

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Wednesday, March 10, 1999/Phalguna 19, 1920 (Saka)

(The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock)

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

WELCOME TO THE CZECH PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, at the outset, I have to make an announcement.

On my own behalf and on behalf of the hon. Members of the House, I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency, Mr. Vaclav Klaus, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of Czech Republic and Mrs. Livia Klausova and other Members of the Czech Parliamentary Delegation who are on a visit to India as our honoured guests.

The other hon. Members of the Delegation are:

1. Mr. Ivan Langer, M.P.
2. Mr. Ladislav Skopal, M.P.
3. Mr. Vlastimil Tlustý, M.P.
4. Mr. Miloslav Ransdorf, M.P.
5. Mr. Pavel Severa, M.P.
6. Mr. Jiri Vlach, M.P.

They arrived Delhi on Monday, 8th March, 1999. They are now seated in the Special Box. We wish them a happy and fruitful stay in our country. Through them we convey our greetings and best wishes to the President, the Parliament and the friendly people of the Czech Republic.

[Translation]

SHRI VIRENDRA SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have already given a notice....(Interruptions). From the Congress at the time of President's rule...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: It would be taken up after Question Hour.

[Translation]

SHRI VIRENDRA SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have already given a notice...(Interruptions). That should be decided because that is a very serious matter. ... (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will go on record. It would be taken up after Question Hour.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[Translation]

Promotion of Sanskrit

*201. SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI:
SHRI PANKAJ CHOUDHARY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of India and Nepal have jointly agreed to promote the use of Sanskrit and popularise Ayurvedic system of medicine;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any agreement has been signed in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (d) India and Nepal have a long tradition of cooperation to promote the use of Sanskrit and popularise Ayurvedic system of medicine. Such cooperation has, with Government's support and facilitation, strengthened over the years. However, there is no formal agreement between India and Nepal specifically to promote the use of Sanskrit and popularise Ayurvedic system of medicine.

But it is something that we have got in legacy and it has been progressing.

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI: Sanskrit is a rich language of the word and other languages have been derived from it. Sanskrit has given birth to our culture and Sanskars. Sanskrit language is a precious heritage of India. From time immemorial Sanskrit has made significant contribution in the unity of the nation. I would like to ask the Minister the details of the programmes chalked out to promote the use of Sanskrit and popularise Ayurvedic system of medicine jointly by India and Nepal?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Mr. Speaker Sir, in India various universities have been organising a number of seminars from years together and was also held in 1997. Lal Bahadur Shastri Sanskrit Academy, New Delhi and Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth Tirupati are affiliated with various institutions in Nepal. In 1997 a Vishva Sanskrit Sammelan was organised in Bangalore. At the same time Indian Council of Cultural Relations provides facilities to Sanskrit scholars for visiting Nepal and the Government have provided assistance to Mahendra Sanskrit University so that these mutual relations are strengthened all the more.

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI: Mr. Speaker Sir, Honourable Minister has given the details about some of the programmes. My second supplementary is as to what is the amount of grants being given for promotion of Sanskrit at present? Whether there is any scheme to organise any workshops to provide intensive training to the teachers to make Sanskrit learning more effective; and if so the details thereof.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the question raised by the honourable member as to what amount is provided for promotion of Sanskrit is not related to Ministry of External Affairs. It pertains to another Ministry. As regards the information in respect of I.C.C.R. and progress regarding promotion of Sanskrit is concerned the same will be provided to the honourable member.

SHRI PANKAJ CHOUDHRY: Honourable Speaker, Sir, recently our honourable Prime Minister took a significant step to augment relations with our friendly countries, neighbouring countries. At the same time steps have also been taken to improve relations with Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Nepal has been our friendly country. I would like to ask the honourable Minister whether there is any proposal to extend cooperation in other areas between India and Nepal in addition to promote the use of Sanskrit and to popularise the Ayurvedic system of

medicine between the two countries, if so, what are the details thereof?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Regarding promotion of Sanskrit, I have already replied. So far as Ayurvedic system of medicine is concerned, it is a system of medicine that is also prevalent in Nepal. To popularise it more, we provide them assistance and cooperation. Colombo Plan also includes promotion of Ayurvedic system. Besides last time when honourable Prime Minister visited Colombo in connection with attending a SAARC Conference there was an agreement to popularise the conventional systems in regard to other areas including Ayurveda. It is in a form of joint declaration. As far as my information goes, there is an Indian Company DABAR, they have set up a company in Nepal by the name of Dabar Nepal Limited. Thus we are assisting them in all possible manners.

[English]

DR. BIKRAM SARKAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Sanskrit is the mother of a large number of Indian languages. This is the Year of Sanskrit. The old manuscripts in Sanskrit are the store house of information, research work in medicine, technology, Ayurveda and its application, etc. We have found that many of the foreign universities are giving support to the study and spread of Sanskrit language. My question is, would the Government financially and physically endeavour to support a number of other non-Governmental organisations or Vidyapeeths for the spread of Sanskrit language. Would the Government also arrange for the small organisations to preserve and maintain Sanskrit manuscripts, available in many parts of India, in a systematic way?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: The first part was: will the Government provide encouragement to non-governmental organisations and Vidyapeeths that have not been mentioned by me; yes, we will, at any time in any manner we can.

