

16.46 hrs.

CONSTITUTION (AMENDMENT) BILL @

(Amendment of Preamble, etc.)

SHRI CHITTA BASU : I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Constitution of India.

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Constitution of India."

The motion was adopted.

SHRI CHITTA BASU : I introduce the Bill.

16.47 hrs.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION BILL

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Before I call upon Dr. Subbarami Reddy to move the Motion for consideration of his Bill, we have to fix the time for this Bill. Shall we fix the time as two hours? I think two hours would be good enough for this Bill.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS : Yes.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY (Visakhapatnam) : I beg to move :

"That the Bill to provide for free and compulsory education upto higher secondary level to all children throughout the country and for matters connected therewith, be taken into consideration."

Education lits the light of knowlege in a human being and removes the ignorance. That is why providing education to the citizens is that first priority of every country in the world. Article 41 of our Constitution contains a directive to the Government as to the provision of education and Article 45 stipulates free and compulsory education for children upto the age of fourteen years. But both articles which form part of the Directive Principles of State Policy have remained a dead letter so far although Article 45 of the Constitution had envisaged a period of ten years for introducing universal education system upto the age of fourteen years throughout the country. Similarly a number of State Legislatures have also enacted laws on the subject but these laws too have not been implemented despite their importance.

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16.48 hrs.

(Shri P.M. Sayeed in the Chair)

The present scenario in the country in this regard is that, largely children from economically weaker sections of the society and rural areas remain deprived of the education because either their parents are not in a position to provide the necessary educational materials such as books, note books, uniforms, shoes, writing material, etc. to their children because the prices of these materials are out of their reach or many of the parents are to some extent dependent upon the physical labour of their children or on the income arising therefrom, even though it may be very meagre. Unless the Union and State Governments come forward to help the economically weak parents in providing educational materials free of cost to their children, the goal of universal education will remain a distant dream for the country.

At the same time, if universal education is to be made a reality the number of senior secondary and other schools in the country have to be multiplied manifold. This can be done with the active cooperation between the Central Government, the State Governments and Private bodies.

Hence, it has been proposed that appropriate Government should establish sufficient number of higher secondary level schools and provide necessary educational materials free of cost to children of poor parents to make universal education a reality in the country.

Sir, I would like to emphasise the importance of introducing this Bill.

I would like to emphasise the importance of introducing these two Bills. Firstly, we must remember our country's great ancient cultural heritage. Perhaps we all know that, and even if you see the history thousands of years back, we had the civilisation first and other countries have learnt from us. Not only that, we even keep listening that the great Vedas have given us science and technology. These countries, all over the world, have now built up science and technology by borrowing and learning from our country. But today, unfortunately, in our country, in our country there are hardly a few people who are educated and majority are not educated. I feel very sad about this.

If we really want to enjoy the democratic fruits in this country, if we want to attain the democratic values in this country, if we want to see the democratic rights in this country then education is very important.

[Translation]

When knowledge springs from science and education, the man is blessed with the good things of life.

[English]

That is the philosophy of our Bhagwat Gita. But today, unfortunately, everybody, perhaps after independence of so many years, gives least importance to education.

A stage has come now when unitedly the entire nation must realise that we must implement the provision as per Article 45 and 45(i) of the Constitution, which stipulates free and compulsory education upto 14 years.

One more thing we must remember. There is a saying in Telugu and Sanskrit :

"Bindro amarjeevulu vaari amulya jeevitalanu tyagmuchi, vaari vechchani raktanni leharatmata poad pudmaaluku parani Kaavindhi airrkota leurujuapai triverua patakanni aigarvesi, arvaikotla bharaikulukn swatautsam prasadvichina mahviya deshah"

[English]

What I mean to say is that so many great patriots have sacrificed their lives and performed *abhisheka* to the lotus feet of *Bharat Mata* with their hot blood and got Independence by hoisting the flag at Red Fort. This is such a great nation and today, we find that poverty, illiteracy and desperation and also *nirasha* and *nispruha* all over the country. What we have to see is, what are the reasons for this?

16.53 hrs.

(Mr. Deputy-Speaker in the Chair)

On the one side we expect the Government to give free and compulsory education but on the other side we must see inspiration and stimulation in the minds and hearts of the people spontaneously. But we do not find that because of poverty and ignorance.

[Translation]

They are not getting education because of ignorance and poverty.

[Translation]

Therefore, for the removal of *agyan* and poverty, Government should play an active role.

