejected the Special Leave Petition on the 16th October, 1972. Both Jeeta Singh and Harbans Singh were to be hanged, but luckily Harbans Singh challenged the death sentence by way of Writ Petition before the hon. Supreme Court stating that Kashmira Singh's death sentence was altered to life imprisonment, but Jeeta Singh's punishment was confirmed as death penalty.

So, Harbans Singh filed a Writ Petition and that Writ Petition came before Justice Sarkaria. The problem was that the Supreme Court Registry failed to mention the judgement relating to Kashmira Singh

in the records and so the judges were also not aware of the judgement in Kashmira Singh's case. Then, after hearing the Writ Petition of Harbans Singh, they came to know that the death sentence of one of the accused in the same case was modified as life imprisonment. So, the hon. Supreme Court ordered that Harbans Singh should not be hanged and commuted his penalty to life imprisonment. This goes to show that even judicial mistake also can take the life of an individual. This is the situation prevailing in this country.

So, my view is, 'an eye for an eye' or 'a tooth for a tooth' attitude is not correct. For example, in the case of Allaudin vs State of Bihar, even the hon. Supreme Court observed that the death penalty should be given in only those exceptional cases in which the crime is so brutal. Even in brutal cases now life imprisonment is given. Instead of giving life imprisonment for 10 years or 12 years, it may be given for 25 years or 30 years till the convicted person is reformed in jail.

Sir, there was a discussion here about paying compensation to the victim. I would like to submit that the accused has to compulsorily give compensation to the affected person. If he is not able to give, then his property should be seized by the State and the State should give the compensation to the victim.

So, I would like to submit that the death penalty should either be removed from the Statute Book or even if it remains in the Statute Book, it should be suspended. This is my view.

Date : 29-11-2006

Need to open Regional Passport Offices at Coimbatore and Madurai in Tamil Nadu.

- **Matter Under Rule 377**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

In Tamil Nadu, there are only two Passport Offices – One at Chennai and the other is located at Tiruchirappalli. Large number of people from southern parts of Tamil Nadu are applying to Trichy Passport Office for getting their passports and they are facing lot of difficulties in getting their passports. Hence the people of the State have requested to open a Regional Passport Office at Madurai but the proposal is pending with the Government.

Sir, I also want to mention here that the city of Coimbatore is fast developing next to Chennai. Tirupur is one of the textile centres located nearby and thousands of hosiery units are functioning here. Large number of people are going abroad from Tirupur, Nilgiris, Salem, Namakikal, Coimbatore and nearby areas. Every year more than 50,000 people are applying for getting passport from Chennai Regional Passport Office. During the year 2005, Chennai Regional Passport Office received 2, 54,498 applications, but this year upto October nearly 2, 42, 289 persons had applied for passport out of which nearly 55, 000 applications were from Coimbatore region only. For getting their passports, they have to travel more than 400 kms. It is time consuming and also creates unnecessary hardships for them. Moreover Coimbatore is developing as a centre for IT. Coimbatore and Tirupur are municipal corporations. Through District Passport Collection Centre at Coimbatore, last year nearly 14,000 people had applied for issue of new passports and this year upto the end of October it crossed to more than 14 thousand applications.

Hence, there is also an urgent need for opening a Regional Passport Office at Coimbatore. I shall, therefore, request the Hon'ble Minister to direct the authorities to open Regional Passport Offices at Coimbatore as well as at Madurai at the earliest.

Date : 08-12-2006

Further Discussion on the motion for consideration of the Agricultural Workers Welfare Bill – 2006

- **Private Member's Bills**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

I am very much grateful to the Chair for giving me this opportunity to discuss about the welfare of the neglected section in the labour community. Our hon. Member, Shri Hannan Mollah introduced this Bill and also he elaborately discussed the problems faced by farm labourers in this country.

Yesterday, Shri D. P. Yadav initiated a discussion for the welfare of the unorganized sector. This is one of the wings in the unorganized sector in this country. If we calculate the labourers working in the unorganized sector, it is 36.9 crore; out of that, 23.21 crore labourers are employed in the agricultural field. This is the time to discuss about the problems faced by the farm labourers of this country.

While we are discussing the farm labourers, the success of agriculture only made a good result in the welfare of the farm labourers. If there is a failure of agriculture, we cannot protect the farm labourers. In the present scenario of our country, day-by-day, agricultural profession is sinking due to so many problems. Firstly, farmers are not able to raise proper crop at the proper time due to failure of monsoon or flood or due to poverty, due to indebtedness and other problems.

Moreover, everywhere, agricultural lands are sold out for starting industries or factories, etc. Agricultural lands are decreasing day-by-day and agricultural profession is sinking. Farm labourers are finding

it difficult to survive. The labourers are not only involving themselves in farming; they are working in the field of agriculture; they are labourers are not able to get houses. The situation in the country is that they do not have house, electricity, drinking water or proper food. By enacting law alone the Government cannot solve this problem. It is a matter to be solved jointly by the State and the Centre. They have to work together for the welfare of the farm labourers of this country. Then only this problem can be solved. If we look at the income of the farmers, it is very low. If the farmers can live happily then only the farm labourers can live happily. Here I want to mention certain facts. The household income of a farmer in this country varies from State to State. If you see the highest per month income of a farmer, in Jammu and Kashmir, it is Rs.5488; in Punjab, it is Rs.4960; in Kerala, it is Rs.4004; in Assam, it is Rs.3168; in Haryana, it is Rs.2882; in Madhya Pradesh, it is 1430; in Rajasthan, it is 1490; in Uttar Pradesh, it is Rs.1633; in Bihar, it is Rs.1624; and in Orissa it is the lowest at Rs.1062. If a farmer is getting only Rs.1000 per month how could a farm labourer get good income? That is the state of affairs.

My learned friend, Shri Hannan Mollah mentioned the Kerala model. Due to many agitations which were held in Kerala, out of 63 lakh of families, 34 lakh families earn their livelihood from this informal sector. The Government decided to form 20 Welfare Boards for the welfare of the farm labourers. In 1969, 32 social security schemes were introduced. All these Boards ran successfully for a certain period but many of them are non-functional now. For example, the Toddy Tapper Welfare Board, the Fishermen Welfare Board, Construction Workers Welfare Board, Agricultural Workers Welfare Board and Bamboo Workers Welfare Board all these are working. The Government contributed 10 per cent to the Toddy Tappers Board. The toddy tappers are living in poor conditions everywhere. If you go to South Tamil Nadu in areas like Tirunelveli, Thiruchenthur, Kanyakumari and Nagercoil, you would find that most of the people are toddy tappers. There is no small safety for a person who is going to the upper working in poultry, which is a part of agriculture; they

do dairying. But whether they are getting proper salary and whether they are able to live properly, we do not know. In the villages, they are facing so many problems. If you go to any village in any part of our country, the farm labourers, those who work in the field, we can see that there is no time schedule for them. But a person who is working in the Government office or any institution or a mill, can work for eight hours and go home.

The farm labourer cannot decide as to how many hours he has to work in the field. He is working day and night. If a snake bites a farm labourer, he is going to the Government Hospital. Three injections are to be given to cure him from the snake bite. That injection is not available in any private hospital. So, what the Government doctors does is, he gives him only two injections and take away the third injection either to his private clinic or sell it. As a result the health of the farmer labourer is affected.

The farm labourers are moving from one place to other. For example in a field 50 labourers work for harvesting the paddy crop. Then they go to the other field. How will they go to the field? Are they going there by bus or train? They are going by taking either a lorry or a goods carrying vehicle and travel a number of places.

They start their journey in the early morning. We see 30 labourers traveling in a lorry and going from one place to other. Late at nights they are return home, after the harvest is over, in the same lorry. So, while traveling in the lorry, whether in the morning or in the evening, if they met with an accident, if anybody dies, he is not paid any compensation. The Insurance Company in the court will say that since the vehicle used was the goods carrying vehicle, and not to be used for carrying persons from one place to another, so they are not liable to pay any compensation. Automatically, the risk goes to the owner of the vehicle. He may be a penniless fellow. The vehicle will be seized by the Court. The labourers will not get anything. He is not able to get any compensation from the court. This is one area where a strict direction should go from the Centre to all the State

Governments that goods vehicle should not be used to transport labourers from one place to other. Under the Motor Vehicles Act, if a driver kills a person or ten or one hundred persons, the minimum fine imposed will be Rs.3000.

Labour Ministry alone cannot solve this problem. All the women involved in the agricultural labour. In the morning whether they are taking food or not, taking tea-coffee or not but they daily purchase 10 packets of Pan Masala, Gutaka or Pan Parag. Finally, because of this they suffer from cancer. They are not able to get any treatment. To protect particularly the women farm labourers, the Government has to close all the factories producing either Pan Masala, Gutaka or Pan Parag. The first beneficiary of this step of the Government will be the women farm labourers.

Another pathetic condition of the farm labourers, who are residing in huts of remote villages, is that they are not getting good water. They get either salty water or water containing fluoride. As a result of this, their health is totally spoiled. They either suffer from cancer or tuberculosis. Even in my Palani Parliamentary constituency, there are Natham and Kangayam talukas, there are very big hospitals – 40-50 bedded hospitals having all equipment but there are neither doctors nor nurses. A poor labourer who earns Rs.60 to Rs.70 daily, how can he afford to go to Apollo Hospital or big hospital and spend lakhs and lakhs on their treatment? So, health care is very important for the farm labourers of this country.

Another important area is housing. The Government of India's scheme, Indira Awas Yojana, is implemented through Panchayats. The Gram Sabhas are only selecting the beneficiaries. Below Poverty Line families are benefited in getting houses under this scheme. Out of the ten houses allotted six or seven to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes and three or four houses go to Other Backward Class people. All these people are farm labourers. I would say that the whole selection process is wrong. Poor Coolie and other

portion of the tree. If he falls down, there is no insurance and no medical facilities for him. If he sustains any fracture in the head or leg or hand, he will have to remain without any treatment.

He may be a bread winner of the family and his whole family would collapse. So, the situation is very bad. These are all the schemes introduced by the Kerala Government. Our friend suggested that Kerala model should be followed. But where are the Boards which they constituted? There is a total failure. Around three percent of the total budget of the State is necessary for the success of these Boards. Today, no Board is running properly. The Government of India has to identify the workers. Today, the agricultural workers are not continuing in the same profession. If you go to our district of Coimbatore, you cannot purchase even a single acre of land for agricultural purposes. All the lands are sold out for the factories and IT institutions. I am a farmer but I am not able to get any farm labourers. All the labourers have been taken by the mini-buses to textile mills. They are getting Rs.100, tiffin, and tea. They are not ready to go to the fields. That is the situation. So, day-by-day, the number of farm labourers is shrinking. For example, in 1961, the farm labourers were 73.54 per cent of the total labourers but it is only 54.04 per cent in 2000. So the number is going down day-by-day. The Government of India under the leadership of Dr. Manmohan Singh and Madam Sonia Gandhi introduced NREGP for protecting the labourers in the villages. But these schemes are not sufficient to protect them.

Hence our Government has to frame a comprehensive Act to protect all the labourers. It should first identify the labourers and then they should be given housing facilities, accidental benefits, maternity benefits, insurance, etc. through an Act

Date : 14-12-2006

Discussion on the motion for consideration of the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admission) Bill 2006

- **Government Bills**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI) :

I am thanking the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Manmohan Singhji and Hon'ble Madam Soniaji and our Hon'ble Minister Arujun Singhji for the introduction of this landmark Bill for the welfare of scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes and other backward classes of citizens of this country.

As per a 3rd amendment during the year 2005 the clause 5 was inserted in Article 15 of our Constitution, with a view to promote the educational advancement of the socially and educationally backward classes of citizens, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes through special provisions relating to assistance of students belonging to these categories in all educational institutions, including private educational institutions whether aided or unaided by the State.

Originally there was no such provision in Article 15 of our Constitution. In the case of Champakam Dorairaj, state of Madras set aside the reservation of seats in educational institutions on the basis of caste and community provided by the then Government of Madras and by great leader Shri K.Kamaraj. Then late leader Shri K.Kamaraj requested Shri Jawahar Lal Nehru to amend the constitution to provide reservation for weaker section in the society. Shri Jawahar Lal Nehru the then Prime Minister requested Dr. B.R.Ambedkar the then Union Law Minister to amend the article 15 of our Constitution. Dr.B.R.Ambedkar amended the article 15 and inserted sub clause 4

and it provide a blanket provision that nothing shall prevent the state from making special provision for the advancement of SC/ST and OBC people.

About 72% population and fervent work force of the country is still living in rural India. Out of the total rural workforce 39.50 per cent are cultivators and 33.20 per cent are agricultural labourers. The agricultural labourers needs reservation but it continues to by-pass them. As regards cultivators, all those upon the semi-medium size of holdings and who are wholly dependent on agriculture and other connective activities deserve the benefit of reservation.

Mandal Commission refer to the need for reservation in Educational Institutions. There are dozen recommendations in the report, which propose, apart from reservation in Government jobs and educational institutions, separate coaching facilities for students aspiring to enter technical and professional institutions and special vocation-oriented education facilities to upgrade the academic and cultural environment of OBC students.

The Reservation in education and public service began in the Madras Presidency as early as 1831. The British Rulers initiated this in response to demands from various groups. Then this movement was developed and achieved by late Leaders Shri K.Kamaraj and Shri E.V.Ramasamy Naicker. Tamil Nadu had 69% reservation even before the Mandal Commission recommendations.

In Andhra Pradesh it was initiated in the 1970s while in Gujarat and Maharashtra the schemes were formalized 1980s and 1990s. At present Karnataka is having 50 per cent reservation out of which 32% for OBCs and 18% for SCs and STs in all the higher education institutions. From 1992 to 2002 over 25000, OBC students were able to get admission in professional colleges in Karnataka. Andhra Pradesh has 49.5% reservation and Kerala has approx. 50 per cent reservation for its OBC, SC and ST populations.

The present Bill pave way for poor rural students to get admission in Central Educational Institutions. By introducing reservation in Central Education Institutions whether it will affect the merit? Certainly not. Thousands of youths from rural areas are working in IT Sector throughout the world. Most of them hail from very poor families and studied in corporation schools or panchayat union schools. Some anti-reservationists are arguing that OBC communities cannot throw up sufficient number of bright students to fill up their quotas in Higher Education Institutions. It is totally false. Assuming that 5000 students were to be admitted to IIT's every year and 27 per cent reservation was made for students belonging to OBCs, it would work out to 1350 seats for the OBCs. The number of ITTs aspirants from the OBC communities is about one lack. Reservation exists in many well known universities yet the quality or prestige of these universities has not been vitiated.

Even in USA affirmative action was promoted by President Lyndon Johnson in 1974 to promote American Blacks who were deprived of most opportunities. The affirmative action was successful in Japan, Former Soviet Union, Former Socialist Countries of East Europe along with Cuba and Vietnam. Immediately after the revolution, Lenin proclaimed the affirmative action known as "KORENIZATSIIS" to provide affirmative preferences for non-Russians, Backward Ethnic Groups and poor Russians.

In this juncture, I want to mention the words of Rabindranath Tagore: "If our political progress is to be real, the underdogs of our society must be helped to become men" Through this Bill our UPA Government decided to uplift the poor students to higher level. Out of 110 crore population nearly 90 crore are poor OBCs, SCs and STs. All are thanking our Hon'ble Minister Shri Arjun Singhji for this landmark historic achievement.

Date : 07.03.2007

Further discussion on the motion of thanks on the President's Address to both Houses of Parliament assembled together on 23.02.2007

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Madam, I am thanking the hon. Speaker for giving me this opportunity to participate in the discussion on the Motion of Thanks for the Address delivered by hon. President in both Houses of Parliament.

After assumption of our UPA Government in 2004, we recorded an average annual growth of national income over eight per cent. This is the year we are going to launch the 11th Five Year Plan. The UPA Government has set a target of attaining an annual growth rate of 9 per cent during the 11th Plan. In the Approach paper of the 11th Five Year Plan, our Government has identified 9 major challenges facing the economy. Out of nine, "Agriculture" is given importance and identified as first and foremost issue. In our country 60-70 percentage of the population is dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. India is next to China in area and production of vegetables. Within 2 years, production of vegetables increased by 5.7 per cent. Nearly 39 per cent of world's mango and 23 per cent of world's banana is produced in India. The production of horticultural crops increased to 8 per cent during 2004-05. India ranks first in the world in milk production which rose from 17 MT in 1950-51 to 100 MT by 2006-07. Fish production in India has increased from 0.75 MT in 1950-51 to 6.5 MT in 2005-06.

