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BUREAU OF PARLIAMENTARY STUDIES AND TRAINING

PARLIAMENTARY FORUM ON WATER CONSERVATION
AND MANAGEMENT

LECTURE SERIES FOR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

PROCEEDINGS

Subject : Screening of the film titled "Water"
Directed by : Ms. Urmi Chakraborty
Date : Thursday, 09 March 2006
Time : 0900 hours
Venue : BPST Committee Hall 'Main',
First Floor, Parliament Library Building,
New Delhi

(al/0900/ak-har)

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA : Hon. Speaker, Sir; Hon. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, hon. Ministers; hon. Members of Parliament, Secretary-General, Lok Sabha; our guest Ms. Urmi Chakraborty; and friends :

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all today at the screening of 'Water', a documentary film by the noted film-maker and national award winner, Ms. Urmi Chakraborty, to be followed by a discussion on the subject.

There are several critical issues facing our society, which require our constant attention and monitoring. As Members of Parliament, you are duty bound to raise and discuss these issues both inside and outside the House, suggest remedial measures and regularly oversee formulation and implementation of the appropriate programmes and policies.

As you all are aware, the hon. Speaker has constituted a Parliamentary Forum on Water Conservation and Management, so that these issues can be discussed in a structured manner with a result-oriented approach and that the conservation of water does not remain a mere slogan, but becomes a reality.

With a view to familiarising the Members with the issues involved and generating more meaningful debates on various subjects, the Bureau of Parliamentary Studies and Training (BPST) has started a lecture series. The credit for this initiative goes to the able guidance of our hon. Speaker, Shri Somnath Chatterjee, who very aptly perceived that the role of the Parliamentarians is not restricted to just participating in the deliberations of the Parliament and its Committees, but goes much beyond that. In between their busy schedules, the Members of Parliament need to be helped in understanding the intricacies of the key issues facing the country. The current lecture series is a humble effort from the BPST in this direction. I am sure, that the hon. Members will stand to benefit substantially from these informative lectures.

As you are aware, today's discussion is the sixth in the lecture series being organized by the BPST. Here I am glad to mention that we at the BPST do feel greatly encouraged by the response of the hon. Members to these lectures. The enthusiasm with which the Members of Parliament have participated in all these lectures goes to prove that the series has been found to be very useful to them.

Hon. Members, it is indeed a matter of great concern for all of us that water, a natural resource, which was available in plenty till very recently has now become scarce due to our lack of planning with regard to its judicious use. It is highly imperative that concerted efforts involving both the Government and the society are made to replenish and properly use the dwindling resource before it is too late.

Ms. Urmi Chakraborty is a zealous filmmaker with a burning desire to highlight social issues in her films. Her films stir the people's conscience and compel them to sit up and think. Her film 'Water' is also a thought-provoking and well-researched documentary on the looming water crisis facing the world. I am sure that viewing of the film 'Water' and exchange of views during the discussions will help the hon. Members more particularly those serving on the Parliamentary Forum on Water in having a greater understanding of this critical problem.

With these words, I extend a very warm welcome to our hon. Speaker. Sir, I can say with a great deal of satisfaction that by constituting the Parliamentary Forum on Water Conservation and Management, you have provided to the Members of Parliament a platform from where they can highlight the issues concerning conservation and management of water. I am extremely grateful to you for kindly consenting to inaugurate today's programme. Sir, your presence here today is a great source of inspiration to all of us.

I would also like to welcome our hon. Deputy-Speaker, who has found the time to be here. As you all know, these days you make their life rather difficult in the House. But I think that the things here work much more smoothly, and there is

no conflict of any kind. I would also like to welcome all the hon. Ministers, and hon. Members of Parliament present here. I keenly look forward to their active participation in the discussion.

I also extend a warm welcome to the Secretary-General, Lok Sabha, Shri P.D.T. Achary to this Programme. His leadership and guidance has always been very helpful to the Bureau.