Not only that there are people who can afford to educate people in the villages but they also do not bother. It is negligence and ignorance on their part. Therefore, what we are finding now on the one side is that there is no education and on the other side, most unfortunately, the child is made as a labour.

[Translation]

The right of Child labour makes me sad and his mental development is blocked.

[English]

A stage has come when we feel shy to see the plight of the child who is working as a labour in this modern society. I really feel sad for them.

Therefore, to eradicate poverty, to eradicate child labour system in our country, education is very important in this country. We have to bear this in mind.

[Translation]

It is easy to sermonise but difficult to implement.

[English]

For everything we need funds and money, we know that. So I will read this para as to how we can make it successful:

"During our Indian freedom struggle, education was the main concern for our great leaders. They insisted that ten per cent of the total outlay be provided for education."

Actually education was the major concern, as I told you. The Congress national Planning Committee suggested way back in 1938 that education be given minimum ten per cent of the total outlay.

In 1944, the Gandhi Plan outlay be reserved exclusively for education. What actually happened? With almost each successive five Year Plan, the budgetary allocation for education is kept sinking. The total outlay for education in the First Five Year Plan was 7.22 percent.

[Translation]

In the second Five Year Plan, the percentage was 6.2 and it dwindled to 5.2 and 3.3 in the Fourth and the Fifth Five Year Plan respectively. In the Seventh Plan it was 3.9 percent.

[English]

In the Seventh Five Year Plan, it was 3.9 percent and remember that these are in the sense of theoretical figures and the amounts allotted are not the amounts actually spent. In the Seventh Five Year Plan for instance, education has got 3.9 per cent of total outlay but the amount actually spent was 3.6 per cent. So, that means, the Government is not taking it seriously to provide sufficient funds which were envisaged by the great leaders through whom we got Independence for the nation.

Then, where do we stand today? What is the position with regard to the educational system in our country? You see, 60 per cent of the illiterates of the world lived in nine countries. If you take the entire world, 60 per cent of the illiterate people are only living in nine countries like, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Mexico, etc. By 2000 AD, India will have the largest number of illiterates. Of every 10 million illiterates in the world, five millions are Indians. That means, for the 50 per cent of illiterates in the entire world population, we have the credit of getting 50 per cent of our own population.

[Translation]

There is a sense of shame and sadness when we wonder when will that day dawn?

[English]

Will you dream of it? As many as 91 out of 100 women among India's 60 to 70 million tribals cannot read and write. In Medak District of Andhra Pradesh, from where the country's Prime Minister was elected in those days, there not even two out of every hundred tribal women are literates.

[Translation]

SHRI DAU DAYAL JOSHI (Kota) : Congress is to blame for this decline, as it has been in power for 45 years.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Let him speak, please.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : My dear friend, here let us talk with human touch. Let us talk with human inspirational spirit. Let us for a minute forget we come from different Parties and from different parts of the country. We are united for a common cause. Let it be the determination, dedication and concentration of these great Members. Please take my point.

[Translation]

A good samaritan should not discriminate on the basis of language or personal to whims but should treat all as equals.

[English]

Therefore, I am not saying that the Congress is great, or the Communist is great or the BJP is great. Let us talk today of the *Sampradaya* of this great nation, the biggest democratic country in the world. Today our people do not know the value of the votes. The people are unfortunately innocent people. They do not know whom to vote.

[Translation]

Please have patience.

[English]

Once a man is educated, he will know the value of the vote in this democratic country which is the most important thing. Therefore, let us forget for a minute all politics. So the census of 1991 reveals that after 47 years of Independence, only 52 percent of Indians are literate and so far as things are concerned, 39 percent only enjoy the benefit of literacy. There are nine States whose literacy rates are below the national level. For example, the four States such as Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh are not only going to the country's account but also share 39 or 40 per cent of the entire population. Let us add to this, Orissa

and Andhra Pradesh, whose literacy rate is 48 and 45 respectively. We are now talking about 51 per cent of the population living in six of the largest States in India in the state of ignorance, illiteracy and, therefore, there is poverty. In six States of the country which are the largest States, there is absolutely no literacy. We all must fight to see that States like Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh etc. must get necessary attention. The very fact is that in all these States, the female literacy rate is less than 35 per cent. In Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan, the literacy rate is 28,39,26,23 and 20 per cent respectively.

17.00 hrs.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : How much is Rajasthan?

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Rajasthan is only 26 per cent.