Within 30 months, UPA Government implemented various schemes for the upliftment of poor and downtrodden people. Implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and Right to Information Act are the great achievements of our Government. Through Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission,

Government has taken number of steps to develop the urban areas. Through Bharat Nirman, Government has allocated huge funds for development of rural roads, rural electrification, rural telephony, rural housing and rural drinking water supply. The "Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission" a new scheme to develop the cities in this country was launched by our hon. Prime Minister of India. Through this programme, Government has planned to develop city wide urban infrastructure services such as water supply, sanitation, drainage, basic services and also social housing to the urban poor. Already 63 cities were identified to implement this scheme. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act passed by UPA Government, has emerged as a major programme both for providing a social safety net to the poor as well as for building rural infrastructure. The scheme is operational in 200 districts and 1.4 crore households have been benefited under this scheme. More than five lakh workers have benefited under this NREGA programme in different parts of our country. Our Government planned to extend NREGA in more cities within five years. The UPA Government has taken major steps for improving the Panchayati Raj institutions. For the first time, a separate Ministry was constituted for Panchayati Raj and planned to remove backwardness in 250 districts.

Under the able leadership of Dr. Manmohan Singhji, highest importance is given to Education. More money was allocated to strengthen Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Mid-Day Meal Programme. Under the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme, 2,000 new residential schools were sanctioned within the last three years for helping the poor girls predominantly belonging to SC, ST, OBC and Minority Communities. An independent Ministry of Women and Child Development has been created to solve the issue relating to women and child welfare. The UPA Government has given great importance to increasing access to education for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Classes and socially and economically weaker sections of the society.

The UPA Government has allocated Rs. 13,000 crore package for the revival of co-operative credit structure and allocated huge money for giving loan to agriculturists.

In India out of 110 Crore population, 70% of the people are agriculturists. In some parts of the country a large number of farmers have committed suicide. To help the distressed farmers, a special package was announced for 31 districts in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala. Nearly Rs 16,000 crore was allocated for helping the poor farmers. Through the effective mechanism of our Government, agricultural growth has improved to 6 per cent during 2005-2006. Even though, our government has allocated huge funds for agricultural credit, in some areas, the nationalized bank authorities are not properly disbursing the loans and are not issuing the Kisan Credit Cards to the needy. For example, in one area in my constituency, namely Thasayanaicken patty Vellakoil Canara the Bank authorities are denying issuance of Kisan Credit Cards to the qualified farmers.

Our UPA Government has given importance to the upliftment of minorities. A high level committee under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Justice Rajendra Sachar was appointed and the Report has already been submitted and Report is about the social, economic and educational status of the Muslim community in the country. Our hon. Prime Minister has charted out a 15-point programme for the minorities. The National Highway Development Programme has been expanded with an estimate of Rs.2,27,000 crore. The Golden Quadrilateral Programme is nearing completion. The UPA government has approved 4-laning of around 4,000 km.of national highways and 6-laning of 6,500 kms.of national highways.

For the first time, UPA Government, within 30 months, has enacted a number of laws for the welfare of the citizens of this country, particularly for the women folk. The Hindu Succession Act was suitably amended to give equal share for all the girls from the ancestral property. For the accountability of the judges, Judges Enquiry Bill has also been introduced and it is under the active

consideration of the Parliamentary Standing Committee. For the upliftment of poor and downtrodden people of this country Indian Constitution was suitably amended to give reservation in promotions and reservation of seats in Higher Educational Institutions like IIM and IITs for SC/ST and OBC students.

At this juncture, I want to mention about my Constituency. I would just like to mention two points about my constituency.

My Palani Parliamentary Constituency is mainly rural area. Most of the people are farmers, labourers, artisans and farm labourers. In one of the Assembly segments in my Palani constituency, Vedasenthur is having nearly 100 textile mills. My Dindigul district is having 136 textile mills. Thousands of people are working in these textile mills. Government of India has to support new entrepreneurs to start more units. Hence I request that our government has to allocate necessary funds to declare Dindigul District as a Textile Zone.

Madam, I may now be permitted to lay the rest of my speech on the Table of the House.

Moreover, the farmers in Dindigul area are producing all varieties of vegetables and those are transported to various parts of the country. But agriculturists are not getting adequate price for their produce. To help the farmers, government has to sanction cold storage facilities in taluk headquarters in Oddanchatram, Palani and Natham. In my Constituency, particularly in Mulanur, the farmers are producing huge quantity of drum sticks. Hence, it is necessary to establish a research institute for drum stick in Mulanur.

This part of the speech was laid on the Table.

In this juncture I humbly request the UPA Government to take necessary steps for interlinking the rivers from Kanyakumari to Kashmir. Atleast government has to concentrate on the linkage of the

rivers in south India to solve the interstate water dispute. After 17 years Cauvery Water Dispute Tribunal had delivered its final award on 5.2.2007. In that award there is a mention about Amaravathy river basin. Amaravathy river is perennial river irrigating 50 thousand acres of land from Amaravathy dam to Karur. More than 100 drinking water schemes are functioning in the Amaravathy river bed. Through Amaravathy river irrigation farmers cultivated sugarcane in 3000 acres of land but it is not considered. Further more it is directed to release 3 TMC water from Pambar Sub Basin in Amaravathy River Basin to Kerala. It will affect total irrigation under Amaravathy river. The farmers living from Udumalpet to Karur will suffer very badly and it is an injustice to the farmers of that region. Hence, I request UPA Government to notify the Cauvery Water Dispute Tribunal Award after rectifying this mistake or otherwise it will affect the farmers, public and all others of Dharaparam *taluk*, Udumalpet *taluk* and Karur district of Tamil Nadu.

With these words I am supporting the Motion.

Date : 26.02.2007

Need to withdraw the Service Tax on Legal Profession

Matter Under Rule 377

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Sir, the legal profession in India is one of the largest in the world and second only to USA. There are more than 1 million people working in this profession. Our country is having very few rich lawyers but there are many lawyers who are poor and they find it hard to make both ends meet and their plight in small places is known to all. Against this backdrop of the position of the members of the Bar, the Government of India has to examine where it would be fit and proper to introduce Service Tax on the legal profession.

The Service Tax was first introduced in the year 1994 and the main objective was the service sector should continue to the growth of the economy. It should be highlighted that this is in addition to profession tax levied by the various State Governments. The average lot of professional lawyer is very miserable. If the legal profession is brought under the tax net, the service provider will pass on the same to the poor litigants and it again increases the cost of legal services.

I shall, therefore, fervently request the Hon'ble Finance Minister to kindly reconsider the imposition of Service Tax on the members of the legal profession so as to save them from additional burden and to safeguard the interests of the poor litigants.

Date : 12-03-2007

General Discussion on the Budget (General) for 2007-2008

- **Budget General**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Mr. Chairman, Sir, hon. Shri P. Chidambaram, our senior leader and Finance Minister of this country has submitted his fourth Budget on 28th February, 2007. It is his sixth Budget. It is an agriculture-oriented budget. He announced number of valuable measures for the renewal of Indian Agriculture. Within 30 months of UPA Government under the able leadership of Madam Soniaji, and the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh ji, the GDP growth rate has improved from 7.5 per cent in 2004-2005 to 9 per cent in 2005-2006 and to 9.2 per cent in 2006-2007. There is an average growth rate in three years of the UPA Government at the rate of 8.6 per cent. The growth rate target for the Tenth Five Year Plan of 8 per cent will be nearly achieved. There is acceleration in growth rate in manufacturing sector from 8.7 per cent to 9.1 per cent, and further to 11.3 per cent. In Service sector from 9.6 per cent to 9.8 per cent, and further to 11.2 per cent. Average growth in agriculture during Tenth Five Year Plan is estimated at 2.3 per cent.

In real terms, per capita income in 2005-2006 was increased by 7.4 per cent. The savings rate estimated at 32.4 per cent, and the investment rate at 33.8 per cent. The present Budget mainly focused on rural drinking water facilities, rural housing, total sanitation and primary education. Through the Bharat Nirman Programme, the UPA Government has provided drinking water facilities to 55,512 villages; 7,83,000 rural houses were constructed; and 12,198 km. length of rural roads were formed. UPA Government planned to provide rural telephone to 20,000 villages and out of which 15,054 villages were provided telephone facilities, and the remaining will be completed

before the end of the year. For the Rajiv Gandhi Drinking Water Mission, it is planned to increase from Rs. 4,680 crore to Rs. 5,850 crore.

Through this present Budget, our Government has planned to spend more money for Sarva Shiksha Abiyan (SSA) and Mid-day Meal Scheme. For school education, allocation is Rs. 23,142 crore. Through Mid-day Meal Scheme, it is proposed to extend this scheme to the children studying in upper primary classes in 3,427 educationally backward blocks.[r67] It is proposed to allocate Rs.7,324 crore for Mid-Day Meal Scheme. For secondary education, it is more than doubled, that is, from Rs.1,837 crore to Rs.3,794 crore.

Another welcoming step is the introduction of 'National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship'. It is proposed to curtail the drop out ratio in this country. According to this novel and innovative scheme, it is planned to conduct national level test among the students who have passed class-VIII and each successful and eligible student will be given Rs.6,000 per year.

Further more, I want to mention some important features of this Budget. On excise duty, the hon. Finance Minister has brought down *ad valorem* component from eight per cent to six per cent on petrol and diesel. Customs duty on non-agricultural products has been slashed from 12 per cent to 10 per cent. Duty on *pan masala*, not containing tobacco has been reduced from 66 per cent to 45 per cent. Duty on drip irrigation systems, agricultural sprinklers and food processing items has been reduced by 2.5 per cent. Through *aam admi Bhima Yojana*, hon. Finance Minister proposed to bring the unorganized household under a safety net by providing insurance. Through this scheme, the Government of India will bear 50 per cent premium of Rs.200 per year per person. It is a very important and a very good scheme that is provided for in this Budget. Allocation for SCs/STs was Rs.6,600 crore last year; now it is raised to Rs.17,691 crore this year. It is a gift from the UPA Government and from our hon. Finance Minister, to the SC/ST population of this country.

I want to mention something about AIDS control. It is proposed to allocate Rs.969 crore for AIDS control. I feel that this allocation is not sufficient to eradicate and prevent this killer disease. By December 2005, it was estimated that there were about 5,206 million persons affected with HIV-Positive in this country, with no State is free from this virus. India presently ranks as the second country in the world next to South Africa. A large number of women are affected with HIV in six States, namely, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Manipur, Andhra Pradesh and Nagaland. For AIDS Awareness Programme, the Government of India is allocating huge funds through NGOs, but the money is not properly utilized; and the NGOs are not working properly, according to the norms. They are getting foreign aid also, but that also is not used properly by them.

It has to be monitored. In India, the majority of the population is still uninfected. More money is to be allocated for Information Technology, Education and Communications fields. It can only help prevent this disease. Now, Anti-Retroviral Therapy Service is rendered in 64 centres in selected hospitals throughout the country. At least, it must be extended to 150 institutions and selected hospitals. For that, more money is to be allocated and more ART centres should be opened. Then only, it can be prevented.

I also want to mention certain facts about the Integrated Child Development Services. This is the only major national programme for children under the age of six years. The universalization of this programme is our commitment. Hon. Supreme Court of India has given a landmark judgment on 13.12.2006 about this issue. According to this judgment, all ICDS Services must be extended to all children under the age of six years and as well as extended to only one-third children, and here, the services are not adequate. National Advisory Council formulated certain recommendations to achieve universalization with quality. Our Government formed a separate Ministry for Women and Child Development for the first time in this country. Budgetary allocation is not sufficient for this programme. Last year, it was Rs.4,761 crore and this year, the allocation is only Rs.4,087 crore. Allocation of Rs.4,087 crore for 160 million children

under six years is not sufficient.

Our hon. Finance Minister is well aware of the problems of the Indian farming community. He hails from a small village of mostly farmers. The most important fact is the Northern part of our country is very badly affected by floods resulting in loss of human lives and damage to property worth thousands of crores of rupees every year. On the other hand, people from the Southern part are migrating from one place to another for want of drinking water not only for themselves but also for their cattle. With the increase in population, this position will grow from bad to worse. India has 17 per cent of the world's population but has only 2.45 per cent of the world's land. Our population is increasing by 2 per cent per year. We all know that Ganga, Brahmaputra, Mahanadhi, Godavari, Krishna, Narmada, Cauvery, Ravi, Sutlej are the main rivers but a large quantity of water goes into the sea when floods come. In order to provide necessary food to all, we have to take steps for linking waters at the national level. It is predicted that the Indian population by 2050 will be 164 crore and our food requirements would be 450 million tonnes.

In our country, works relating to construction of dam are unnecessarily delayed for a number of years. Because of this delay in implementation of projects, costs got escalated. For example, Nagarjuna Sagar Dam was originally estimated at Rs. 91.12 crores. While submitting the proposals to the Planning Commission, it was estimated Rs. 163.54 crores. Till 2005, we have spent Rs. 1,300 crores for this project. Narmada Valley project is estimated at around Rs. 200 crores. So far, we have spent Rs. 21,000 crores but till date the work is not completed. In my constituency, in the year 1989 Nanganjiyar Dam was estimated at Rs. 25 crores. We have already spent nearly 80 crores but the work is not yet completed. We have to concentrate on these things. Fortunately, we are having a huge quantity of water in our country. We have to plan for the linkage of rivers in our country. The expected expenditure will be Rs. 5,60,000 crore. If we implement this project, our agriculture will improve, drinking water problems will be solved, power generation would be

augmented and the Inter-State water dispute will also be solved permanently. But there is no mention about this issue in this Budget. I would request the hon. Prime Minister, the hon. Finance Minister and the hon. Water Resource Minister to concentrate on this issue to safeguard the future needs of our country.

With these words, I welcome this Budget and I conclude my speech.

Date : 19-03-2007

Need to release a 'Postal Stamp' and a 'First Day Cover' in memory of Thillaiyadi Valliammai, an associate of Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa.

- **Matter Under Rule 377**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Sir, this is the 100th year of Satyagraha Movement started by Mahatmaji in South Africa. **Thillaiyadi Valliammai** who was born on 22-2-1898 at Thilaiyad to Sri Munusamy Mudaliar and Smt. Mangalam Janaki was one of the earliest associates of Mahatma Gandhi. Basically her parents were weavers and they carried their weaving profession at Thillaiyadi in Tamilnadu. Since weaving profession was totally neglected, they decided to go abroad for achieving excellence. They left to South Africa as coolies and got settled at Johannesburg. In the year 1893, Dada Abdulla Company requested Mahatmaji to plead a case on their behalf. After reaching South Africa on seeing this kind of slavery, Mahatama Gandhi decided to stay for a further period to two years to solve the problem of slavery. On 11th September 1906, Gandhiji convened a meeting of Indians and local people. Nearly 3,000 people participated in that meeting. It was decided to agitate through Ahimsa. Due to the intervention of Gokaley, a compromise was arrived between Gandhiji and General Smartz in October 1912. As per the compromise, the Black Act enacted by General Smartz for payment of three sovereign on each Indian was cancelled. On 14th March 1913, Justice Shiarley declared all the marriages conducted other than the marriages *conducted as per local Law were null and void. It badly affected the Indian women. All the Indian community and others started an agitation against the judgment. The agitation was started by Gandhiji. For all these agitations, the small girl, Valliammai participated and delivered lecturers. During the age of eleven, even though she was

sick, she traveled all the places Viz., New Castle, Charles town, Dando, Ladismith, Maritsbark, Durban along with Kasturba Gandhi and conducted the meeting. On 22 December 1913, she was arrested by police and convicted for three months. She was lodged in Maritsberg Jail. Day by day her health condition deteriorated. Since then, her condition became very bad and she was released on 11th February 1914. She was taken to home and she passed away 22nd February 1914.

She worked with Gandhiji in the early years when he tuned his non-violent methods in South Africa, fighting the apartheid there and Gandhiji has himself admitted that her sacrifice has increased his resolve to fight against the Britishers.

To honour such a women patriot, I urge upon the Hon'ble Minister of Communications and IT to release a Special Postage Stamp and a First Day Cover which will fulfill long pending dream of the Tamil People*.

* Treated as laid on the Table

Date : 13-03-2007

Need to conduct the proceedings of Madras High Court in Tamil Language.

- **Special Mention**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Hon. Chairman, Sir, Tamil has been declared as one of the classical languages by the Government of India, but till date it has not been given due recognition by the Union Government. There is a long-pending demand for conducting the deliberations of Madras High Court and Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court in Tamil. However, the genuine demand of the State is not being given proper heed. Whereas in other States like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, U.P., and Rajasthan, the deliberations of the High Courts concerned are being conducted in the regional language, that is, Hindi.

Hence, I urge upon the Union Government that the discrimination meted out to the Tamil people should be removed and proceedings of the Madras High Court and Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court should be allowed to be conducted in Tamil as in the case of some of the Northern States.

I would request the Government to take necessary steps to implement Tamil as the language of the Madras High Court and Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you not want to change the name of the Court? Now, it is 'Madras High Court'. Do you not want to change the name to 'Chennai High Court'? You only want that the proceedings should be conducted in Tamil. What about the name?

