

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

"That Clause 1, the Enacting formula, and the Long Title stand part of the Bill.

The motion was adopted.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula, and the Long Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA : I beg to move :

"That the Bill be passed.

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

"That the Bill be passed.

The motion was adopted.

18.14 hrs.

INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY
(AMENDMENT) BILL*

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA) : Sir, on behalf of Shri S.R. Bommai, I beg to move :

"That the Bill to amend the Indira Gandhi National Open University Act, 1985, as passed by Rajya Sabha be taken into consideration."

MR. SPEAKER : Motion moved :

"That the Bill to amend the Indira Gandhi National Open University Act, 1985, as passed by Rajya Sabha be taken into consideration."

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I welcome the objective of Indira Gandhi National Open University (Amendment) Bill, 1997 introduced by the Government because amendment has been made in section 3 and 6. The following proviso would be added in sub-section of section 3 of Indira Gandhi National Open University Act, 1985, "Study centre could be opened outside India with prior approval of chancellor." The words, "Study centres outside India" would be added alongwith with "throughout India" in section 6.

Sir, it is a matter of great happiness that earlier we used to hear about Nalanda and Takshila that there were big centres of education and students from foreign countries visited these centres for study. For the first

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time Indira Gandhi National Open University has gained lot of importance in spreading informal education. It has become a boon for those private students who are getting education through correspondence courses and distant education. As large number of immigrants, who know Indian languages and non-resident Indians are living in United Arab Emirate, Mauritius etc. They want to set up such type of centres in their countries so that they could also take benefit of these centres. To extend this facility, original Indira Gandhi Open University Act was enacted in 1985 and 225 study centres at 17 regional centres are in existence since 1987 onwards. Through these centres there are 746 students in the first year, 6000 in the second year and 8,000 in the third year but as against the number of faculties opened the required number of students therein are not adequate and moreover, the medium of instructions is also English.

Sir, through you I would urge upon the Government that on the one hand the students could not get admission in colleges and there is a large number of students in queue for getting admission and there is a problem of discipline, the people in service cannot get education after getting admission, the people living in villages or the people who want to get education in the morning and evening, they can also not get education, therefore when such University has been opened to get them educated, then all the Indian languages should be the medium of instruction.

We are celebrating the 50th anniversary of independence, therefore, alongwith English, Hindi should also be made the medium of instructions in the examinations of Indira Gandhi Open University and study centres of correspondence and remote education. Besides, it would be better if Minister should clarify as to what will be the system of examination in the centres being opened in foreign countries and how the centres will be controlled. The Headquarters of the Indira Gandhi Open University is in Delhi but its centres have been opened in other states also and complaints of irregularities being committed there have been received in regard to the appointment. I would like to request the Government to make efforts to remove those irregularities so that the services of Indira Gandhi Open University can be utilized properly in the country as well as abroad. Indian culture, knowledge, traditions and social features should reach foreign countries and the people living there can also be benefited there from.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : When a Professor speaks on a University, I know that there can be no end.

[Translation]

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have to say such things which are in favour of the Bill.

[Shri George Fernandes]

I would like to point out that whenever any such institutions are established by the Government. They are named after some particular persons. The country should think over it. Such a situation is prevailing in our country where feudalism has already been in existence. Today on the occasion of 50th anniversary of independence, we should take a vow to abandon feudalistic traditions. Smt. Indira Gandhi was one of the Prime Ministers of this country who made her contribution in the effective functioning of the Government of this country.

18.17 hrs.

(MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*)

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it troubles us that whenever any hospital, university, airport, road, building, cremation ground or any trust set up by the Government are named they are named after the persons of one particular family. We have objection to all such things. But this system is continuing in our country. