

## Some Reactions to Muslim Women's (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Bill

"If the Government does not give Muslim women protection and takes away our rights under Section 125 Cr. PC it will be wresting from us the right to be Indian citizens." —Mehmoona Khanooma, Lecturer, Amravati University.

"Isn't it (maintenance from my husband) my right? He destroyed my life (divorced me when I was 2 months pregnant) for no fault of mine. Shouldn't he be made to pay even a little?" —Zeenat Bi, divorcee, Bombay.

"We have not been consulted about the changes. ...This is a question which affects our survival..... Now we are told that even the doors of the court are going to close for us." —Mrs. Shakila Bano, Deserted Women, Delhi

"By stipulating that Wakf Board should take care of divorced Muslim woman if her relatives could not support her, the Bill would throw open the doors to bigamy and to treat marriage as pastime" —R. Vashivakat Ali, Chairman Islamic Shariat Board

"The Prime Minister who is leading the country into the 21st century, is, in fact leading a section of the people to a primitive tribal past. The casualty is the secular character of the Indian Constitution." —N. P. Mohammad, noted Malayalam Writer.

"The proposed Bill is not an inherited law. It will be a new statute which will violate human rights and fundamental rights.....(it) is not just a challenge to Muslim women but to all women and fair minded people in the country." —Daniel Latifi, Advocate Supreme Court

"The hopes by Muslim women of getting a better deal after the Shah Bano case verdict, are being given a deep burial.....(it) has thrown to winds the secular ideals.....It is perpetrating gross injustice on Muslim women under a religious garb...

(It) is a blow to progressive sections in all communities. It is nothing but a hoax, adding insult to injury."

—M. K. Krishnan, Secretary, National Council, CPI

"Shah Bano's case has opened the eyes of Muslim divorcees and more and more such women want to move court for maintenance."

—Muslim Satya Shodhak Mandal and Talak Mukti Morcha.

"This is a blow to the progressive sections in all communities and is bound to strengthen the obscurantism of the Muslim Community, alienate it from the rest of the country and make it easier for Hindu Communalists to attack it."

—CPI (M) Polit buro

"The Bill violates the spirit of the constitution. Instead of moving in the direction of a U.C. C., the Government is going to divide a community."

—A. K. Patel, M. P. Bhartiya Janata Party.

"But, perhaps, the measure now being contemplated was not altogether surprising after the election results in Kishanganj, Bijnaur and Assam, when Congress (I) nominees lost to candidates who appeared to favour sectarian or fundamentalist philosophies.

It will promote sectarianism in a society that is already riddled with far too many divisions."

—Statesman Editorial.

"The responsibility of implementing the complicated procedures of this Bill will fall on our judges and it's quite likely that Muslim women may land up spending their whole lives, trying to get justice.

—Jansalta Editorial

"The Wakf Board will appeal for allocation of funds from the centre. The poor financial condition of the Board leaves it with no alternative."

—M. P. Wakf Board.