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN : Thank you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is still Madras High Court. You do not want to change it as 'Tamil Nadu High Court', and you only want the proceedings in Tamil language.

Date : 26-04-2007

Need to set up a Central University on Information Technology in Tamil Nadu.

- **Matter Under Rule 377**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Sir, at present there are 18 Central Universities functioning throughout the country. All the Universities are located in Northern India except one in Puducherry. There are five universities in the North East, four in New Delhi, four in Uttar Pradesh, two in Andhra Pradesh and one each in West Bengal and Maharashtra.

For the past sixty years no central university is constituted on any field of education in Tamilnadu, Kerala and Karnataka. The youths from south are unable to get admission in anyone of the Central Universities due to language problem and so many reasons. Large number of youths who are working in the field of Information Technology sector throughout the world are from Tamil Nadu only. However, there is not much scope for the students in the Tamilnadu State to pursue their higher education in Central Universities and they are facing lot of difficulties.

Hence, there is an urgent need for setting up of a Central University on Information Technology in Southern India particularly in Tamilnadu. I shall, therefore, urge upon the Government to take necessary action for establishing a Central University on Information Technology in Tamilnadu at the earliest.

Date : 04-05-2007

Discussion on the resolution on Formulation and implementation Comprehensive Food and Nutrition Security Scheme.

- **Private Member's Resolution**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir, for giving me an opportunity to participate in this discussion. Hon. Member Shri Naveen Jindal moved this Resolution for implementing a comprehensive food and nutrition security scheme aiming at total eradication of hunger from the country. This learned and young Member is one of the famous industrialists in the country. About one lakh people are working under him. I appreciate his thinking about the welfare of the poor people living in this country. I congratulate him for moving this Resolution and I support it.

First of all, I want to mention certain facts about our great country. Our country, ancient India, covers an area of 32,87,263 km. from Kanyakumari to Himalayas; it is the tenth industrialized country in the world; 7th largest country in the world with a length of 3,214 km from north to south and 2,933 km. from east to west. The total length of coastal line is 7,516.6 km. Indian rivers are classified into four groups – Himalayan rivers, Deccan rivers, Coastal rivers and rivers of the Inland drainage basin. In the case of population, as on 1.3.2001, there were 532.1 million males; 496.4 million females, totaling 1028 million; now, it is 110 crore.

Our learned friend has moved this important Resolution about food security. If we go back to 5,000 years, at that time, men were hunting animals for food; women were selecting plants for cultivation. Even now, in Arunachal Pradesh, there is one place called Along; there is a

Donyi-Polo Temple, where we can see the portrait of a woman credited with introduction of rice into cultivation. That was the history 5000 years ago.

Now, during Independence period and during pre-Independence period, we were in a position to purchase food grains from foreign countries. Now, the situation has changed totally. Agriculture is the mainstay of Indian economy.

Agriculture contributes to 22 per cent of GDP; about 65-70 per cent of the population is dependent on agriculture. Production of oilseeds in 2006-07 reached 2.34 metric tonnes; cotton alone contributed to 18.93 million bales each containing 170 kg. Production of jute and masta reached 10.83 million bales, each containing 180 kg. Sugarcane production touched 273.16 metric tonnes; rice production touched 89.99 metric tonnes; wheat production reached 71.54 metric tonnes. Coarse and cereal reached 34.67 metric tonnes.

In the case of land utilization, in the year 1950-51, in agriculture, it was 1,187.5 lakh hectares; in 2003-04, it was 1,409.6 lakh hectares. Food security and nutritious food depends on the success of agriculture in this country. Highest wheat production was in the year 1999-2000, when we had 76.7 metric tonne. Now, food production is in crossroads. There are so many reasons for this. Unless we improve the food production, the problem of food security will not be solved.

One main reason for this is floods in the northern region and drought in the southern region; moreover, farmers are not able to get good seeds; farmers are not able to get unadulterated fertilizer, free electricity, etc. If you see the example of Tamil Nadu, from 1989, farmers are enjoying free electricity and they are able to produce very good variety of paddy, gram, etc. Furthermore, I want to emphasize one point.

Farmers are using free electricity, not for their own purposes, but for the purpose of country. They are producing wheat and rice for the

consumption of 110 crore population of this country. The whole population is living on the wheat and rice produced by the farmers of this country. When they apply for electricity connection with the State Electricity Boards, they have to wait at least for 8-10 years. But those who are able to pay Rs.50,000-Rs.1,00,000, they are able to get the connection within 3-5 days. This is the situation. All the State Governments should be directed to give electricity connection within 24 hours to the farmers, when they apply. The ground water level is going down every year. So, farmers are not able to get water for irrigation purposes. This problem should be solved and water should be made available to them.

I would like to now mention about the diseases. We should control diseases like TB, Malaria, AIDS, Cancer, Blindness, Leprosy and Mental Disorder. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, has taken a number of steps. I would particularly mention about the AIDS. In the year 2006, throughout the world people living with HIV AIDS are 39.5 million, out of which Adults are 37.2 million, women are 17.7 million, children are 2.3 million and newly infected people are 4.3 million. Death due to AIDS in 2006 alone was 2.9 million. In India nearly 5.7 million people are living with AIDS out of which 5.2 million are adults between the age group of 15-49. In India leprosy patients are 1.49 lakh. Polio cases detected in 2006 alone were 672. Every year 2 million new Tuberculosis cases are detected in this country. Total cancer patients in this country are 8,50,000 and out of this, cervical cancer patients are 1,40,000, breast cancer patients are 80,000 and oral cancer patients are 17,000.

Also, since we are not able to give nutritious food to the pregnant women, most of the children are affected in the womb itself. For helping the pregnant women, Tamil Nadu Government introduced a scheme called 'Magapperu Udhavi Thittam' scheme. All the pregnant ladies are entitled to get during the last six months of their pregnancy Rs.1000 per month. The State Government is providing funds for this scheme to get healthy children. In this country 214 million people are

under-nourished, 40 million people are exposed to natural disorders and 50 per cent of children, mostly tribal in rural areas, are under-nourished. Sir, 23 per cent of the children have low birth weight and 60 out of 1000 die before the age of one year. Most of the children are affected with anemia, under-weight and micro-nutrient deficiencies.

Way back, in the year 1954, our late Leader Kamraj was traveling in the Northern Tamil Nadu on April 14, 1954. In the streets, he saw the children and asked why they did not go to school and were in the garden. The children told him that they were not able to get food. Immediately he announced Free Noon Meal Scheme. That was implemented throughout the country for the welfare of the children.

In 1954 this was the situation and after 60 years we are exporting the food grains though our people are living below poverty line. The Government decides the poverty line. As mentioned by my colleague, 60 per cent of the population in this country lives below poverty line. Those who consume less than 2400 calories per day in rural areas and 2100 calories in urban areas are supposed to be living below poverty line. Combining both, those who consume 2250 calories per day are considered to be living below poverty line.

Income of an individual per month in rural area is Rs.368 and in urban area it is Rs.559. Elimination of hunger is the first requisite for eradication of poverty. Right to adequate food and clean drinking water should be regarded as basic human right. In most of the villages, the Government has to take steps to provide potable good water for the public. Due to water alone people are affected with a number of diseases like cancer. Good food and good water should be given to all the poor people of this country. Mahatma Gandhi advocated Antyodaya and Vinoba Bhave advocated 'Sarvodaya'. We have to work for implementing these schemes. I support this Resolution and thank our young leader Shri Naveen Jindal bringing this Resolution. I also thank you for giving me this opportunity.

Date : 07-05-2007

Discussion on the motion for consideration of the Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2005

Government Bills

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Madam Chairman, first of all, I am thankful to the Chair for giving me this opportunity to participate in the discussion on Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2005.

I would like to congratulate and thank the hon. Minister of Power, Shri Shinde ji for the introduction of this piece of legislation to further amend the Electricity Act, 2003 as per the commitment made by UPA in the National Common Minimum Programme.

Ours is an age of scientific inventions which have made life easy and comfortable. The most useful of all inventions is electricity. Electricity is one of the wonders and blessings of Science.

When Lenin came to power in Russia after the success of the Revolution in October 1917, his message to his people was: "The Revolution means socialism and electricity. If a country has capitalism and electricity, its people will be happier, more prosperous and more advanced than the people of a country which has socialism but no electricity."

Madam, the Indian Electricity Act was promulgated in the year 1903, it was then amended in 1910 and lately in 1959. The Rules thereunder were first framed in 1937 and then in 1956. The Indian Electricity Supply Act was promulgated in 1948 for the purpose of providing rationalization of the production of electricity, and generally for taking measures conducive to the development of electricity in this country. It was slightly amended in 1959.

Electricity Laws (Amendment) Act, 1988 came into force on 30th December, 1998. There had been drastic amendments in the Electricity Act, 1910 and the Electricity Supply Act, 1948. The object of these amendments is to provide for transmission as a distinct activity under the Indian Electricity Act, 1910 and the Electricity Supply Act, 1948. The law relating to generation, transmission, distribution, trading and use of electricity is enunciated in the Electricity Act, 2003.

The present amendment provisions are based on the Electricity Act, 2003. The present Bill paves way to amend Section 6, Section 38 and other Sections.

Section 6 of the Electricity Act, 2003 provides that the appropriate Government shall endeavour to supply electricity to all areas including villages and hamlets. As per this provision, rural electrification is under the purpose of the State Government. The present amendment in Section 6 provides that the concerned State Governments and the Central Government shall jointly endeavour to provide access to electricity to all areas including villages and hamlets through rural electricity infrastructure and electrification of households.

As per Census 2001, only 44 per cent of the rural households have access to electricity infrastructure. Improvement of rural electricity infrastructure is essential to empower rural India. For the improvement of this, our UPA Government, under the leadership of Madam Sonia ji, implemented the Rajiv Gandhi Vidyutikaran Yojana in April 2005 for providing access to electricity to all rural households over a period of four years. It has been estimated that this Scheme would have a subsidy component of Rs. 14,5 70 crore with an outlay of Rs. 16,255 crore funded from the Consolidated Fund of India in two phases. Phase I started from the year 2005-06 with sanction of Rs. 5,000 crore. The Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) is the nodal agency for the

programme. Under the new scheme, till 9th February, 2007, 28,241 villages have been electrified, and 5,14,141 connections to below poverty line (BPL) households have been released. The target for the year 2007-08 is for electrification of 40,000 unelectrified villages and offering electricity connection to around 40 lakh unelectrified BPL households electricity connection free of charge, as per norms of Kutir Jyoti Programme in all rural electrification. Therefore, the present amendment in Section 6 is a welcome step taken by our hon. Minister.

Another important amendment is with respect to the Section 151 of the present Act, 2003. According to Section 151, the police cannot take any action directly against the persons involved in the theft of electric energy or alteration in the meter. If they want to take action, they have to include it in the provision of the Indian Penal Code. According to the present amendment, and the inclusion of Section 151(2)(3) in Section 151, it would pave the way for the police to investigate and take cognizance of the offences as per provision of the Criminal Procedure Code. It will reduce offences and the police would be able to take action against the culprits. For, for example, Section 39 of the Electricity Act, if any case is registered, police is using Section 379 of the IPC. So, all such cases are being ended in acquittal. But by this amendment, we would get more conviction, and the offences would also be reduced. This is another important and good amendment in this proposed Bill.

It is proposed to constitute special courts for speedy trial without committing the offences to special courts under Section 153 to try offences under Sections 135 to 138. But, in this proposed amendment, I am having a small reservation. Based on this amendment, the State Governments are directed to constitute special courts. It is an unnecessary burden on the State Governments. Moreover, in all subordinate courts, a large number of cases and even in a small magistrate courts, more than 2,000 cases are pending there. Therefore, the Government of India has to

allocate more funds to the States to be able to constitute the special courts, special prosecutors and the infrastructural facilities. Then only, we can try the offences of the electricity. This is my humble submission.

Madam, while concluding my speech, I would mention about the situation in Delhi. The power situation in this country is alarming. Delhi, the Capital City of this country, is short of 800 MW. Each 100 MW shortage means an hour of cuts.

The Financial Capital of India, Mumbai, is also facing the power shortage of 400 MW, and same is the situation in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka. Our country generates 1,29,000 MW of power, and there is a shortage of 70,000 MW. Usually, electricity production capacity would be increased as per increase of demand, but I am sorry to mention that in the last 10 years, there has been no electricity capacity addition. Those who were in power since 1996 to 2004, had failed to concentrate on “power” to help the public. But now, our hon. Minister of Power, Shri Shindeji, who is a very efficient Minister has taken a number of steps to produce more electricity and to solve the problem of public of this country. I am appreciating and congratulating him. I am supporting this Bill

With these words, I am supporting this Bill and concluding my speech.

Date : 07-05-2007

Need to withdraw Value Added Tax (VAT) on Tobacco and Tobacco products.

- **Matter Under Rule 377**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Tobacco is an important agricultural product in this country. It is fetching very good income to Government of India by way of export. The tobacco growing farmers are also getting good income through this commercial crop. Lakhs of workers are directly involved in manufacturing, curing tobacco leaves and other allied tobacco products. Thousands of major and small industries are running in this field throughout the country.

In the recent Enactment of Taxation Laws (Amendment Act) 2007 by Union of India the tobacco has been shifted from the list of "Declared Goods" and thereby the State Governments are empowered to levy Value Added Tax on tobacco @ 12.5%. This proposal affects the various exemptions already granted by the Government of India to un-manufactured and manufactured tobacco products. By notification dated 1-3-1979, the manufactured tobacco was completely exempted from the whole of duty of excise leviable under the Central Excise Act 1944 and the Additional Duties of Excise Act 1957. The above age old exemptions given by Government of India for the welfare of poor agricultural families is withdrawn by imposing Value Added Tax on unmanufactured tobacco which is an agricultural produce.

The Small Scale Industries involved in this field were granted exemption for their survival from the payment of all types of duties but now these are subjected to the levy of 12.5% VAT, by the State Governments.

The imposition of Value Added Tax on tobacco and allied products in all forms will affect poor farmers, labourers, dealers and others involved in this field.

Hence, I urge upon the Government of India to issue suitable direction to all State Governments not to impose Value Added Tax on Tobacco and its products.

Date : 14-05-2007

Need to allocate funds to Tamil Nadu Agricultural University for establishing a National Level Research Institute exclusively for “Drumstick” (Moringa Tinctoria).

- **Matter Under Rule 377**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

The 'Drumstic', Botanically named "MORINGA OLEIFERA" a perennial vegetable crop widely cultivated in Erode, Karur, Dindigul, Namakkal, Coimbatore, Trichy, Theni and Madurai Districts, in Tamil Nadu. The area under cultivation of MORINGA in Tamil Nadu state is 6154 hectares with a production of 3.08 lakh tones with an average productivity of 50 tones per hectare. This crop mostly cultivated by marginal farmers and whole MORINGA is marketed through Oddanchatram vegetable market and transported to all the districts of Tamil Nadu and other states.

It is commercially exploited in preparation of certain food products like pickles, canned vegetable, dry pulp powder, dry fruit (as bits) and pulp paste etc. In addition, it has industrial value on extraction of vegetable oil called as been oil extracted from its seed. The Moringa seed has immense value in electronic industry. Recently, production of moringa seed oil as biofuel is also gaining momentum. The bark and roots of moringa tree has got medicinal value and hence it is also mentioned as Karpakaviruksha.

In order to find solutions to production problems and commercialization of moringa crop in various industries like food processing, vegetable oil extraction and biofuel production, a scientific approach through research trials on moringa needs special

attention. In this context establishment of a separate National level Research station for moringa will help to evolve new variety.

In my Palani constituency, Mulanur in Dharapuram Taluk is a Moringa belt.

Hence, I urge upon the Government of India to allocate necessary funds to Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Coimbatore to establish a National Level Research Institute for Moringa in Mulanur in my Palani Constituency and to develop this vegetable crop.

Date : 15-05-2007

Need to include Malayali Tribe of Erode district, Tamil Nadu and Dhobi community in Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Castes lists respectively under the provisions of the 'Constitution'.

- **Special Mention**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

In the Erode District, Sathyamangalam Taluk, Kuntri, Kuthiyalathoor and Bargur Panchayats, there is a caste namely 'Malayali'. Their population is nearly 7000. They are residing in hilly area. Their profession is collecting vegetables and other products grown in the mountains and selling them in nearby towns. They are living nearly 30 kms. away from the town. They are treated as untouchables. They are not considered as SC, ST or BC. They are not able to send their children to schools since they are not able to get community certificates. They are all Scheduled Tribes. Already, a proposal had been sent by the Government of Tamil Nadu and the same is pending with the Government of India, to include this 'Malyali' caste as 'Erode district Malayali' caste under Article 342 (2) as a Scheduled Tribe. I urge upon the Government to include Erode District Malayali caste as Scheduled Caste and help these poor downtrodden people.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN : Washerman, 'Dhobi' community is in the list of Scheduled Caste in Assam, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Utaranchal, Mizoram and Delhi. In other States it is considered as a Backward Community. The people of this 'Dhobi' community are very poor. They are dying for whitening our clothes. In villages and towns they are living in huts and outskirts.