The second part was: what the Government will do about preservation of manuscripts in Sanskrit; that is really a question best addressed to different Ministries. But I can assure the hon. Member that the Government will do everything possible.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are a country of great tradition and heritage. To know about the great tradition of our country, one should read Sanskrit literature. It is in Sanskrit. Unfortunately, I feel Sanskrit does not get the importance which it should get in our

country. We are neglecting it. It is such a language where—SATYAMEV JAYATE, AHIMSA PARMO DHARMA YATO. LOKA SAMASTA SUKHINO BHAWANTU— the whole world is one universe, all such universal outlook, universal perception and vision is imbibed. We are ignoring this language and it is one of the reasons why intolerance—religious or otherwise—is growing in our country. Therefore, I would like to know from this Government what it is going to do for the spread of this language and for the study of this language in our schools so that they could have a glimpse of the great traditions of our country and also feel proud of our country and its heritage.

In addition, this question is about spreading Sanskrit in Nepal. Why limit it to Nepal because there are other countries like Germany who have appreciated the greatness of Sanskrit. I am told that in Germany, Sanskrit literature is taught in many universities. Likewise, what your Ministry proposing to do for the spread of this language in other countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): It should also be done for the Members of Parliament.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: I would very much welcome it. If Sanskrit class is started for the Members, I will be a regular student there.

SHRI RAM NAIK: I will join you there.

SHRI BHUBANESWAR KALITA: It is already there if some Members are interested.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are four parts of the question. The hon. Member has spoken of his perception that Sanskrit does not receive the kind of importance that he believes it ought to as the cultural fountain of our land. I share that perception.

Secondly, he has said that on this account intolerance and other difficulties have risen in the country. I do not necessarily concur with that. But that is a different aspect of the whole thing.

Thirdly, what we will do about promoting Sanskrit, its study and propagation within the country; it is a question best addressed to the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

Fourthly, on what we would do about promoting Sanskrit not simply in Nepal but in other countries; through ICCR and other agencies, the Ministry will examine the proposal.

[Translation]

SHRI CHINMAYANAND SWAMI: Sanskrit is taught and studied in many countries of South Asia viz. Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Thailand, Singapore and intensive study on Sanskrit is conducted even in Germany etc. A lot of research work has been done on the Vedas there and a number of manuscripts are kept safe. I would like to know from the Minister whether on the occasion of this Sanskrit Year the Government would make any effort of their own for the study of Sanskrit, preservation and publication of its manuscripts, and in-depth Research on Sanskrit in these countries.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: One honourable member has already asked this question. I have tried to reply to it. It is certainly a good suggestion. Wherever Sanskrit is studied whether we have done anything through Ministry of External Affairs, I.C.C.R. or other agencies, we would specifically look into this aspect and provide more encouragement.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I am not going to allow any more supplementaries to this Question because the next Question is more important. Now, Question No. 202.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Khanduri.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: It is not on Question No. 202.

MAJOR GENERAL BHUVAN CHANDRA KHANDURI, AVSM (Garhwal): Sir, I entirely agree with what Prof. Kurien has said and I also add that Sanskrit is the most scientific language in the world today from even the computer point of view.

[Translation]

Sir, my question pertains to Nepal. The Minister has said that no formal agreement has been signed with Nepal so far. As the honourable member has expressed his feelings that we should try to promote Sanskrit and popularise Ayurvedic system of medicine in other countries also. Nepal and India are the only countries in the world who have got these things in legacy. Do you think that now we should go for a formal agreement on these subjects with Nepal. If so, then what are you doing in this regard and if not, the reasons for not realising its necessity?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Mr. Speaker Sir, our Ministry is of this view that formal agreements are needed only when there is any decline in the existing relations. India and Nepal have got age old cultural relations. These relations are more stronger than what can be under a formal agreement. And our Ministry is of this view that a formal agreement will help to strengthen the relations to some extent ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MAJOR GENERAL BHUVAN CHANDRA KHANDURI, AVSM: But that will also give an indication to other countries in the world. It is not only a matter between India and Nepal. Why I am asking this is because it will give a message and official sanction will certainly have some sanctity.

[Translation]

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: As regards other countries are concerned I have already said that the Ministry of External Affairs would certainly consider what can be done in this regard in other countries...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, it is unfortunate on the part of the Government to promote only Sanskrit. It is a dead

language...*(Interruptions)* ... When you are promoting Sanskrit, why cannot you promote other languages also? It is unfortunate on the part of the Government to do so...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Now, we may take up Question No. 202. Shri Shanti Lal Chaplot.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, since Question Nos. 202 and 203 relate to irrigation projects and irrigation capacity, it would be more helpful if you take both the Questions simultaneously.

MR. SPEAKER: All right. Question Nos. 202 and 203 may be taken up together.

[Translation]

Pending Irrigation Projects

*202. SHRI SHANTILAL CHAPLOT:
SHRI BALIRAM KASHYAP:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of irrigation projects of several States awaiting clearance of the Union Government as on date, State-wise;

(b) the details of proposals submitted by each State Government and the number out of them accorded sanction during each of the last three years, State-wise;

(c) the details of funds earmarked and released to each State to undertake these projects; and

(d) the details of major and medium irrigation projects which are under construction in the country at present and the number out of them likely to be completed during the Ninth Five Year Plan period. Project-wise and State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.