Last but not the least, I heartily welcome Ms. Urmi Chakraborty, and would like to express my deep appreciation of the ceaseless efforts put in by you in highlighting burning social issues through your documentaries.

With these words, I welcome you all once again, and request the hon. Speaker to get the proceedings going.

Thank you.

(ends)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Deputy-Speaker, Shrimati Alva, Mr. Secretary-General, Ms. Urmi Chakraborty, and friends :

Shrimati Alva has already informed you about the objective behind the formation of this Forum as well as arranging such lecture series. I am very happy to have this response from the hon. Members of Parliament. It is really organised for the purpose of dissemination of very important information, which we always do not have. At the same time, we can also interact with the distinguished persons on important issues. This allows us to make ourselves aware of the seriousness of the problem. I hope and expect that these discussions will find a reflection inside the House when important issues are to be discussed, and today, nothing is more important in this country than the problem of water. We have already seen some presentations, and we have also had the benefit of some of the lectures by very competent people. The same has benefited us all. With this objective, today's programme has been organised.

Shrimati Alva has also told all of you about Ms. Chakraborty. She is one of the most accomplished persons in this area, and confined just as a filmmaker. Her interest is in serving the people through different media, and this is a very important media that she has selected. She has also shown her expertise in this area. She has won many national recognition and awards. Therefore, I am looking forward to today's presentation.

I wish more and more participation and greater reflection of it inside both the Houses of Parliament. I am saying this because people are looking towards us for some solution to their problems. This is not just an individual problem or a problem confined to a particular area, but this is a national problem. Therefore, let us advent this serious situation, and try to find out solutions as representatives of the people.

I am thankful to experts like Ms. Chakraborty who agree to spend some time here in trying to share their experiences with us. I am thankful to her, and I am sure we shall have a very instructive exposition here. Thank you very much.

MS. URMI CHAKRABORTY : Sir, it is a great privilege for me to be here to show the film 'Water' in front of all of you. In fact, I started to make an effort in , the year 1998-1999, when I saw a note on the internet saying that there would be a huge,water crisis by the year 2025. It motivated me to go for research work, and it took me three years to go through the research work. Ultimately, I made this film with the help of the Film Division. They had financed my film.

My main intention to make this film was to make the people conscious of the fact that if we are not careful enough to preserve, conserve as well as manage the fresh water properly, then we are going to face a real crisis in the near future. In case of West Bengal and Bihar, we have got enough fresh water stocks, but if we are not really careful enough to preserve our water resources, then the situation would get really ugly. In other States, I have seen that the situation is very frightening and acute. Therefore, my main idea is to make the people conscious about this issue.

I should not say much about this issue because my film will speak for itself. I have tried to cover all the places from Rajasthan to West Bengal to find out the situation prevalent there. I am sure that you all will like the film.

I once again thank everybody, especially, Shri Somnath Chatterjee, Shrimati Margaret Alva, and everybody present here for giving me an opportunity to show my film in front of all of you. Thank you very much.

(ends)

{A documentary film titled "Water" was screened}

(bl/1010/sh-jr)

DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA: While complimenting Mrs. Urmi Chakraborty for such a nice presentation, I would like to submit one thing that she should stick to only one message, that is, water conservation and management. On the inter-linkin'g of rivers, there are controversial statements. In the given situation, we require major dams and also water harvesting measures through *naliah*. The statement regarding the dam on the River *Narmada* is also controversial. I am from Gujarat. I know everything about the Narmada Sarovar Dam. I would like to submit here that as per the World Bank report, the best rehabilitation package was given to the oustees. Therefore, such type of a message will give a wrong impression to the society. I think, you should erase that particular portion from the film. After the Supreme Court's judgment, when height was increased, it had gone through various stages before it was finally cleared. I know personally how much benefit was given to the displaced persons. Therefore, that particular portion should be removed from the film.