They are called by different names in different States as 'Vannar', Agasa, Madivala, Ekali, Rajakula, Veluthadar, Rajaka, and Dhobi but throughout the country they are treated as 'Antyajas' or 'Outcasters'. Maybe under any name, throughout the country 'Dhobi', the washermen, must be included as Scheduled Caste under Article 341

Date : 15-05-2007

Discussion regarding Price Rise

- Short Duration Discussions (Rule 193)

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI) :

Hon. Chairman, I thank the Chair for giving me an opportunity to speak on price rise participating in this discussion under Rule 193. It is pointed out by my esteemed colleagues from the Opposition Benches that the Centre has failed to take effective measures to curb the price rise in the last three years. But I would like to highlight certain points that proves to the contrary. The main reason behind the price rise is not the Government's non-action on this front because the Government has been taking measure and certain effective measures have also yielded results to contain spiraling up of prices further. I would like to point out the factors that are leading to rise in prices of essential commodities and other goods and products. Price rise is directly dependent on agricultural production and goods manufactured out of agricultural produce and their availability for both manufacturing and consumption and also the quantity of total agricultural production. Their reach to the public linked to the distribution and marketing mechanism should also to be taken into consideration while we analyse the reason for price rise. There is a fall in agricultural production, especially in the production of rice particularly in Tamil Nadu. It is due to non-flow of required water for irrigation in river Cauvery in Tamil Nadu. The entire Thanjavur district was severely affected by drought conditions for three to four years consecutively. Similarly, in Kerala, level of rainfall had fallen drastically which resulted in reduced quantum of agricultural produce. In the North, the wheat production had been affected due to flood havoc in several States. In 1960-61, the wheat production was 11 metric tonnes. In the ten year period between 1991-2001, the wheat production had increased to 74.6 metric tonnes. In 2006-07, it had come down to 72.8 metric tonnes.

The wheat production was found to be less not only in India, but in almost all the wheat producing countries. The phenomenal reduction in wheat production was witnessed world over. In 2004-05, 628 metric tonnes of wheat production was witnessed. In 2005-06, it has come down to 587 metric tonnes. This had given rise to wholesale price increase. The wholesale price index that was 10.7 per cent from 22.01.2005 to 21.01.2006 has increased to 11.8 per cent by 21.01.2007. This had resulted rise in the price of wheat in smaller markets and retail shops too. In 2006 March, the cost of wheat per quintal was Rs.1100/-. In 2006 December, it was upto Rs.1750 per quintal. In 2007 April, it has come down to Rs.1500 per quintal. In 2006 December, the price of wheat per kilogram was Rs.17.50. In 2007 March, it has come down to Rs.15.50 per kilogram. This price reduction was possible only because of the right intervention measures taken by the Union Government, especially by our Finance Minister.

I would like to point out the production scenario pertaining to the pulses. It was pointed out by my colleague from the opposition Benches that the prices of pulses are also shooting up. In 2003-04, the pulses production was 14.9 metric tonnes, an all time high. It had nose-dived to 13.1 metric tonnes in 2004-05. In 2005-06, the production level had come to 13.4 metric tonnes. In 2006-07, the pulses production had increased to 14.5 metric tonnes due to various measures taken by the Union Government to enthuse and encourage the farmers by way of providing several incentives.

Pulses were imported from other countries. In 2004-05, 1.33 metric tonnes of pulses were imported. In 2005-06, 1.6 metric tonnes of pulses were imported. By January, 2007, 1.7 metric tonnes of pulses have been imported. I agree that the price of green gram (moong dal). In 2006 April, it was Rs.30.50 per kilo. In the month of March, 2007, price of moong dal had risen to Rs.34.50 per kg. As far as India is concerned, there is a wide gap between the production level and the consumption level. This is because pulses are grown in areas

where there are good rainfall. Pulses are dependent on rains. In the years during which there is a shortfall in rain, it is reflected in the reduced production of pulses for which there is very good demand always. Inadequate rainfalls have given rise to fluctuation in production of pulses which had resulted in price rise due to heavy demand and reduced availability. Increased production alone can pave way for price reduction in the pulses sector that form part of agricultural sector in the country. So there is an urgent need to educate and encourage farmers to go in for cultivating different strains of pulses researched and developed by our agricultural scientists.

At this juncture, I would like to point out that the rise in price of edible oil has not touched astronomical figures. The fluctuating rise in the price of edible oils are well under control. In 2002-03, the production of edible oil remained at a level of 148.4 metric tonnes. That was the scenario during Indian regime. After UPA came to power, we have taken various measures to provide incentives to farmers which had resulted in an increase in the production of edible oils to a level of 279.8 metric tonnes in the year 2005-06. In 2006-07, though the production level has come down 273.9 metric tonnes, it has not given rise to alarming price rise. The Government are well aware of the ground realities and are ensuring constant monitoring to take effective control over rise in prices. In our country, the consumption level of edible oil touches 10 metric tonnes. But, our domestic production touches a mere 6 metric tonnes. That is the reason why we have been strengthening public distribution system through which we have been distributing imported palm oil and soyabean oil. They are allowed in the open market also. In the year 2004-05, the import of edible oil was 47 lakh tonnes. In the year 2005-06, 42.88 lakh tonnes of edible oil was imported.

As far as sugar production is concerned, India is the second largest sugar producing country. In 2004-05, 130 lakh tonnes of sugar was produced. In January, 2006, the cost of sugar per kg. was Rs.20. In April, 2006, it came down to Rs.19.35 per kg.

In December, 2006, it came down to Rs.17.60 per kg. In March, 2007, the sugar prices have further come down to Rs.16 per kg. So, during a period of one year from 2006 to March, 2007, we find a fall in price to the tune of Rs.4 per kg. From Rs.20 in January, 2006, it has come down to Rs.16 in March 2007 because of the positive intervention of the Government and strict measures adopted by the Government in containing the prices as sugar is one among the essential commodities. This reflects the eagerness on the part of the Government and the valiance of its effective measures.

Onion has assumed an important place in our food habits and it is considered to be an essential commodities as our women use them in our houses almost daily. Its production level remains to be 6.2 metric tonnes continuously in the last two years. So, there is no noticeable price rise as far as onion is concerned. Potato and other vegetables are grown sufficiently without contributing to price rise because of the effective measures and positive interventions of the Government as this Government is well aware of the price rise situation while making constant endeavours to control rise in prices.

In order to have a vigil over price rise, no sooner than the UPA Government came to power, our Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, had written to the Chief Ministers of all the States to take stringent action against hoarders and black marketers.

He had also urged upon them to regulate marketing mechanism and distribution system. He had impressed upon them to strengthen public distribution system which is the hope of the poor and the down trodden and all those who live below the poverty line. Rice, wheat, pulses, Kerosene and other essential commodities are distributed through the PDS mechanism. Centre has asked the States to ensure the streamlined availability of these essential commodities to the needy poor.

When it was pointed out that this Government had increased the oil prices five times, it was not highlighted that this very same Government had also reduced the price of petrol by Rs.2 per litre. The Opposition Members were raising hue and cry but they coolly ignored the efforts taken by this Government. The price of diesel was reduced by Rs.1 per ltr. Through STC, 55 lakh tonnes of wheat was imported. 43 lakhs of tonnes of wheat was imported in April, 2007. Even traders in the private sector were permitted to import wheat so that it will have its cascading and soothing effect in the domestic market so that the price of wheat does not shoot up. In order to encourage the import of wheat in June, 2006, the import duty was reduced by 5 percent from 50 per cent. In September 2006, it became 'zero' duty.

In Feb., 2007, four lakh tonnes of wheat have been imported for sales in the open market. All these measures were taken only to contain the prices to ensure that wheat price do not shoot up a ban on export of wheat has been imposed on 9th of Feb., 2007. On 22nd of June last year, ban on the export of pulses was imposed. NAFED has imported 49300 tonnes of pulses to ensure that there is no artificial price rise in the domestic market.

Import duty on palm oil has been slashed down. Surcharge on edible oils like sunflower oil has been reduced by 15 per cent as announced in this year's Budget. Milk products are also attracting reduced duties. With all these measures, still efforts are on to contain prices. So, we are very much aware of our responsibilities and continued to remain waken up to the ground reality.

In controlling prices, State Governments are also having responsibility along with the Union Government. In Tamil Nadu, the Government headed by Dr. Kalaingar Karunanidhi has proved that rice can be sold through PDS at Rs.2 per kg. Crores of people are benefiting. When that can be done in Tamil Nadu, why other States are not following suits? RYOT bazaar, i.e., farmers' shanty styled as Uzhavar Sandhai has been set up in Tamil Nadu to benefit the

agriculturists and farmers to get remunerative price for their agricultural produce like vegetables and even grains.

The Government of Tamil Nadu has created infrastructure facilities for this. Farmers are getting free marketing centers and space to sell their produce without having to pay for them. They get free transport facilities to move their agriculture produce from their field to markets where they sell their produce directly to the consumers thereby avoiding middleman and unnecessary increase in prices. Through this measure, farmers are getting remunerative price while consumers get vegetables at cheaper rates. Fresh produce are available to the users and they are made available to them by the growers themselves directly. Dr. Kalaingar Karunanidhi has opened these Uzhavar Sandhai in all the taluk headquarters in Tamil Nadu. Farmers are encouraged to move their goods to these market centers the previous night itself using the services of public transport system free of cost. Farmers are encouraged to sell their produce installs provided to them free of cost and they are free from any kind of tax.

I would like to ask all the other State Governments in India as to why they are not able to follow the example that has been set by Tamil Nadu Government presently headed by the Chief Minister Dr. Kalaingar Karunanidhi. Instead of doing that why should they throw the blame on the Centre for rise in prices. Effective measure should be taken at the State level also. Dr. M.S. Swaminathan Committee has recommended that Uzhavar Sandhai Scheme should be introduced all over the country. This will pave way for easier availability of vegetables at cheaper rates directly from the farmers to the consumers. Only when farmers are provided with all necessary facilities like availability of funds for investment, inputs and irrigation facilities, we can help them to augment agricultural production which alone can be a viable measure to control the rise in prices.

In Tamil Nadu, about Rs.6700 crores of co-operative loans distributed to farmers has been waived. This has come as an incentive, an encouragement to farmers by way of easing their debt burden. Using

a drop of ink, a revolution has been brought up in Tamil Nadu. Why such effort is not being taken by various State Governments in the country? Why such measure are not being adopted to help control prices? Only when farmers are protected and helped, we can increase agricultural production without which we cannot sustain production and reduce price.

There is no point in politicising and making hue and cry pointing out to this State and that State like Uttrakhand, Punjab and Haryana, etc. I would like to point out that Union Government alone is not having the responsibility to control prices. It has got to be shed by all the State Governments in the country. As of now the rise in price trend has stabilised thanks to the efforts of the Union Government, especially of our Finance Minister Thiru P. Chitambaram whom I would like to congratulate now. Thanking the Chair for the opportunity provided to put forth my view points let me conclude.

Date : 16-05-2007

Sethu-Samudram Canal Project and reported controversy regarding its Alignment.

- **Calling Attention (Rule 197)**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

The Sethu Samudram Ship Canal Project envisages the creation of a navigable canal from the Gulf of Mannar to the Bay of Bengal through a stretch of Shallow Sea in the Palk Strait separating India and Sri Lanka by dredging.

The above Project was first proposed by a British, Mr. A.D. Taylor of the Indian Marines during 1860. At the instance of late leader, Shri K. Kamaraj, hon. late Jawaharlal Nehru's Cabinet cleared the Project for the first time in the year 1955. The Project was studied in 1955, 1983 and 1986. During NDA regime – 1998 to 2003 – various feasibility studies were carried out and the Project was approved, including alignment by the Ministers Shri Thirunavukarasar, Shri Arun Jaitly and other BJP led NDA Ministers. ... (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Nothing will go on record except the speech of Shri Kharventhan.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN: Consequent upon the request of Dr. Kalaingar Karunanidhi and due to the strenuous efforts taken by our hon. Minister, Shri T.R. Baalu, the Scheme was launched at Madurai by hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, hon. Shrimati Sonia Gandhi on 2nd July, 2005 at an estimated cost of Rs. 2,500 crore. I want to know from the hon. Minister how this Project is expected to boost our National Defence?

Secondly, whether at any point of time the alleged heritage factor, "Ram Sethu" issue was raised during the investigation conducted by

the BJP Ministers, Shri Arun Jaitly, Kumari Uma Bharti and by other Ministers during the BJP led NDA regime in the period 1998 to 2003?

Date : 20-08-2007

Need to build a monument at Virupakshi in honour of Shri Gopal Naicker, a Great Warrior and Freedom Fighter from Tamil Nadu.

- **Matter Under Rule -377**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

A Merchant British Company that came from London for trade gained political authority and started collection of taxes from the native rulers of South India from 1750. First native ruler who waged war against Britishers in Tamil Nadu was Pooli Thevar by refusing to pay taxes in the year 1755. So many leaders, viz., Muthuvaduganatha Thevar (1772), Smt. Velu Nachiar (1772), Muthuramalinga Sethupathy (1795), Veerapandiya Kattabomman (1799), Virupakshi Gopal Naicker (1800), Oomathurai (1801), and Maruthupandiar (1801) had fought against Britishers and sacrificed their lives for the independence of this country. After that only Vellore Revolution was held in 1806 and Sipoy Mutiny held in North in the year 1857. Here I want to bring forth certain facts about Virupakshi Gopal Naicker of my Constituency. Shri Gopal Naicker ruled Virupakshi Zameen during 1800.

Veerapandiya Kattabomman was arrested on 24.9.1799 and hanged to death on 17.10.1799. After his death, his brother Oomathurai reached Dindigul Valley and collected 4,000 youths and fought against the Britishers with the help of Virupakshi Gopal Naicker. Revolutionaries organized a meeting on 29.4.1800 at Palani Hills under the leadership of Gopal Naicker and planned to attack the Britishers' Coimbatore Fort on 3.6.1800. It was called the Palani Conspiracy. The revolutionaries reached Virupakshi from far off places like Maharashtra on 28.4.1800 itself to attend the above meeting.

Even though their attempt was foiled, this was the first war staged against the Britishers by Gopal Naicker and the native Indians. After that, the Revolutionaries went into hiding in the Palani forests and continuously fought against the Britishers.

After a long fight, Virupakshi Zameen was captured by Britishers on 16-10-1801 and Revolutionaries were arrested. Important leaders including Shri Gopal Naicker were hanged to death on 24-10-1801 and remaining 73 others were sent to exile on 11-2-1802.

The great freedom fighter, Dheeran Chinnamalai also joined the stream with Shri Gopal Naicker and lived in Palani Hills. Even now, the Old Fort and other monuments of Shri Gopal Naicker are available in Palani area, Dindigal District.

Hence, I request the Hon. Prime Minister to take steps to erect a monument to honour the great warrior Shri Gopal Naicker at Virupakshi in my Palani Parliamentary Constituency.

Date : 30.08.2007

**Need to release a Commemorative Postage Stamp
and First day Cover in the Honour of Shri P.
Kakkan, a Great Freedom Fighter and Social
Reformer from Tamil Nadu on his Birth Centenary.**

- **Matter Under Rule 377**

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SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Shri P. Kakkan was born on 18 June 1909 at Thumbaipatti Village, Melur Taluk, Madurai District. Late Shri P. Kakkan after completing his early education and teachers training, started working for the upliftment of downtrodden Scheduled Castes people. Under the direction and leadership of Mahatma Gandhiji and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a movement was launched in the year 1932 where under SCs were allowed to gain entry in the temples of Southern India. Shri P. Kakkan actively participated along with his mentor Shri Vaidhyanatha Iyer and Shri K. Kamaraj in this social upliftment movement.

On 8 July 1939, Shri P. Kakkan and other leaders entered into Madurai Meenakshi Amman Temple under the leadership of Shri Vaidhyanatha Iyer. It was the first in the history of Southern India during the regime of British that Scheduled Castes people had Darshan of Lord Meenakshi Sundareswarar in that temple. After that only, throughout the country, Scheduled Castes people were allowed to have Darshan in various Hindu temples. During Quit India Movement^ Shri Kakkan was arrested in Thanjavur and remanded to judicial custody and imprisoned for 1-1/2 years. In the prison, he was ill-treated by the Britishers and he sustained injuries all over his body.