Now, Sir, I will tell you what the reason for this unfortunate situation in our country in the field of education is. The total Plan outlay of the Seventh Plan was of the order of Rs. 1,80,000 crores, out of which, the outlay on education was only Rs. 6,000 crore, of which Rs. 3,994 crore was to be met from the State sector. What is the education base that we have now developed? The vast majority of students study in primary schools, a large number of which are without building, without minimum teaching aids and without furniture. Even today, the country is dotted with single-teacher schools. There are schools where only one single teacher is there.

Superimposed on this is the system of middle schools, into which not more than half the students who pass out class V, again seek entry. In 1991, the drop-out rate of boys in middle schools was 42 per cent. Drop-out means, children join the school but again discontinue and go away. They will not study up to VIII standard. So, day by day, the students' drop-out rate is increasing in our country. However, we act up to literate anyone who has actually entered the primary schools system but the fact is that such a child, especially if he is a drop-out, is both illiterate and ignorant. The middle schools themselves are only a little better equipped than the primary schools which feed them. A child who emerges from class VIII, especially in rural areas, may have gained some literacy but not shed his ignorance.

We must also remember that vocational education system is totally a failure. So many crores of rupees are being spent but we are really not in a position to get the real results of this. Whatever the achievements of this vocational education system, the CAG's findings tell a very sorry telltale. The initial target was to divert ten per cent of the 10+2 students to vocational stream by 1992. The attainment was just 2.21 per cent. So, the time frame for such students was revised to 1995. It was met but the utilisation of capacity was poor in Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi. Of the 5,80,000 students enrolled in twelve States in 1994, only 1,19,000 were successful.

On the utilisation of available resources, out of Rs. 487 crore released by the HRD Ministry, only Rs. 289 crore, or 59 per cent, were utilised by the States and the Union Territories. As much as Rs. 190 crore remained unused with the Ministry at the end of 1995.

If universal education is to be made a reality, the number of Senior Secondary and other schools in the country has to be multiplied manifold. This can be done with the active cooperation between the Central Government, the State Governments and the private bodies. Unless the Union Government and the State Governments come forward to help the economically weak parents in providing educational material free of cost to their children, the goal of universal education will remain a distant dream for the country. I shall suggest that in order to check the drop-outs, the following measures may be taken:

- (i) To provide incentives, such as, free text books, free uniforms, scholarships, mid-day meals - of course, it is already there.
- (ii) Community mobilisation to acquire literacy, appointment of female teachers, provision of day-care centres to take care of young siblings, hostel facilities - which are very important - expansion of facilities in schools covered under 'Operation Blackboard'.
- (iii) To cover new work centres for incentives and to continue with education of school teachers by establishing district institutes of education and training.

Hence, it is proper that the Government should establish sufficient number of Higher Secondary level schools and provide necessary educational material free of cost to the children of poor parents to enable them to provide education to their children.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Reddy, how much more time would you require?

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Sir, I will take another nine-and-a-half minutes.

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You will be replying to the debate. You should be prepared for that.

[English]

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : If you want to make people's memory full of achievements to be spectacular, magnificent and unparallel in the world map, you must give topmost priority for education in this country. I definitely believe that every Party will stand to it and agree to it.

[Translation]

"Lokotrana Sanghatana Nirupamana Na Sannivasa Nadwitiya".

[English]

Our hon. Prime Minister is here. I know that he is a very firm leader and he will do it and I will definitely have the full confidence that our nation will become a glorious nation and therefore, I introduce this Bill.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I thought by these words you are concluding.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Sir, another five minutes only.

I am very happy to say that our Government has emphasised in their Common Minimum Programme that six per cent of the nation's G.D.P. will be earmarked for education and this will be achieved by 2000 AD and fifty per cent of the funds will be for primary education and specific funds will be earmarked for imparting technical and vocational training in order to turn out more employment and self-employment and the goal of National Literacy Mission to cover 10 crore adults will be achieved by 1998-99.

There is a very good and extraordinary objective here. Therefore, this objective should be implemented and their achievements will be memorable in this democratic country and in the future for centuries together.

In conclusion, I may say that blaming the State Governments will not do. Let us have a philosophy. Let us have the constructive criticism. Let us always love, live and make our achievements memorable. Let us not politicise everything. Let us not think that: 'I am great and that man is not great'. Let us not believe in: 'My Party is great and other Party is less great.' For a common cause, for a noble cause, for a glorious cause and for a human cause all must be united and must stand unitedly like a rock and see that glorious heritage is built up in the future world map.

Therefore, I say that compulsory education is very important. In education, of course, we have moved forward. We said that there should be a threat for parents that they would be punished if they prevent their children from going to school. Of course, this is a democratic country. Nobody will agree to prevention by force. It will revolt.

