

110TH CONGRESS
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H. CON. RES. 139

Expressing the sense of the Congress that the United States should address the ongoing problem of untouchability in India.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 1, 2007

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona (for himself, Ms. KILPATRICK, Ms. NORTON, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. AKIN, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. SALI, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. RUSH, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, and Ms. CLARKE) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress that the United States should address the ongoing problem of untouchability in India.

Whereas the United States and the Republic of India have entered an unprecedented partnership;

Whereas, the July 18, 2005, Joint Statement between President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh stated that, “[a]s leaders of nations committed to the values of human freedom, democracy, and rule of law, the new relationship between India and the United States will promote stability, democracy, prosperity, and peace throughout the world [. . . and] it will enhance our ability

to work together to provide global leadership in areas of mutual concern and interest”;

Whereas caste is the socioeconomic stratification of people in South Asia based on a combination of work and descent;

Whereas the “Untouchables”, now known as the Dalits, and the forest tribes of India, called Tribals, who together number approximately 250,000,000 to 300,000,000 people, are the primary victims of caste discrimination in India;

Whereas discrimination against the Dalits and Tribals has existed for more than 2,000 years and has included educational discrimination, economic disenfranchisement, physical abuse, discrimination in medical care, religious discrimination, and violence targeting Dalit and Tribal women;

Whereas Article 17 of the Constitution of India outlaws untouchability;

Whereas despite numerous laws enacted for the protection and betterment of the Dalits and Tribals, they are still considered outcasts in Indian society and are treated as such;

Whereas the Dalits and Tribals are denied equal treatment under the law;

Whereas the National Commission on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has declared that many of the reported cases of atrocities against Dalits and Tribals end in acquittals;

Whereas Dalit women are often raped with impunity;

Whereas despite the fact that many Dalits do not report crimes for fear of reprisals by the dominant castes, offi-

cial police statistics averaged over the past five years show that 13 Dalits are murdered every week, five Dalits' homes or possessions are burnt every week, six Dalits are kidnapped or abducted every week, three Dalit women are raped every day, 11 Dalits are beaten every day, and a crime is committed against a Dalit every 18 minutes;

Whereas the majority of temple prostitutes as well as the majority of women trafficked in India are Dalit women;

Whereas low-caste unborn females are targeted for abortions;

Whereas most Dalits and Tribals are among those poorest of the poor living on less than \$1 per day;

Whereas most of India's bonded laborers are Dalits;

Whereas half of India's Dalit children are undernourished, 21 percent are "severely underweight", and 12 percent die before their 5th birthday;

Whereas Dalits and other low-caste people are denied equal access to education;

Whereas the Dalits and Tribals maintain higher illiteracy rates than non-Dalit populations;

Whereas the public education afforded Dalits and Tribals, when available at all, is usually inadequate and conducted in regional languages or Hindi, thereby disqualifying them from access to India's public universities which teach in English, and from most government positions and most advanced jobs in India, which require English;

Whereas the HIV/AIDS epidemic in India is massive and underreported;

Whereas the United Nations estimates that approximately 50,000,000 Indians will die from HIV/AIDS in the next 40 years; and

Whereas Dalits and Tribals are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS and are the largest high-risk population in India: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
 2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of Congress that, as the
 3 leaders of the United States and the Republic of India
 4 have expressed commitment to the values of human free-
 5 dom, democracy, and the rule of law, it is in the interests
 6 of the United States to address the problem of the treat-
 7 ment of the Dalits and Tribals in India in order to better
 8 meet mutual economic and security goals by—

9 (1) raising the issues of caste discrimination, vi-
 10 olence against women, and untouchability through
 11 diplomatic channels both directly with the Govern-
 12 ment of India and within the context of international
 13 bodies;

14 (2) inviting Dalit organizations to participate in
 15 the planning and implementation of development
 16 projects from the United States Agency for Inter-
 17 national Development and other United States devel-
 18 opment organizations;

19 (3) prioritizing funding for projects that posi-
 20 tively impact Dalit and Tribal communities, espe-
 21 cially Dalit women;

22 (4) ensuring that cooperative research programs
 23 targeting rural health care, the HIV/AIDS epidemic,

1 and rural technology contain proper focus on the
2 Dalits and Tribals;

3 (5) ensuring that anyone receiving funding in
4 India from the United States Government—

5 (A) is aware that it is United States Gov-
6 ernment policy that caste discrimination is un-
7 acceptable, and that the United States is com-
8 mitted to eliminating it; and

9 (B) treat all people equally, with regard to
10 caste discrimination;

11 (6) ensuring that—

12 (A) qualified Dalits are in no way discour-
13 aged from working with the United States Gov-
14 ernment or organizations receiving funding in
15 India from the United States Government, and
16 that transparent and fair recruitment, selection,
17 and career development processes are imple-
18 mented, with clear objective criteria; and

19 (B) procedures exist to detect and remedy
20 any caste discrimination in employment condi-
21 tions, wages, benefits or job security for anyone
22 working with the United States Government or
23 organizations receiving funding in India from
24 the United States Government;

1 (7) encouraging United States citizens working
2 in India to avoid discrimination toward the Dalits in
3 all business interactions; and

4 (8) discussing the issue of caste in the context
5 of congressional delegations.

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