In the year 1952, Shri Kakkan won the Parliamentary elections and became Member of Parliament from Madurai Central Constituency

and served for five years. In 1957 & 1962, Shri P. Kakkan was elected as MLA from Melur and Samayanallur Assembly Segments and occupied various positions as a Home Minister for 9 years in Tamil Nadu Government. He lived a simple life and followed strict austerity measures so much so that he did not have any property in his name. He lived in a rented house in Chennai until his death. He was an example of simplicity, honesty, selfless service who worked for the upliftment of the downtrodden. He died in harness on 28 December 1981. His birth Centenary falls on June 18, 2009. I request the Government to honour Shri P. Kakkan by releasing a commemorative postage stamp and First Day Cover on the Birth Centenary year.

Date : 05.09.2007

Need to protect the interests of the OBC employees of Cauvery Asset in Karaikal, Pondicherry.

Matter Under Rule 377

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

In Karaikal, Puducherry, Cauvery Asset was started during the year 1984 by the Union of India. It is functioning as a primary institution for the exploration of oil and natural gas. Nearly 500 employees belonging to Other Backward Classes are working in that Organization. For the welfare of the OBC employees and to monitor the implementation of 27% reservation, an Association was formed in the year 1994.

As per the directions of ONGC Management vide Order No. HQ/CA/8/(2)/95 dated 31.3.1995, subscription from the pay roll was deducted from the OBC employees of the above said Association from 1995 to 2004 (A/c Code No. 193129) and remitted to the Association.

After implementation of "Shramik" in the Southern Region, the deduction of subscription from the pay roll was stopped without prior intimation. Consequently, the Association is making repeated representations to the respected CMD, Director(HR) to activate the INFO-Type 0057 and Wages Type 9212 for deduction of subscription from the pay roll and also requesting issue of Orders providing 'periodical meetings' for this Association with the ONGC Management at various levels and granting facilities, viz., providing room for the functioning of the Association, etc.

The above Association requested the ONGC Chairman and Managing Director for issuing Orders providing periodical meetings and other benefits. But the representation is still pending. During the pendency, an Association of All India ONGC OBC and MBC Employees Welfare Association was formed by some labour leaders and for that all of the sudden approval was granted on 28th August 2007 and also directed to collect the subscription from the pay roll retrospectively from April 2005.

Hence, I urge upon the Government of India to cancel the Order issued on 28th August 2007 and pass favourable Orders to the ONGC OBC Employees Welfare Association and protect the interests of the OBC employees.

Date : 19.11.2007

Need to fix a higher Minimum Support Price for paddy.

Matter Under Rule 377

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Sir, paddy is one of the most important crop produced in the Southern States in the country particularly in Tamil Nadu and the majority of farmers are engaged in the production of the same. But the farmers are not getting necessary assistance and adequate support price for their produce. Due to this, the farmers in these States are driven to poverty and some of them even committed suicides.

Recently, the Union Government had fixed Minimum Support Price (MSP) for wheat, paddy, etc. The MSP for wheat has been substantially increased from Rs. 750/- to Rs. 1,000/- a quintal. However, the MSP is fixed at Rs. 645/- and Rs. 695/- a quintal for two varieties of paddy. The incentive given to wheat farmers has not extended to the paddy farmers. The MSP for paddy in the last four years was just 17% as compared to 35% in the case of wheat. Recently Government announced additionally 50 Rs. Per quintal even though that is not sufficient.

Over the years, the cost of cultivation of paddy had increased substantially. The substantial fall in the availability of agriculture labour in rural areas ultimately leading to increase in the labour cost. The wide variation between the market price of paddy and the MSP fixed by the Centre should be removed.

I shall, therefore, urge upon the Union Government either the MSP for paddy be fixed at a higher level or a special incentive price for paddy should be announced at the earliest.

Date : 22.11.2007

Discussion on the All India Institute of Medical Sciences and the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (Amendment) Bill - 2007

Government Bills

SHRI SK KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Madam, I thank the Chair for giving me this opportunity to support this landmark Amendment Bill.

All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi and the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGI), Chandigarh have been regulated under the All India Institute of Medical Sciences Act 1956, and Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research Chandigarh Act 1966.

Presently, the appointment, terms and conditions of service of the Directors of the above institutions are also monitored by the above Acts and Rules made there under. The present Bill has been placed in pursuance of the directions of the hon. Delhi High Court dated 29th March 2007 in LPA Nos. 2045, 2046 of the year 2006.

The present Director was selected and appointed as Director AIIMS at the age of 61 years for tenure of five years. This is an illegal appointment. This is in contradiction to all earlier appointments of AIIMS, Delhi and PGI, Chandigarh. This appointment is also in contradiction to the subsequent appointment of Director, PGI, Chandigarh in March 2004 who has also been appointed till he attains 62 years.

Delhi High Court held that the Director is an employee of the Institute but the provisions of regulation 30, which prescribe the age of superannuation for non-teaching employees as sixty years and for

teaching faculty sixty two years, will not apply for the post of Director . The court held that the appointment to the Director post is a "tenure appointment" and is incapable of being curtailed except for justifiable reason and with notice to the Director, and that too in accordance with law.

Hon. The High Court has also directed the Government of India and the AIIMS governing body to formulate a policy covering the various facts and conditions of service of its employees including the Director of the Institute in accordance with law. Hon. The High Court further highlighted the deficiencies in the existing rules and regulations to the tenure of the Director of AIIMS, New Delhi and PGI, Chandigarh. To remove the deficiencies and to comply with the directions of the hon. High Court, this Bill is presented by Hon'ble Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Anbumani Ramadoss.

This present Bill paves way to amend Section 11 of AIIMS Act 1956 and Section 11 of PGIMS Act 1966 by including Sub Section 1 A. According to sub-section 1A, the Director shall hold office for a term of 5 years from the date of appointment or until he attains the age of sixty-five years whichever is earlier.

In 2004, the total budget of the AIIMS was around Rs. 250 crore. However, the present hon. Minister for Health and Family Welfare had a vision to bring AIIMS to the level of John Hopkins and with that view, he got the Budget raised to 500 crore.

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Please conclude.

SHRI SK KHARVENTHAN : I am speaking on the Bill. You have allowed other Members.... (*Interruptions*) Please permit me to speak for one minute more.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Your time is over.

SHRI SK KHARVENTHAN : For the past few months, the non-plan expenditure has increased two-fold but the planned fund is not being used and about Rs. 200 crore is being retained.

About 104 MPs including Gandhian, Shrimati Nirmala Deshpande have submitted representation against the present Director with regard to caste based discrimination and harassment and an inquiry also was instituted against him.[R65]

The present Director has failed to conduct the Convocation and failed to award the degrees to the undergraduates. The students have started agitation and finally the hon. Minister has signed and issued the certificates.

The entire country, all the people are well aware of the anti-public activity of the present Director but the Government of India is not able to do anything for the removal of him. Since he is appointed for the period of five years *ie* up to his 66th year, he is not bothering about the welfare of the Institution and not abiding by the rules and regulations. The present Amendment Bill will solve this problem.

The UPA Government under the able administration of our hon. Prime Minister, our hon. Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Anbumani Ramadoss has planned to start six world-class AIIMS like Institutions in Jodhpur, Bhubaneswar, Rishikesh, Patna, Raipur and Bhopal before the end of 2010.

I am humbly appreciating the valuable services of our hon. Minister, Dr. Anbumani Ramadoss.

On considering all these aspects, the present Bill is a welcome step taken by our hon. Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Anbumani Ramadoss. I appreciate and congratulate the Minister and support this Bill.

Date : 22.11.2007

Need to protect the Cattles from 'Foot and Mouth disease' spreading in Erode district of Tamil Nadu.

Special Mention

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Madam, farmers of Tamil Nadu, particularly of my Erode District, depend upon milk and milk products for their livelihood. They have a large number of cows, buffaloes, goats and other cattle. More than 500 cattle had died within a month in Periyapuliyoor and Palayakottai villages in Erode District due to foot and mouth disease. The District Collector has sent four medical teams to the affected areas. However, it has not been possible to control the disease so far. Farmers there are badly affected as they lost their cattle due to the sudden outbreak of this killer disease. The disease is spreading now throughout Tamil Nadu.

Hence, I urge upon the Government of India to take urgent steps to control this killer disease and provide compensation to the affected farmers.

Date : 28.11.2007

Discussion regarding Indo-US Nuclear Agreement

Short Duration Discussion (Rule 193)

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI) :

I am thanking the chair for giving me this opportunity to support the Indo-Us Nuclear Deal.

Agreement of Co-operation between the Government of India and Government of the United States of America concerning peaceful uses of Nuclear energy and it is called as 123 agreement. It is for the period of 40 years. This agreement relates to the peaceful uses of Nuclear Energy by the two countries without having any linkage with non-peaceful act. Though the deal is for civil nuclear Co-operation our Government has taken all possible security situations into consideration. This agreement is a satisfactory agreement which will enable an international civilian nuclear Co-operation. Our concerns have been adequately addressed in the agreement. This agreement favours for India in 2 reasons. One it allows India to participate in Global nuclear commerce and another is that there is no bar on India's strategic Programmes.

We have to appreciate and congratulate our Honourable Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh Ji for negotiating 123 agreement that is indisputably to the advantage of India's Nuclear Programme and energy sector. For the past 2 years our Government underwent number of meetings with American counterpart and finalised this agreement. Now BJP and his allies are opposing this agreement as if America is an untouchable country. During the year 2001 then Prime Minister Honourable Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and President Bush is a joint statement and expressed the intention to Co-operate in areas of energy and space. Our Honourable Prime Minister and president

Bush issued Joint statement on 18-06-2005 and the deal was progressed after number of elaborate discussions.

The Two line statement by Vajpayee and Bush in 2001 had to be converted into a full-fledged technically, politically, and legally binding 123 agreement. In the final agreement India's right to test nuclear weapons, guarantee of lifetime fuel supply and India's right to reprocess the spent fuel have all been protected.

*India has been one of the pioneering Countries in applications of nuclear Technology for power production. Amongst the 30 countries in the world that are using nuclear power India is in the lowest 27th rank. India's economic growth is at the rate of 9% in GDP but were lacking in power production. Through this Historic agreement India's power problem and shortage of uranium are solved. We are in shortage 10,000/- M. Watt Power. Through this agreement and through nuclear energy we can produce 20,000/- M. Watt by the year 2020.

Throughout country our scientists are welcoming this agreement Japan, China and may other countries have entered into similar 123 agreement with US. On any way our military nuclear facilities will not be interfered or hindered since a non-hindrance clause is inserted in the agreement. This agreement is a practical solution to meet all our requirements. This agreement is an achievement of the UPA Government led by Dr. Manmohan Singh Ji.*

I am supporting and welcoming this agreement.

* The speech was laid on the Table.

Date : 30.11.2007

**Discussion on the motion for consideration of the
Inter-State River Water Regulatory Authority Bill,
2005.**

Private Members Bill

SHRI SK KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Thank you, Sir, for the opportunity given.

First of all, I am appreciating and congratulating our hon. Senior Member Shri Mohan Singh for introducing this Bill. Through this Bill he is suggesting to constitute an Inter-State Water Regulatory Authority by the Government of India to resolve the disputes between the State where the river originates and the States where it flows.

He has suggested in clause 5(1) of this Bill that the Authority shall consist of the Chairperson, who shall be a retired Chief Justice of Supreme Court and four other members who are retired and have held high positions in the Ministries of Water Resources and Energy of the Central Government. Then, he explains the functions of the Regulatory Authority. The first function is to calculate the water resources available in all the States and their requirement of water for the purposes of irrigation, drinking and generation of power. It is also to advise the Government with regard to water harvesting policy. These are the things he has suggested.

If you go from Kanyakumari to Kashmir, throughout the country all the States are having problem of water sharing. When our great late leader Shri K. Kamaraj became the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, on April, 14, 1954, he planned to construct various dams in the State of Tamil Nadu, particularly Bhavani Sagar Dam and Amaravathi Dam etc. for irrigation purposes. Now, all the States, where the river

originates and flows to other States, are fighting for sharing of water. So, the hon. Member has suggested through this Bill to solve this problem between the States.

I want to put forth before this August House that to solve the disputes between the States, inter-State River Water Disputes Act was enacted in the year 1956. It was further amended in the year 2002 to adjudicate the disputes in a time bound manner. A number of cases were referred to this Inter-State Water Dispute Tribunal and those cases are pending for a number of years. Huge money is already spent for solving the problem, but the problem is not yet solved. During the rainy season, we are able to see that there is more water flowing in River Ganga and River Brahmaputra, without using it for any purpose.

If you go to the Southern States like Tamil Nadu, we are not able to get water in a time bound manner for agricultural purposes. Even though we have Cauvery delta in Tamil Nadu, we have to beg to other States for taking the water; otherwise total agriculture in the State will collapse. That is the position. Now-a-days, we are having shortage of water. We are in need of water for having hydro-electric projects. Those States which are having more water, they can give it to other States which are not having sufficient water.

Under the provisions of the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, the Inter-State River Water Disputes Tribunal was constituted and a number of cases were referred to it from various States. In this regard, I want to mention certain cases. With regard to rivers Ravi and Beas, there is a dispute among Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan. Till 2006, for this case alone, they spent nearly Rs. 5.45 crore. There is Cauvery River water dispute among Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Pudduchery. Till 2006, nearly Rs. 10.43 crore were spent. With regard to Krishna River water dispute among Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, nearly Rs. 2.05 crore were spent. The entire expenses for the Tribunal are borne by the

participating States. Even after spending these huge sums, the problems are not yet solved.

There is a dispute among Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra with respect to Madei, Mandovi and Mahadayi Rivers. These are all long pending disputes. Andhra Pradesh and Orissa are fighting in the same manner regarding Bansadhara River water. Then, Tamil Nadu and Kerala are fighting with regard to water of Mullaiperiyar River. That is continuously going on. The Government of India is effectively and sincerely trying to solve the problem by way of negotiations. If the negotiations do not succeed, the problem is referred to the Tribunal. The matter is pending in the Tribunal also. Once the Tribunal does not solve it, it goes to the Supreme Court. In the Supreme Court also, it remains pending.

Unless the inter-State water disputes are solved throughout the country, there will not be a permanent solution of water required for irrigation and power generation purposes. For example, if the States come forward with a compromise, then the problem will be solved.

As regards Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed one year back with respect to the Ken-Betwa link. Similarly, Rajasthan is also preparing to sign an MoU with respect to Chambal, Kali Sindh, Parbati and Banas rivers for irrigation and drinking purposes. Therefore, our senior hon. Member, Shri Mohan Singh, suggested constituting the Inter-State River Water Regulatory Authority with the help of which all the rivers will be taken by the Government of India. Hence, based on this suggestion, the Government of India can direct the States -- where water source is available or from where water originates -- to provide water to the States where water is necessary or required. If this Bill is accepted by the Government, then the problem in this country will be solved. Hence, I am welcoming this Bill, and supporting this Bill.

Date : 01.12.2007

Discussion on the Sashastra Seema Bal Bill, 2007

Government Bills

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity. Sir, I rise to support the Sashastra Seema Bal Bill. I am also appreciative of our hon. Minister of Home Affairs for presenting this Bill. Actually, this Bill is framed for the constitution of Force and conditions of service of the members in the Force.

Sir, this Bill elaborately discusses about the appointment, tenure of service and also offences under Chapter III. The offences are discussed under Chapter III in an elaborate manner and certainly this proposal will streamline the force and will also raise the morality of our people serving in the force.

Sir, in this Bill, there were separate provisions under clauses 14 and 15 about redressing the grievances. Section 14(1) deals with the grievances of persons other than officers. The persons other than officers working in the service can get their grievances redressed by lodging the complaint against the senior officers. In most of the cases, we have seen the persons other than officers are being ill-treated by the immediate senior officers. This proposal will certainly protect them.

Sir, under clause 15, there is a separate provision for redressal of the grievances of the officers.

Sir, I would also like to mention that in the Army or in the Air Force, young people are serving in Bangladesh border or in Pakistan

border. They are not being given any leave for two years or three years and they are not able to meet their family members.

Sir, today is the International HIV/AIDS protection day. There is a recent report in which it is mentioned that some of the Army men are also affected by this disease and they are tested as positive. The reason for this is that they are not allowed to go to their homes and meet the family members for three years or so. There must be certain provisions for providing holidays at least 15 days, one month or once in a year. This is one of the important suggestions I would like to place before this august House.

Sir, the young men who are joining the Forces are not being provided adequate and proper salary. Nowadays, youngsters are getting very high salary in different fields. So, the Government has to come forward and provide good salaries and all other benefits to them. Then only the young people will come to serve in these Forces.

Sir, these are my few suggestions. I welcome the Bill.

Date : 01.12.2007

Need to protect the rights of women, young girls and children suffering from HIV.AIDS.

Special Mention

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Sir, the new data reveals that in our country. HIV/AIDS has affected nearly 2.47 million people which constitutes 0.36 per cent of our total population.