[Translation]

Sir, this is a democratic country. We have to accomplish it with tact and persuasion.

We must create a new sense of thought that : 'You will have a great future; do not think of only small amounts like five rupees or ten rupees which you get as wages by sending your child to do labour work; you must send them to school'. So, the Government must take action. The voluntary organisations must come forward and people who are having a good mind in society must come forward to help these innocent parents to train them mentally and tell them not to do the mistake of preventing the child from going to school.

Therefore, while concluding I say that you have given permission to introduce this Bill in the Lok Sabha and that shows that we are happy that it is a good cause. The hon. Members and colleagues who are going to speak will definitely support and help in this good cause. That is my hope.

Hon' Prime Minister is a kind hearted man and he believes in helping others.

It is a coincidence that he happened to be here during discussion on such an important Bill. Therefore, it is fortunate that the Prime Minister of the country is here. I hope that he will definitely tell that it is a good idea and their objective in the Common Minimum Programme. If he announces from his golden voice it will be a great pleasure and we all will be very happy.

Thank you very much, Sir, for giving me this opportunity. I hope that all will support this Bill.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Motion moved :

"That the Bill to provide for free and compulsory education upto higher secondary level to all children throughout the country and for matters connected therewith, be taken into consideration."

After your compliment to the hon. Prime Minister, I would request the hon. Prime Minister to make his statement.

17.10 hrs.

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER

Debt Relief, Central Plan Assistance, Facilities at Migrant Camps, Infrastructure Development in Relation to the State of Jammu and Kashmir

[English]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I would like to make the following statement in connection with some of the relief measures that we have taken about Jammu and Kashmir.

Debt relief to small businesses affected by militancy: Hon. Members would kindly recall that on 23rd of July, 1996 I made a Statement in the House relating to certain long term infrastructural projects in the sectors of communication and power in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Hon. Members would agree with me that tourism, horticulture and handicrafts form the backbone of the economy of Jammu and Kashmir State. Other activities like small scale trade and industry, transport and hotels subserve the tourism sector. This sector was the worst affected because of militancy during the last 6-7 years. Tourist arrivals in the Valley declined from a peak figure of seven lakhs in 1986-87 to almost a trickle

during the last few years. This has affected the livelihood of thousands of families deriving sustenance from tourism and related activities. The affected units and individuals who had taken commercial loans from banks have not been able to repay the loans since there was no cash flow and have fallen into debt trap. The State Government have identified that about 31,000 borrowers from the sectors of small scale trade and industry, transport, hotel and houseboat businesses took loans to the extent of Rs. 181.87 crore. During the last six years, there has been hardly any repayment and the interest on these loans itself amounts for another Rs. 212.79 crore. Hon. Members would agree with me that while militancy hindered tourism, loss of tourism led to a great degree of unemployment, and growing of militancy, setting up a vicious circle. Now that the democratic process is being re-established and all efforts being made to restore normalcy, it is necessary to provide some relief to those hapless victims, especially the smaller borrowers. The Government, therefore, proposes to write-off the outstanding loan and interest of all borrowers whose original borrowing is less than or up to Rs. 50,000/-. This would enable these small borrowers to get fresh loans from the banking sector to restart their businesses. As regards the borrowers above Rs. 50,000/-, an Inter-Ministerial Committee is being constituted to look into the questions of a moratorium and rescheduling of their loans, reduction in interest rates, and any other reliefs that could be given.

Special Central Plan Assistance to J and K State for 1996-97 : In view of the precarious resource position of the Jammu and Kashmir State, resulting from militancy, the Central Government has been helping the Jammu and Kashmir State by providing special Central assistance not only to meet a reasonable Annual Plan set up but also to bridge gaps on the non-plan side. As a result of this effort, the State Government's tottering budget has been stabilised during the last three years. Last year, namely, 1995-96, the Parliament passed a balanced budget for the State with built-in Central assistance to meet the non-Plan gap so that the Approved plan outlay of Rs. 1050 crore could be preserved. In view of the fact that the State for the first utilised almost entire plan outlay last year, the outlay for the current year has been fixed again at Rs. 1050 crore. However, even with Central assistance at the level of last year, the State budget during the current year has a deficit of Rs. 352 crore on current account, resulting from additional commitments of the State Government on different accounts.

Unless this resource gap is bridged by a special Central assistance of an equal amount, the State will have no option but to reduce its plan size to Rs. 698.00 crore. Any reduction in Plan outlay at this crucial juncture when the State is on the path to total normalcy, needs to be avoided. Therefore, the Centre has decided to provide a special Central plan assistance of Rs. 352