The Committee on Public Finance to identify the number of school girls in need of sanitary facilities and prepare a system to provide them with the facilities they need

Date : 25-11-2023

- **In the month of September alone, 22 girls under the age of 16 became pregnant**

The Committee on Public Finance held a special discussion in Parliament on 21.11.2023 with the representatives of civil organizations including the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) in order to get ideas and suggestions on the budget proposals presented for the year 2024 and the policies to be prepared in this country. The Committee was Chaired by Member of Parliament Hon. (Dr.) Harsha de Silva.

Representatives of civil organizations pointed out about a number of areas that have received less attention in the budget proposals, but should be given full attention. They briefed the Committee on the problems that may arise due to the lack of attention paid to women's welfare. The difficulties faced by school girls were discussed at length during the Committee.

Accordingly, the attention of the Committee on Public Finance was focused on identifying the number of school girls in need of other facilities including sanitary facilities and preparing a system to provide them with the necessary facilities.

It was disclosed in the Committee that 168 cases of child sexual abuse have been reported in the month of September this year and 22 girls under the age of 16 have become pregnant. According to the said, the representatives of Civil Society organizations were of the view that creating a systematic program to provide sex education for children is a very urgent need.

It was also discussed at length in the Committee that new policies should be formulated to implement special programs for the care of the elderly in this country. The Chair pointed out the need to amend the old Act for the development of mental health and make it suitable for the present.

Members of Parliament Hon. M. A. Sumanthiran, Hon. Rauff Hakeem, Hon. Chandima Weerakkody, Hon. Mayantha Dissanayake, Hon. Harshana Rajakaruna, and Hon. Weerasumana Weerasinghe with the permission of the Chair were present at the Committee meeting held.

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