Sir, over the past two years, the number of women and girls infected with HIV has increased in every region of the world. In Delhi alone, in 2004 it was 945 and as on January 2006 it was 2592. Among the youth, 75 per cent of people living with HIV are females. Most of the women who suffer from HIV/AIDS are in the prime of their productive lives. Often 'positive' women who have been abandoned by their husbands and ostracized from their communities. Widows who have lost their husbands to HIV are very often refused their share in their husband's property. 'Positive' children are not permitted admission to study in schools.

Therefore, I urge upon the Government of India to take immediate steps for setting up Permanent Legal Aid Clinic with the participation of women lawyers throughout the HIV/AIDS infected areas with the objective of helping women, young girls and children living with HIV/AIDS to get medical treatment, to assist them to acquire property rights, to get maintenance, to assist getting employment, to get Government schemes like old age pension, monetary benefits for destitute women and widows and education for their children.

Thank you.

Date : 03.03.2008

Need to allocate adequate funds under various schemes meant for the welfare of OBCs.

Matter Under Rule 377

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

For the upliftment of Other Backward Classes in this country, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has implemented five schemes through States/UTs. They are (i) Pre-matric Scholarships, (ii) Post-matric Scholarships (iii) Hostel Facilities for OBC boys and girls (iv) Additional Credit Facility for backward classes through National Backward Finance Development Corporation for viable projects (v) Assistance to Voluntary Organisations for the welfare of OBCs through NGOs. For the past two years U 2006-07 and 2007-08 allocation of funds by our Government for the implementation of the above schemes is very less as compared with other demands.

Moreover, Funds allocation for Plan Schemes and Non-Plan Schemes are declining year after year since 2001. It shows that there is a decline in the allocation of funds for the welfare of OBCs. Total allocation for the welfare of various Communities viz., SC, ST, and Minorities, has risen from Rs. 1322 crore in 2001-02 to Rs. 1495 crore in 2005 06 but for the welfare of OBC, it has actually been reduced from Rs. 71.45 crore to Rs. 65.30 crore.

Hence, I humbly request the Hon'ble Finance Minister to allocate more funds for the welfare of OBC in the forthcoming General Budget.

Further, I request the Hon'ble Finance Minister to take steps to create a separate Foundation for the welfare of OBC students on the lines of SC and Minorities Foundation in the name of Late, Shri K. Kamaraj who dedicated his entire life for the upliftment of poor and downtrodden communities.

Date : 05.03.2008

**Need to protect the interests of Linguistic Scholars
by permitting them to offer prayers in temple by
singing songs in their Mother tongue throughout the
Country.**

Special Mention

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN :

Sir, from time immemorial, throughout the country, a large number of poets, scholars, and devotees have written lyrics and poems praising Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu in their respective languages. The four most revered Shaivate Saints – Appar, Sundarar, Sambandar and Manikkavasagar – and other Nayanmars have composed and written a number of poems praising Lord Shiva. Devaram and Thirvasagam are part of important Tamil literature. Recently, Tamil Oduvars tried to sing Devaram and Thiruvagasam at Sri Chidambaram Natarajar Temple, where the above hymns written on palm leaves were supposed to be found 1000 years back by famous ruler Raja Raja Chola. During that time, nine persons were arrested including eight advocates. At the same time, the Oduvars and devotees are not against the present system of singing songs in other languages.

I urge upon the Government to take steps to protect the Oduvars and devotees who sing Devaram and Thiruvagasam in Sri Chidambaram Natarajar Temple. I also urge that all those arrested persons should be released immediately.

Date : 14.03.2008

**Need to implement Shri E.M. Sudharsana
Nachiappan Committee's recommendation
providing for reservation to SCs, STs and OBCs in
Higher Judiciary.**

Special Mention

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Union Law Ministry has been issuing circulars from time to time calling upon the Chief Justices to consider the names of SC/ST/OBC candidates for selection to the posts of judges in Higher Judiciary. But till date, it has not been considered. The Parliamentary Committee on SC/ST headed by Shri Karia Munda had also submitted a Report during 2000 highlighting the total neglect of these claims and the violations of the orders issued by the Union Government.

Thereafter, the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution under the Chairmanship of Justice M.L. Venkatachelliah had again dealt with the issue. It had far-reaching recommendations. Now Shri Sudersana Nachiappan Committee has also considered the issue in depth and it has categorically recommended reservation in favour of SC, ST and OBCs in higher judiciary. For the past 60 years, there is no proper opportunity for the above categories in the higher judiciary.

Hence, I urge upon the Union Government to take immediate steps to implement Shri Sudersana Nachiappan Committee's recommendations and provide reservation for SCs, STs and OBCs in the higher judiciary.

Thank you.

Date : 23-04-2008

Discussion on the Demands for Grants under control of the Ministry of Rural Development (2008-2009)

-Budget (General)

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

I rise to support the Demands for Grants (2008-2009) for the Ministry of Rural Development.

After assumption of UPA Government under the leadership of Madam Soniaji, our Hon'ble Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singhji has implemented number of projects for the upliftment of rural and backward areas of this country. Bharat Nirman is one of the initiatives taken by the Union Government. It is having a plan for building rural infrastructure within a period of four years 2005-2009. It has six components *Viz.*, Irrigation, Roads, Water Supply, Housing, Rural Electrification and Rural Telecom Connectivity. Estimated cost for this scheme is Rs. 174,000 crore. Out of above six components, three are implemented by the Rural Development Ministry such as Rural Roads, Rural Water Supply and Rural Housing. The Ministry of Rural Development is also implementing wage employment programmes of national rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS), Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) and Swarn jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY). THROUGH BHARAT NIRMAN, it has been envisaged to connect 1.5 lakh km. Village roads habitations over 500 people in hilly areas and over 1,000 people in other areas. It is decided to equip 66,820 villages with telephone and 14,183 remote villages by digital satellite phones. For creating irrigation facilities, 1 cr. hectare of irrigation potential and restore 10 lakh, hectare potential by renovation and modernization schemes. Furthermore, it is decided to provide drinking water facilities for 55,067 uncovered habitations and 2.8 lakh partially covered

habitations and provide potable water to 2 lakh villages. It is decided to construct 60 lakh villages for the rural poor and provide electricity to 1.25 villages. Even though Government of India is allocating huge funds for rural development, number of State Governments are still not complying with norms

when it comes to the implementation. Some States have not complied with norms relating to release of funds for District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) administration.

Bihar has emerged as the largest non-complying State with 36 Districts not complying with the norms of SGSY, seven Districts are not complying with Indira Awaas Yojana Scheme norms and 10 districts were proposals for DRDA administration have not received.

Further I want to bring certain facts about the implementation of the NREG Scheme. The Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is facing with certain challenges in many States. The beneficiaries of jobs cards are not properly identified in many States. Moreover, if identified, there are favoritism in issuing cards to the beneficiaries. The job card holders are not being paid by full wages.

In many cases, they are being paid as low as Rs. 25 or Rs.30 per day and the rest of the amount is being swallowed by middlemen. Moreover, the work which has already undertaken are taken up again without any proper time limit. Hence, immediate steps should be taken for continuous supervision of the work undertaken under NREG Scheme.

Before implementing NREG Scheme, Government of India has allocated huge funds for implementation of various schemes through District Panchayats, Intermediate Panchayats and Gram Panchayats under Sampooran Gramin Rojgar Yojana (SGRY). Now, the Government has stopped the total allocation of funds under the SGRY scheme. Through this scheme, out of the total allocation, 22% of the money was earmarked for the individual benefits of the poor

downtrodden SC/ST individuals. This Scheme is also now scrapped. District Panchayats and Intermediate panchayats are not having any funds to implement any developmental schemes and they are also not answerable to the public and voters. Hence, I request the Government that the funds should be earmarked for SGRY Scheme or some other schemes to implement through District Panchayat and Intermediate Panchayats.

70% of the population are living in rural areas. Villages lack basic amenities of health services, housing, education, safe drinking water, rural connectivity and communication facilities. If Bharat Nirman Scheme is implemented properly, then only these problems will be solved.

In rural areas throughout the country, nearly 28,444 schools are not having drinking water facilities and 9.13 lakh schools are not having sanitation facilities.

Our late leader, Rajivji announced that the allocation of fund by Government of India reaches the masses only 10% and remaining are swallowed. Even now, the same situation continues. All the Government of India schemes to be implemented only through District Panchayats, Intermediate Panchayats and Gram Panchayats, then only the rural problems will be solved.

I want to put forth about the great achievement of our Tamil Nadu Government headed by Dr. Kalamazhar Karunanidhi in implementing various rural development schemes. Government of Tamil Nadu and its Local Development, Minister, Shri M.K. Stalin has implemented, "Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam". It is a novel scheme to identify the village panchayat for implementing various rural development schemes. In contrast, to the conventional practices of choosing one village panchayat annually in every Assembly Constituency for development are spreading resources thinly across all the village panchayats.

The Government of Tamil Nadu has developed the scheme during 2007 to identify financially weaker village panchayats and has given priority. The above scheme is covering one-fifth of the village panchayat in each block in each year in the ascending order of its per capita income. Funds from schemes of other departments such as the Highways, Public Works, Social Welfare and Education are allocated to the extent possible for solving the existing problems and it is planned to complete it within 2011. During 2006-2007, Government of Tamil Nadu has allocated Rs. 508 crore for the development of 2,540 village panchayat at the rate of Rs. 20 lakh per village panchayat. Total funds are utilized and schemes were completed within the financial year.

During current year, it is proposed to allocate Rs. 507 crore for 2,534 villages. I urge upon the Government to direct all the State Governments to implement this landmark scheme and I am once again appreciating our hon"ble Chief Minister, Dr. Kalaignar and also the Local Administration Minister, Shri M.K. Stalin for implementing this scheme.

With these words, I am supporting the Demands for Grants for Rural.

Date : 28.04.2008

Need to review the closure of vaccine manufacturing Pasteur Institute, Coonoor; BCG Vaccine Laboratory, Chennai ; and Central Research Institute, Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh.

Matter Under Rule 377

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

The Health Ministry, Government of India had ordered to shut down the three age-old vaccine manufacturing units at Pasteur Institute, Coonoor, BCG Vaccine Laboratory, Chennai and Central Research Institute, Kasauli (Himachal Pradesh), as they did not follow the good manufacturing practices. All the three units which produce primary vaccines like DPT, BCG and Polio have been regularly supplying vaccines for the routine immunization programmes for decades. The entire 8 crore doses of the BCG vaccine for TB are supplied by the BCG Vaccine Laboratory, Chennai while CRI, Kasauli and Pasteur Institute, Coonoor provides over half of the required DBT doses in India. Other vaccines like the Yellow Fever Vaccine are manufactured only by the Kasauli unit in Asia. They were directed not to supply vaccines from the stocks and, therefore, they had to stop the procurement of raw materials by Central Licensing Approving Authority (CLAA). Pasteur Institute sold anti-rabies vaccine only for Rs. 10. After closure, now it is sold in the open market for Rs. 370 to Rs. 1,200. Due to sudden stoppage of vaccine production by these three units nearly 38 crore Indian children will not get any vaccines.

Procuring the Vaccine from the private sector would put the entire Indian population and particularly the poor at a great risk and also the Vaccines are not affordable by them. Government of India

has proposed to start a Central Vaccine Park in Chengalpattu, Tamil Nadu *in lieu* of these three units.

Hence, I urge upon the Union Government that till the opening of the above Central Vaccine Park, the three Vaccine Units should be allowed to continue the manufacturing of vaccines otherwise there will be huge shortage of vaccines in the country and the lives of the entire citizens will be in danger.

Date : 19-12-2008

Discussion on the Resolutions, Legislation For The Overall Development Of Persons Belonging To Denotified Tribes And Nomadic Tribes

- **Private member Bill**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Mr. Chairman, Sir, first of all, I want to congratulate our hon. Member Shri Haribhau Rathod for bringing this Resolution for the welfare of the Denotified Tribes and Nomadic Tribes.

Sir, the Constitution of India provides protection to the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes of this country. The status of Denotified Tribes and Nomadic Tribes varies from State to State in our country. In some States they are considered as the Scheduled Castes, in some States they are considered as the Scheduled Tribes and in some other States they are considered as Other Backward Classes. As per our Constitution, articles 366 (24), 366 (25), 341 and 342 protect the rights of the Scheduled Tribes and also Other Backward Classes in this country.

The population of the Scheduled Castes in India is 84.33 million as per the Census of 2001 and they constitute 8.2 per cent of the total population of the country. Out of them, 91.7 per cent of the Scheduled Tribes are living in rural areas and 8.3 per cent are living in urban areas. In the State of Tamil Nadu, these Denotified Tribes and Nomadic Tribes are living in Nilgiri Hills and also in some parts of my constituency in Dindigul District. Their living conditions are very bad and the educational facilities available to them are pathetic. Even the commission constituted by the Government to study about their living conditions gave an elaborate report about the drop-out rate among the children of Denotified Tribes and Nomadic Tribes. The report said that the drop-out is a critical indicator reflecting lack of educational development and inability of this social group to

complete specific level of education. In the case of the Scheduled Tribes, the drop-out rate is still very high. The drop-out rate is 42.3 per cent from Class 1 to Class 5, it is 65.9 per cent from Class 1 to Class 8 and 79 per cent from Class 1 to 10, as per the survey of 2004-05.

So, I would request our Government to take steps to establish residential schools like Kasturba Gandhi Palika Vidyalaya and they should be provided with hostel facilities and also dresses and particularly vocational courses should be offered to them with job guarantee. Then only they will put all their children in schools. Unless we give them proper education, these tribes will not develop. We are seeing that practically in our area. The Government of Tamil Nadu has taken some steps for the welfare of these people. The present Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Dr. Kalaingar Karunanidhi has introduced a scheme to provide rice at Re. 1 per kilogram and it is very helpful to these poor people.

I would like to add one more thing here. Our Government has constituted a National Commission to study the developmental aspects of Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes. The Commission has given its report with recommendations to develop their living conditions. It has given a total of 76 recommendations for their upliftment and to amend the Constitution suitably for their welfare. Out of which a very important recommendation is establishment of a National Commission for De-Notified Tribes as a permanent constitutional body, like National Commission for Scheduled Castes and National Commission for Scheduled Tribes. Another important recommendation, out of these, 66th recommendation, is reservation of ten per cent Government jobs for De-Notified Tribes even if the ceiling of 50 per cent is exceeded. These recommendations must be implemented without further delay.

Further more, I would appreciate our Government that after 60 years of our Independence, we have established Indira Gandhi Tribal

Technical University. This is a great achievement. We also enacted a Tribal Bill.

The hon. Member, Shri Chandrappan, referred about the Dalit Christians. In my constituency alone, we are having a Christian population of not less than two lakhs and most of the people are living in tribal and hill areas. Some of them belong to the Scheduled Tribes. They must be given, at least, school education and jobs. Even though, they have converted to Christianity, their rights are to be protected. They should be allowed to continue their education as Scheduled Tribe candidates. That must be considered.

Further, I would like to bring to your notice, even though we have passed the Tribal Bill, that tribal people are living in hilly areas, the forest people are threatening them daily not to plough the land, not to cultivate the land. They are not being protected carefully. The Government has to take steps to protect the rights of those who are living in the hilly areas.

With these words, once again, I would like to congratulate and thank the hon. Member, Shri Haribhau Rathod, for bringing this Resolution for the welfare of the down-trodden people living in hilly areas

Date : 05.12.2007

Discussion on the motion for consideration of the maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Bill – 2007

Government Bills

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Sir, I would request you to permit me from this seat.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: All right. You may speak from here.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN : Sir, at the outset, I am thankful to the hon. Minister for bringing forward this landmark Bill.

According to the present law, the aged parents and senior citizens can approach both the civil courts by way of maintenance suit and also the criminal courts under Section 125 CrPC. According to this piece of legislation, the State Government is given power under Clause 7 to constitute a Tribunal. The Tribunal will be headed by a person not less than the rank of a Sub Divisional Officer. Against the Tribunal Order, the Appellate Tribunal will be constituted under Section 15.

Sir, even though this Bill is a very welcome measure, yet I have got some reservations. The senior citizens, old aged parents can approach the Tribunals by way of filing applications. Those who are not able to file applications, the Organisation can file applications. What is the meaning of the Organization? It is the NGOs. They can file the applications to go to the Tribunals.[r77]

In this Bill, I want to categorically mention about Clause 17. “Notwithstanding anything contained in any law, no party to a

proceeding before a Tribunal or Appellate Tribunal shall be represented by a legal practitioner.” Whenever in this country, we started constituting Tribunals like the Central Administrative Tribunal or the State Administrative Tribunal, the more the Tribunals are coming, the more the powers of the courts are shrinking. Even Section 30 of the Advocates Act has not yet been implemented to the lawyers to appear and all that. This is taking away the powers of the lawyers. This has to be modified. This is my humble request.

