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Title : Unique National Identity Card Scheme for the citizens of the country.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA (HAZARIBAGH) : Madam, we welcome the proposal of the Government to have Unique Identification Number for every citizen of this country. We also welcome the appointment of Shri Nandan Nilekani as the head of this Department, which will do this work. The Deputy Leader of our party had raised the issue during the debate on Demand for Grants of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Minister of Home Affairs said categorically that the Unique Identity Number, as the President of India had said in her Address, is for every citizen of this country. He emphasized the word 'citizen'. Therefore, I was somewhat mystified because when Shri Nilekani took charge of his office yesterday, he is reported to have said that not only the citizens but all the residents of India, whether legal or illegal, would get the Unique Identification Number.[\[s7\]](#)

The second point that he has made was that this will be a voluntary scheme, and those who get the number will be entitled to Government benefits and those who opt out of it or choose to remain outside this scheme will not get those benefits. The third point that he has made was that it is not a smart card. Therefore, many of the facilities, which one can access through the smart card, will not automatically follow.

Now, I am raising this issue in the House because this is a very very important programme, which has been taken up by the Government, and as I said in the beginning that we have welcomed it. In fact, the foundations for this were laid when the NDA was in power, and the then Prime Minister had appointed a Group of Ministers (GoM) to go into this. As Shrimati Sushma Swaraj had pointed out during the debate that the GoM had made their recommendation that : "We should issue such a number to all the Indian citizens, so that we could make a distinction between citizens -- whether resident or not, and non-citizens who are resident, but are not citizens of India. Therefore, I find that what Mr. Nilekani has said outside the House has caused some confusion.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : It is a deviation from the Minister's statement.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA : Yes, it is a deviation from what the Minister has stated in this House. Therefore, I will request the Government, through you, Madam, to come to this House and take the House into confidence with regard to the description, the details and the definition of this scheme.

Who all are intended to be covered? Now that the authority has been set up, let the Government come to the House and make a statement. Further, let the Members of Parliament also be permitted to make their contribution and their suggestions, so that we really have a worthwhile scheme and not something, which is ill-advised or ill-thought of or is not properly designed. This is the reason why I decided to raise this issue. I hope those Ministers of the Government who are here will bring it to the notice of the concerned Minister, and we will have a statement soon from the Government. Thank you.