Again, coming back to the portion dealing with inter-linking of rivers, a controversial statement was made by that scientist, whoever he may be. Yes, we should definitely take into account the issues relating to flora and fauna and ecological balance. However, inter-linking is one of the solutions because we have to diver river waters to those areas where there is no rain at all or where there is no chance for water harvesting, etc., for example, in places like Saurashtra, Kutch and in some places in Rajasthan.

One more point that I would like to make is that this film will not be complete without mentioning the success story of water conservation in Gujarat region. Rajendrasinh ji, the pioneer of this movement, when he visited my constituency, told me that what took him 16 years, we were able to do it in two years. It is one of the biggest water conservation programmes that has been undertaken in Saurashtra and Kutch region. It was possible because of the awareness that has been created and by the participation of the people themselves.

That is why, it has become the biggest success story. I think, you should include such types of stories in your film. I can give you thousands of such clippings where people themselves have been doing such water harvesting in those areas.

These are the three points that I wanted to submit.

MRS. URMI CHAKRABORTY: As a filmmaker, whatever information I have got, I wanted to share it with my audience. I did not want to talk to the people in a 'political' manner. As a viewer or research worker, whatever information I have got, I have showed it through this film. I wanted to touch upon all the areas of the water crisis, and that was the idea. But the span was so short that I could not clarify- everything. In my speech also, I said that I wanted to make the people conscious about the whole scenario. Otherwise, I have to make so many documentaries. It is just my intention to make the people conscious about the whole scenario on water crisis.

MR. SPEAKER: I do not think that she has been trying to sort of project or pursue one issue. I think, she has tried to highlight the problems that are there. You are right that there are different viewpoints. I believe, she has no particular message to reinforce. There are many achievements, no doubt. Dr. Kathiria had done a remarkable job in his constituency. We have also been benefited by that. However, there are different viewpoints and different issues. I think, we should take it from that point of view. Out of these problems that have been mentioned, some have been mentioned and some may not have been solved. There is no question of any particular message to be reinforced. Let us try to get more and more ideas on what the problems are so that we can try to find out a solution to 'them. Dr. Kathiria has made a wonderful presentation and he has solved many of these problems in his area.

In regard to water harvesting, in the Speaker's house in Delhi, there is now proper harvesting, and also, I believe, that has already been introduced in the Parliament House. You may have seen it in the Parliament House Annexe. I was very encouraged when the engineers said that he had no idea before that so much

of water could be accumulated. Now, it is being done. More and more people are becoming conscious, which is the intention of this lecture series.

DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA: Even in Gujarat, we have passed a legislation whereby any residence or commercial building covering an area of more than 200 metres will have to have a water harvesting system.

MRS. URMI CHAKRABORTY: Another point is that in Gujarat, Rajasthan or upper side of India, we are having these problems. However, in places like Bihar and West Bengal, we have enough stock of water, but they are not careful enough. I want to make them conscious that they should not waste this water. If they are not careful now, they are also going to face such troubles in future. Therefore, my intention is to make them careful.

SHRI P.D.T. ACHARY: Respected Speaker, Sir, respected Deputy-Speaker, Sir, Mrs. Urmi Chakraborty, hon. Members of Parliament, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Sir, we are extremely grateful to you that you have been able to come here and grace the occasion. You have always provided us guidance in these matters and it is your idea or initiative that we have been able to set up this Forum. This Forum is functioning effectively. We have been able to organise, in fact, important lectures on subjects like water conservation and also on other subjects. I take this opportunity to express our grateful thanks to you for this.

I also take this opportunity to thank the hon. Deputy-Speaker who has been able to come and here and grace the occasion.

I express my thanks to Mrs. Urmi Chakraborty who has produced a wonderful film. In fact, I feel that we must see more and more such films for the sense of crisis to sink into our conscience because the problem is so acute and so serious. Her film is a good presentation of the various dimensions of this crisis.

I would thank the hon. Members of Parliament who have been able to come here and who have taken a lot of interest in this subject. I hope, they will continue to take interest in these matters. Thank you.

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