Another thing is that if the lawyer is not appearing, what will happen? Now, we are giving power to the NGOs. The NGOs are only going to file the application before the Tribunal. For conducting the cases and giving evidence, we are going to appoint a Maintenance Officer, a Government servant. Either the NGO or the Maintenance Officer will collect the money from the parties or from the deposits of the Tribunals. What is the accountability? What is the guarantee? If a lawyer commits a mistake, there is a State Bar Council and there is an All-India Bar Council to control the lawyer. How the NGOs and the Maintenance Officer will be controlled? Now, we are seeing everyday that a large number of complaints coming against the misuse of funds by the NGOs. So, giving power to the NGOs will not serve the purpose. It will not help the senior citizens. This is one aspect.

Another thing is, according to Clause 14, the power is given. Those petitions, which are pending in the Magistrate Court under Section 125C of Cr.P.C., the power is given to withdraw the criminal proceeding. What will happen to the suits that are pending in civil courts? If a senior citizen has filed a civil suit before the Munsif Court and he wants to withdraw it, How he will withdraw? It is not mentioned in this Bill.

Another thing is that the Divisional Officer is RDO. In the Southern Region, he is called as RDO. He is the Tribunal’s head. The District Collector is the Appellate Tribunal’s Chairman. Now, we are seeing that the Divisional Officer and the District Collector are having

a large number of works. They are working day and night. How can they spare the time to hear the senior people, call once in a week to the Collectorate and hear them? Under the Head of the Divisional Officer or under the Head of the Collector, a separate Welfare Officer should be appointed to hear them. That is another suggestion.

One other suggestion is that, now under the present Act, according to Sec. 125 Cr.P.C., Rs.500 is permissible. It is a lesser amount. I agree that this lesser amount and this has to be increased. According to this proposal, Clause 9, sub-clause (2), the Tribunal is empowered to grant up to Rs.10,000. How is it possible to pay monthly Rs.10,000/- by son or daughter. All are not rich people. If the Tribunal has awarded Rs.10,000 per mensem, it will come to Rs.1,20,000 per year. How is it possible? Then coming to the interest rate also, the interest is five per cent and not more than 18 per cent for non-payment of the money within the stipulated period. In the rural areas, how is it possible? This must be reduced. The amount of Rs.10,000 must also be reduced. The interest rate also must be reduced.

Another important proposal is establishment of Old Age Homes, that is, Clause 19, sub-clause (1). It is a welcome one. "No civil court shall have jurisdiction in respect of any matter to which any provision of this Act applies." In respect of any order passed by the Tribunal or Appellate Tribunal, the civil court is having no power to pass any stay order. It is another welcome step. These are all some welcoming steps.

Except removing the Clause of non-appearance of lawyer, remaining portions are welcomeable steps. Also, the quantum of amount and the quantum of interest to be paid must be reduced. By altering these things, this is a welcomeable step taken for protecting the interests of the senior citizens and also oldage people.

Another important one is Clause 5, sub-clause (6), "Where a maintenance order was made against more than one person, the

death of one of them does not affect the liability of others to continue paying maintenance.” Suppose a father is having three sons. The Tribunal passed an award against the three sons. All the three sons are enjoying the property of the father. If one son died, I want to know whether the two sons have to pay the entire money. The power must be given to add the legal heirs. The son of the deceased or daughter or those who are going to enjoy the property must pay the maintenance to the senior citizen or aged parents. That has to be clarified in this Bill.

With these words, I am welcoming and supporting the Bill. I am also congratulating the Minister for introducing this landmark Bill.

Date : 05.12.2007

Discussion on the motion for consideration of the Indira Gandhi National Tribal University Bill – 2007

Government Bills

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Mr. Chairman, I thank the hon. Minister of Human Resource Development for bringing this landmark amendment to set up this university named after our great leader late Indira Gandhi.

Some hon. Members suggested that the name of the university should be changed to that of a tribal leader. Actually, establishment of such a university was the dream of Indiraji. On 4th September, 1970, Madam Indira Gandhi stated in this very House:

“The advance in education has been considerable. We know it is not enough. There are still many difficulties which boys from the SCs and STs still find in getting jobs and even getting the right kind of education. I believe if any of them is below standard it is not because of an inherent weakness but because their talents and capabilities have not been given the opportunity to blossom. That opportunity we must do our best to provide.”

This was the dream of Indiraji. Therefore, naming this university after her is a perfectly correct step.

The national average literacy rate is 68.88 per cent. Rate of literacy among the tribal population is only one per cent. In Clause 8 there is a mention of the students. It says that students who are not studying under distance education programme have to stay in the hostels. Who is going to bear the cost of those students? Secondly, regional centres are going to be set up in different tribal areas throughout the country. Who would be funding these centres?

About 99 per cent of the seven per cent posts reserved for STs are lying vacant in different parts of the country. Is reservation for tribal students going to be given in this university or are the posts going to be filled from candidates belong to all castes? Not allowing students union elections in the university is undemocratic. Students' union elections must be allowed.

With these words, I welcome the Bill.

Date : 12-12-2008

Discussion on the motion to consider Science and Engineering Research Board Bill – 2008

- **Government Bills**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. First of all, I would like to congratulate and thank our Senior Advocate and efficient Minister, hon. Kapil Sibal for bringing this Bill for development of science and technology in this country.

Actually our Government, under the able leadership of Madam Sonia ji, our hon. Prime Minister announced on 15th May, 2008 about this proposal for the constitution of the Science and Engineering Research Board. After the announcement, within 197 days, within six months, our hon. Minister was able to present this Bill for constitution of this Board. Once again, I would like to appreciate it.

Clause 3 of the Bill deals with constitution of the Board. This Board is a high-level, empowered body with necessary and financial autonomy chaired by the Secretary, Department of Science and Technology. The proposed Board aims to enhance the level of basic research, and provide for necessary autonomy, flexibility, speeding up the research and delivery of funds for the researchers. When we are discussing about science and technology, the 110 crore population of this country are very grateful and thankful to our first Prime Minister hon. Jawaharlal Nehru *ji* who started the programme of science and technology. For your information, we got freedom in the year 1947. In 1948, he engaged Homi J. Bhabha to start the atomic research. Then, our great leader late Shri Rajiv Gandhi gave very much importance to science and technology. It is because of the hard work of Shri Rajiv Gandhi that the Indian youths are working throughout the world in the field of information technology. In the

same manner, whenever the Congress Government has been there at the Centre, this Government only concentrated in the development of science and technology. Development of science and technology only boosts the academia of this country and develops the youths to become number one in the world. This Bill that has been presented is also comparable to the other countries.

For your information, I would like to mention that Indian researchers accounted for only 2.16 per cent of world's publication of research in science and technology and China 2.62 per cent between 1993 and 2004. Between 1993 and 2004, 1.84 lakh research papers were written by Indians contributing to 1.91 per cent of world share taking the country to the 13th position. At this juncture, I would like to mention that research and development must be given more importance and sufficient money should be allocated for that purpose.

Sir, take for example Australia. In Australia there is 125 per cent deduction for eligible R&D expenses; plus 175 per cent deduction for eligible R&D expenditures exceeding a base amount of prior-year spending. Likewise, in China there is 150 per cent deduction for qualified R&D expenditure; in Japan there is a flat 8 to 12 per cent R&D tax credit; and additional 5 per cent of the R&D expenditure. In Korea there are tax holidays up to seven years are provided. In Singapore, there is 100 per cent deduction for expenses incurred on approved R&D project.

In the UK, there is 125 per cent deduction for qualifying R&D expenses incurred by large companies. In the US, there is hundred per cent deduction or amortization over a 60-month period. In Canada, there is 20 per cent flat R&D tax credit. In France, there is 50 per cent R&D credit. In Ireland there is 20 per cent R&D tax credit for qualifying expenditure. In our country, our statistics reveal that R&D spending in India Inc. has been on the rise over the last few years. R&D expenditure, which is currently estimated at less than 1 per cent of GDP, is likely to grow to 2 per cent of GDP by 2010. So we are

really taking steps for the development of R&D. The present Bill will certainly boost the science and technology amongst the youths of this county. I support and welcome this Bill.

I would only like to mention about clause 17 of the Bill alone where power of Central Government to supersede the Board is given.[r14]

I feel that this clause is not necessary. The constitution of the Board has been mentioned in clause 3 (2) & (3). Clause 3 (3) says: "The Board shall consist of the following persons: ...". All these persons mentioned here from (a) to (j) are the Central Government servants. So, there is no necessity to supersede the Board. So, this can be considered.

Sir, I welcome this Bill. I also appreciate and congratulate our senior hon. Minister, Shri Kapil Sibal for bringing this Bill.

Date : 15.12.2008

Need to revamp the legal education system and prevent the recurrence of violent incidents in law colleges.

Matter Under Rule 377

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Sir, Bar Council of India is the statutory body constituted under the provisions of Advocates Act 1961 to monitor the legal education and legal profession in the country. The Ministry of Law and Justice is providing funds to the Bar Council of India for the promotion of Legal Education. The recent incident, which has happened in Chennai at Dr. Ambedkar Government Law College on 12-11-2008, has thrown up many questions about the very existence of Law Colleges and Bar Councils in the country. In the presence of 100 policemen, caste-based violence erupted between two student groups in the college campus and led to brutal attack which left four students with fatal injuries. It is a pity to note that the age old institution is not having any academic atmosphere. There is no updated library. Four of the 20 permanent posts of teachers and 22 part-time teacher posts are lying vacant. As per the provisions of Bar Council of India, for minimum of five hours, the classes are to be conducted everyday but the classes are not conducted even for two hours a day. Moreover, there are no strict attendance rules for students. There are no facilities for sports and cultural activities for the participation of students. Hostels are also not maintained properly. The Bar Council of India is the Central Agency to approve the Law Colleges throughout the country. The Chennai Law College is not having approval after 2006-07. In Tamil Nadu and other States so many Government and Private Law Colleges are functioning like this.

Today, the situation is like that without attending single day, anybody can obtain a Law Degree from the few Law Colleges located in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Legal Education in this country is deteriorating day by day.

Hence, I urge upon the Ministry of Law and Justice to take immediate necessary action to revamp the legal education in this country and prevent the recurrence of such unfortunate incidents in the Law Colleges in future.

Sir, further I am requesting the Government of India to establish one National Law School in Tamil Nadu.

Date : 16-12-2008

Discussion on the motion consideration of the Unorganised Worker's Social Security Bill- 2008

- **Government Bills**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

I rise to support this landmark Bill presented by our Hon. Minister, Shri Oscar Fernandes in this august House.

As per National Sample Survey, during 1999-2000 total number of workers including organized and unorganized sector is 39.7 crore, out of which, 36.9 crore are in unorganized sector and it constitutes 93 per cent. During 2004-05, total workers were 45.9 crore and among them unorganized sector is 43.3 crore *i.e.* 94 per cent. Out of 43.3 crore workers, 26.9 crore are agricultural workers and 2.6 crore are construction workers and remaining workers are working in various fields. To extend the Social Security, Health Insurance and other welfare schemes for these 43.3 crore workers, our UPA Government under the able leadership of Shrimati Sonia Gandhiji, has introduced this Bill. As per the provisions of present Bill, it is an enabling Act where the State Governments and the Central Government can formulate schemes for the welfare of unorganized sector workers. We are not giving any direct benefit to the unorganized workers through this Bill. In the same manner, there is no demarcation of powers between States and the Centre. However, this is the first step taken by our Government after 60 years of Independence for the welfare of unorganized sector workers.

As per Clause 5(1), the Government of India can constitute a National Social Security Board and as per Clause 6(1) the States can constitute State Social Security Board for the welfare of unorganized sector workers. As per Clause 5, sub clause (iv), two Members of Parliament

from Lok Sabha and one from Rajya Sabha will be included in the National Security Board. In the same manner, Clause 6, sub-clause (2) sub-clause C(iii) paves way to include two members from Legislative Assembly will be included in the respective State Boards.

I want to bring to the kind notice of the august House that some of the States are having Upper Houses. Hence one among them will be included in this Board. For that, this Bill has to be amended suitably.

Both Boards are only recommendatory bodies and both are not having any powers to implement any welfare schemes to labourers. In the above Clause 5, sub-clause (vi), it is mentioned that five representatives from State Governments will be included in National Level Board. Who are all the five? Are they Government officials or Labour Union Leaders? That is not mentioned clearly and it has to be clarified. National level Trade Union representatives have to be accommodated in National Level Social Security Board.

Clause 3, sub-clause (1), deals with welfare schemes. It is a welcome step taken by UPA Government. Chapter V and Clause 10 deals with the Registration of Workers for Social Security Schemes. So far, 18 State Governments have constituted the State Welfare Boards. Our Tamil Nadu Government is the only State which has implemented a separate Act by our Chief Minister, Dr. Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi for the welfare of unorganized sector workers. As per provision 10 and its sub-clauses, it is nowhere mentioned about the fees for Registration of Membership. In Tamil Nadu, there is no membership. Kerala, a labour oriented State, the State Government is collecting Rs.20 per month from members. Throughout the country, it has to be instructed not to collect any money from any worker except contributions.

Another welcome provision is about Identity Card as per Clause 10(3). This Smart Card will be very useful for the workers. Another aspect is funding. For example, in the State of Tamil Nadu, the Government has constituted 14 Boards. Out of the 14 Boards, only

two Boards, namely the Construction Labour Welfare Board and Auto Rickshaw Drivers and other Vehicle Drivers Board have funds and the remaining 12 Boards are not having any fund. Hence, the Government of India has to allocate sufficient funds for the welfare of unorganised sector workers.

Before concluding my speech, I want to congratulate the Hon'ble Minister, Shri Oscar Fernandes for presenting this Bill with the intention of protecting the interests of labourers working in unorganized sector and they should be adequately insured without any financial strain on them.

With these words, I am concluding my speech

Date : 13-02-2009

Regarding need to bring peace and to protect the interests of Tamils in Srilanka

- **Submissions by Members**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Hon. Deputy Speaker Sir, Sri Lanka won its freedom in 1948. The then Sri Lankan Government announced Sinhalese language as the official language. They failed to accord Tamil the official language status. Their Tamil leader Selvanayakam led an agitation for their legitimate rights. The then Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru also supported. Therefore the official language Act 33 / 1956 came in to force and Tamil also become official language in 1956. Clash between Sinhalese and Tamils became a continuous struggle thereafter. On 23.7.1983, thirteen Sri Lankan Army men were killed in Colombo. Wrongly presuming that Tamils were behind it, Sinhalese let loose violence and riots broke out. 5000 Tamils lost their lives and property. More than 1.20 lakhs of Tamils fled to Tamil Nadu as refugees. They were sheltered by Government of India and Tamil Nadu. The then Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi interested positively to convene an all party meeting in Sri Lanka and she had sent senior G.Parthasarathy as her envoy to Sri Lanka. The talks for a negotiated settlement made during his five visits did not yield fruit. Tamils were attacked continuously. The then External Affairs Minister Shri Narasimha Rao had talks with Shri Jayawardane. There was an end to attack on Tamils but the attack took its ugly head again and again. Then Shri Rajiv Gandhi as our Prime Minister took steps to bring together all the rival militant factions. He arranged for a dialogue with the Sri Lankan authorities in Thimpu. The talks failed again. On 1987, Jayawardane's regime brought about an economic blockade on Tamils and attacked Tamils in Vadamarachi. Shri Rajiv Gandhi took steps to ensure food supplies to the Tamils. In 3.6.1987, from Rameswaram port

food materials were sent in 19 boats. Sri Lankan Government did not permit it. Thereafter, 24 tonnes of food and relief materials were air dropped through our 5 Air Force planes sent from Bangalore. On 29.7.1987, an accord was signed between Rajiv Gandhi and Jayawardane to find a lasting solution. According to that agreement, Tamils that form one third of the Sri Lankan population were to get a Tamil homeland. On 30.8.1987, all the Tamils languishing in prisons got general amnesty. As per agreement on 28.9.1987, an interim administration with 6 LTTE men was to be established. But, Shri Prabhakaran went back on his words and there was a set back to implement this accord. The efforts of Smt. Gandhi from 1983 and Shri Rajiv Gandhi from 1984 helped LTTE and other militants in a big way.

Prabhakaran was trained in Assam and several training camps were organized in Tamil Nadu. Both the Government of India and the Government of Tamil Nadu have extended all possible assistance to the Tamil militants to protect the Tamils of Sri Lanka. Indo-Sri Lankan accord of 29.7.1987 was found to be against the interests of the Sinhalese. Hence there was an attempt on Shri. Rajiv Gandhi by a Sri Lankan Navy man. Though the Government of India and the Government of Tamil Nadu extended all possible help to form a separate Tamil homeland under the leadership of Prabhakaran, the LTTE militants have resorted to fratricidal killing and finished off 56 Tamil leaders.

