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Title: Need to open separate centres for the study of Malayalam and other regional languages in higher educational institutions in Delhi.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, we will take 'Zero Hour'.

SHRI P.T. THOMAS (IDUKKI): Mr. Chairman, Sir, India has been a land of diversity. The diversity in its culture, beliefs, rituals, food, clothing and languages is what makes India a unique country. While reasserting our commitment to unity in diversity, we have never hesitated to enrich the diverse aspects of our linguistic and cultural heritage with all possible means as a great democratic nation.

Now, there are 22 Scheduled Languages according to the Eighth Schedule of our Constitution. The Central Government should take necessary steps to promote studies in the major regional languages listed in the Eighth Schedule. The Government should come up with time-bound initiatives to start separate centres for the study of regional languages in universities and Centres of Higher Learning at least in the capital city of our country, New Delhi.

Malayalam being one among the Scheduled Languages is not taught anywhere in New Delhi. Earlier, Delhi University facilitated both research and literary studies in Malayalam language. It is not clear why Delhi University hesitated to carry on such initiatives in the long run.

In Jawaharlal Nehru University, which is considered as one of the best in Asia, there is a Centre for Indian Languages. Apart from Hindi, Urdu and Tamil, other Scheduled Languages including Malayalam are not finding a place in this much celebrated Centre for Indian Languages in JNU. This is a shame to our claims of an enriched linguistic and cultural heritage, which we are proud of.

I would humbly appeal to the Government of India to take necessary steps to facilitate the study of Malayalam and other regional languages in the Centres of Higher Learning in the capital city of India, New Delhi. Thank you.