On 21.5.1991, Shri Rajiv Gandhi who did a lot to help the Tamils of Sri Lanka was brutally assassinated. LTTE acted as a mercenary to kill Shri Rajiv Gandhi. Hence, 33 countries including India banned LTTE as a terrorist organization. In the last 3 years, Sri Lankan Government has let loose military attacks on Tamils in the northern province of Sri Lanka. Even schools and worship places and hospitals are not spared in their bombarding shells. Innocent

Tamils have been living in bunkers and forests. Sri Lankan Army has violated international convention and attacks on civilian areas by

shelling. In Mullaitivu, at a place called Pudhukkudiyiruppu, a hospital having 150 beds that accommodated ailing inmates was attacked by the Sinhalese Army. Eleven doctors from among the 20 doctors there are no more there. Without medical aid, Tamils have been stranded. About a lakh and a quarter of innocent Tamils are used as human shield by the LTTE. When a Christian nun wanted to flee to the safer zone, she was shot dead.

At the instance of the Government of India, a 48-hour cessation of hostilities was announced by Sri Lanka. But civilians were prevented from moving to safer zones. About 1 ½ lakh Sri Lankan Tamils languish as refugees in India. The Tamils world over are anxious that normalcy returns there. US, Norway and India have urged the Sri Lankan Government to announce ceasefire. But the Sri Lankan Government has rejected it. The Government of Tamil Nadu led by Dr. Kalaignar Karunanidhi and the Union Government of the UPA led by Madame Sonia Gandhi have put pressure on Sri Lanka.

Hence, I urge upon the Government of India to ensure ceasefire there taking up with the United Nations. Both the Sri Lankan Tamils and the Indian Tamils are of the same stock. In 1832, when the British Government evolved the Railway Plan, it included the then Ceylon too. If the Government of India willed it, Sri Lanka can be prevailed upon within an hour. Therefore, I urge upon the Union Government to take viable effective steps at the earliest.

Indian National Congress is the only organization that has sacrificed more. We have lost Mahatma Gandhi due to communalism, lost Shrimati Indira Gandhi due to Sikh extremism and Shri Rajiv Gandhi due to militant LTTE. Congress is all out to end terrorism. LTTE must lay down arms and must come to the negotiating table.

Our Congress and Shrimati Sonia Gandhi are steadfast in protecting Tamils and their interest. Our mother figure Sonia has pardoned even the murder convict Nalini who was involved in her husband's death

just because of her daughter. On behalf of Congress and on behalf of our leader Sonia ji, I urge upon the

Government to ensure protection of Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Date : 19.02.2009

Combined Discussion on the Statutory Resolution regarding Disapproval of Central Universities Ordinance, 2009 and Central Universities Bill, 2009

Government Bills

SHRI SK KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Thank you, Sir, for giving me this opportunity to participate in this discussion. On behalf of my Congress Party and on behalf of my leader Shrimati Sonia Ji I am congratulating hon. Minister for the introduction of this landmark Bill.

Through this Bill, our Government aims to establish 12 national level universities in 12 States and to upgrade the existing universities to the national level. Out of 12 universities, one university is given to Tamil Nadu. On behalf of six crore Tamil people, I would like to thank the UPA Chairperson Madam Sonia Ji and Dr. Manmohan Singh for establishing one university in my State.

When this proposal was announced by our hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, he had said that each university should become a symbol of excellence, a model of efficiency and an example in terms of academic standards.

The National Knowledge Commission constituted by the Government of India recommended to establish not less 1,500 universities throughout the country and 50 national universities.[r69]

At present, throughout the country we are having 450 Universities. Andhra Pradesh takes the lead and has one University in each district. Tamil Nadu is also having more number of Universities.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now it is six o'clock. There are 15 more speakers on this Bill alone. One more Bill has to be passed today. Therefore, if the House agrees, we may extend the time of the House. I must take the sense of the House.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

SHRI RAJESH RANJAN aka Pappu Yadav (Madhepura) : Sir, the House went on till ten o'clock last night and a bill has to be taken. Therefore, I would request that it be referred for tomorrow or the bill which is in progress should be dropped and the next bill should be taken up tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The time of the House is extended up to seven o'clock. Shri Kharventhan.

SHRI SK KHARVENTHAN :

It further recommended that at least 10 national-level Universities be formed within a period of three years. In the 350 districts the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) was below the national average. Hence the National Knowledge Commission recommended to establish 1500 Universities to attain a Gross Enrollment Ratio of at least 15 per cent by 2015. The General Enrollment Ratio (GER) for higher education in India is approximately 11 per cent, compared to 36 per cent in the developed countries. It is 22 per cent in China. The Eleventh Plan proposes to raise India's GER to 15 per cent and 21 per cent by the end of Twelfth Plan. To meet these daunting targets, the Government needs to dramatically expand the number of new Universities. Considering this situation, our Government came forward to establish 12 national-level Universities in 12 States. For this, the UPA Government decided to spend Rs. 45,000 crore.

Sir, I would like to mention certain points about the Bill. Section 6 of the Bill explains about the powers of the proposed University. Section 6 (2) deals with admission of students. As per

this clause, students are selected and admitted in these Universities on all-India basis by conducting common entrance test. I am having some reservation to this proposal. There is no specific reservation for the respective State students. Here, I want to mention about the Goa University. Our Government decided to upgrade the Goa University. We are upgrading that also to a Central University. What will be the fate of the native students?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Time is very limited. Kindly conclude.

SHRI SK KHARVENTHAN :

Instead of upgrading the existing University, we have to establish a new University in Goa; otherwise we have to reserve certain percentage of seats for local students. I would request the hon. Minister to consider this for all the Universities and reserve certain seats for the native students.

As per Section 27 of the Bill, the statuses of the University are framed. As per Section 8 (1) of this Bill, the President of India is the Visitor. As per the statute, the Visitor is empowered to appoint the Chancellor as well as the Vice-Chancellor for the Central Universities. At this juncture, I want to bring to your kind notice the pathetic situation of one Central University in Tamil Nadu.

Sir, one Gandhi Gram Central University is located in Chinnalapatti, Dindigul District, Tamil Nadu. It is one of the oldest Universities in India. The Vice-President of India is the Chancellor of the University.

Dr. Karunakaran, Professor served as Vice-Chancellor of the University till his retirement in June, 2007. A three-member Search Committee was constituted to choose a new Vice-Chancellor. One-and-a-half years ago, this Committee has recommended a three-member Panel to appoint a suitable person as Vice-Chancellor to the Ministry of Human Resource Development. But, till date, the Vice-Chancellor has not been appointed.

In Universities, Convocation can be conducted only by the Vice-Chancellors under their presidentship.[RP70]

Since Vice-Chancellor was not there, Convocation was not held for the past two years. So, the degrees of Ph.D., M. Phil, PG, Graduate and other Diploma students numbering about 1,500 were not able to get their degrees for the past two years. It causes unnecessary hardship to them, and they are not able to pursue their higher studies and employment.

Keeping in view of the above facts, I would request the hon. Minister to appoint a Vice-Chancellor for the Gandhi Gram Rural University at the earliest.

Sir, I now come to Section 33 (1), which is dealing with conditions and service of employees. It says:

“Every employee of the University shall be appointed under a written contract, ”

Sir, I would like to know whether the University is going to appoint all the employees on contract basis, and whether the University is not going to give permanent status for these employees. This point has to be clarified by the hon. Minister. Otherwise, it will not protect the rights of the employees, who are going to serve in all these Universities. This is my humble submission.

With these words, I am once again congratulating and appreciating the hon. Minister for having brought forward this Bill, and I welcome this Bill.

Date : 19.02.2009

Discussion on the High Court and Supreme Court Judges Salaries and Conditions of Service (Amendment Bill - 2008)

-Government Bills

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Sir, I thank the Chair for giving me this opportunity to participate in the discussion on the High Court and Supreme Court Judges Salaries and Conditions of Service (Amendment) Bill, 2008.

As per our Constitution, Supreme Court of India is the highest Court in the land and it is the final authority for appeal in Indian Judiciary. Next to it is the various High Courts.

Now, the present Bill is aimed to increase salary and other benefits to High Court and Supreme Court Judges. Pursuant to the Sixth Pay Commission submitting its Report to the Government, the Chief Justice of India constituted a Committee of three judges to recommend appropriate and revised salaries, allowances and other service conditions for Chief Justice of India, Judges of Supreme Court and High Courts. Based on the Committee's recommendations, our Government revised the salaries of judges.

I want to mention certain facts about the salary of High Court and Supreme Court Judges. Now the salary of the Chief Justice of India is Rs. 33,000. Our Government has decided to increase the salary of the Chief Justice of India from Rs. 33,000 to Rs. 1 lakh. Sir, the pathetic situation in the country is that the Secretaries working under the Supreme Court Judges are drawing more salary than the judges. I feel it is not sufficient in keeping with the current inflation trend. It is lesser than the Governor's salary. Hence, Chief Justice's

salary should also be at par with Governor's salary. The Committee of Judges have proposed to raise the salary from Rs. 33,000 to Rs. 1.10 lakh but the Ministry of Finance restricted it to Rs. 1 lakh. It is not correct. It should be raised to Rs. 1.10 lakh and simultaneously for other judges.

It is pathetic to note that the Subordinate Judicial Officers are getting only Rs. 9000 per month. This is lesser than the salary drawn by the Class IV employees in the Union of India. Hence their salary has also to be increased to not less than Rs. 25,000 per month.

During 1956, the strength of judges in the Supreme Court was 11 including the Chief Justice. In 1960, it was raised to 14 and in 1977, it was 18 and later in 1986, it was increased to 26. Now our Government raised it to 30. In our judicial system throughout the country, actual strength of High Court Judges are 886 but we are having only 620 judges and 266 posts are lying vacant. Due to non-filling of vacancies, nearly 37.1 lakh cases are pending in 21 High Courts in the country. Now, we had increased the strength but so far we have failed to fill up the sanctioned strength.

Filling up of the vacancies in various High Courts is a continuous process as vacancies keep arising due to retirements., resignations, etc. In pursuant to the Supreme Court judgement dated 6.10.1993 in the case of “ **Supreme Court Advocates On Record and Anr Vs. Union of India** ” , the entire process of initiation of proposal for appointment of a judge in High Court is vested with the Chief Justice of the respective High Court.

Even though the Government of India is continuously reminding the various High Courts, they are not taking any concrete steps to fill up the vacancies. Throughout the country, we are having the entire list of judges' retirement dates. At least three months before their retirement, the respective High Court has to start the process of new appointments. It is alarming in the case of subordinate judiciary. The sanctioned strength in subordinate judiciary is 15,399, out of which

only 12,368 judges are working and 3,031 posts are vacant. The total number of cases pending in subordinate courts are 3.45 crore. The total number of cases pending in the Supreme Court alone is 41,708.

At this juncture, I want to emphasise the Union Government to persuade the Chief Justice of India to constitute a Supreme Court Bench for southern region of the country, at Chennai. It will help the poor litigants coming all the way from far southern States to New Delhi to file cases in the Supreme Court.

On considering all the above aspects, I am welcoming, supporting this Bill and concluding my speech with congratulating the hon. Minister.

Date : 24-02-2009

Need to permit the tapping of Coconut-Palm milk from Coconut and Palmyra trees for its use as a herbal drink in the Country.

- **Matter Under Rule 377**

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI):

Sir, Toddy-Palm Milk is one of the traditional, social and local herbal drink extracted from Coconut and Palmyra trees. It is famous in Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Nigeria, Central and Western Africa and other parts of Southeast Asia. There is a widespread belief that Coconut Herbal Drink is a rich source of the B-Complex Vitamins. The scientists of U.K., K.C. Browning & C.Y. Symons had submitted a report during 1916 that Toddy contains Vitamin B1. Shri P.C. Leong, a scientist in the University of Malaysia conducted a research about the nutritive value of coconut herbal drink and submitted a report. As per his report, the coconut drink is having yeast cells that are mostly alive, it follows that its nutritive value as a source of Thiamine (B1) and Riboflavin (B2) is found mainly in the fluid. The above herbal drink is having only 3.8% alcohol. Some of the States like Tamil Nadu had banned its tapping for the past 20 years, but are selling Indian Made Foreign Liquor. As the above herbal drink is of medicinal value and it cures TB, Asthma and other lung related diseases, if tapping of Toddy is allowed, it will certainly fetch very good income for coconut growers, farm labourers and other workers.

Hence, I urge upon the Hon'ble Agriculture Minister, Union of India to include Coconut- Palm Milk as a herbal drink and direct all the States to allow tapping it from Coconut and Palmyra trees.

Index

- A**
- Agrarian Sector, 24
 - Agricultural University, 16, 138, 139
 - Agricultural Workers, 104, 105
 - All India Institute of Medical Sciences, 158, 159, 160
 - Amaravathy, 116
 - Aquaculture, 38, 39
 - Arupadai Vedugal, 46
- B**
- BCG Vaccine, 178
- C**
- Capital Punishment, 98
 - Cattles, 161
 - Cauvery, 24, 26, 53, 116, 121, 142, 155, 165
 - Central University, 127, 203
 - Coastal Aquaculture, 38
 - Cooperative Societies, 21
- D**
- Demands for Grants, 20, 33, 72, 75, 83, 87, 174, 177
 - Dharapuram, 33, 35, 36, 64, 71, 80, 88, 96, 139
 - Dheeran Chinnamalai, 23, 37, 152
 - Dhobi community, 140
 - Digital Journalists Association of India, 12
 - Discussion on the Budget, 33, 118
- E**
- Dr. Ambedkar, 109, 153, 192
 - Education Loan Task Force, 12
 - Educational Institution, 67, 68, 109, 110, 111, 115
 - Electricity, 130, 132, 133, 134
 - Environment and Forests, 16, 29, 93
 - Excise Duty, 71
- F**
- farmers, 22, 24, 25, 26, 38, 63, 70, 72, 73, 74, 76, 83, 84, 104, 105, 114, 115, 116, 121, 129, 130, 136, 137, 138, 143, 144, 146, 147, 157, 161
 - First Day Cover, 53, 123, 124, 154
- G**
- Gopal Naicker, 151, 152
 - Government Bills, 38, 40, 48, 54, 93, 109, 132, 158, 167, 183, 187, 189, 194, 201, 205
- H**
- handicapped, 45
 - High Court, 43, 47, 51, 54, 55, 57, 69, 82, 85, 98, 125, 126, 158, 159, 205, 206
- I**
- Information Technology, 53, 120, 127
 - Insurance, 78, 85, 90, 92, 106, 194

J

Judges Salaries, 205
Judiciaries, 82
Judiciary, 100, 173, 205

K

Kakkan, 18, 153
Kalingaraya Gounder, 53
Kamaraj, 18, 109, 110, 149, 153, 164,
171
Kautilya, 98
Kendriya Vidyalaya, 32
Kisan Credit Card, 114

L

L.I.C. of India, 78
Lakshmana, 18
Legal Profession, 117

M

Malayali Tribe, 140
Manu Smriti, 98
Medical Practitioner, 41
Mid-Day Meal Programme, 113
Mid-day Meal Scheme, 31, 119
Minority, 67, 68, 113
Mother tongue, 172
Motion of Thanks, 30, 112
Mullai Periyar Dam, 75, 76

N

National Knowledge Commission,
201, 202
Next Gen Political Leaders, 9, 12

Noyyal River, 16

O

OBC employees, 155, 156

P

Panchayati Raj, 31, 113
Passport Office, 61, 102, 103
Pensioners, 21
Postal Stamp, 123
Poultry, 77
PreSense, 9, 11, 15
Price Rise, 142
Prime Point Foundation, 9, 10, 11, 15
Prime Point Srinivasan, 9, 11
Provident Fund, 96

R

Railways, 32, 33, 35, 36, 45, 62, 65,
87
Rama, 18
Ramayana, 18
Research, 138, 139, 158, 178, 189
Resolutions, 180
Rule 193, 142, 162
Rule 377, 23, 28, 45, 46, 47, 53, 61,
77, 80, 82, 85, 96, 102, 117, 123,
127, 136, 138, 153, 155, 157, 170,
178, 192, 208
Rural Development, 174, 175

S

Sabarimala, 28
Safai Karamcharis, 90
Sansad Ratna Award, 9, 11, 12

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, 31, 113

Sarva Shiksha Abiyan, 119

Senior citizens, 21

Service Tax, 117

Sethu-Samudram, 149

Social Reformer, 153

Social Security, 194, 195

Special Mention, 70, 76, 78, 125,

140, 161, 169, 172, 173

Statutory Resolution, 67, 201

Supreme Court, 22, 38, 39, 43, 47,

51, 69, 74, 76, 78, 82, 94, 98, 100,

101, 120, 164, 166, 205, 206, 207

T

Tamil Language, 125

Tapioca, 21

Tax Tribunal, 54, 56

Thillaiyadi Valliammai, 123

Thirukkural, 24

Tourism, 46

U

Union Budget, 71

University, 16, 67, 127, 138, 139,

182, 187, 201, 202, 203, 204, 208

V

Value Added Tax, 136, 137

W

Western Ghat, 28, 76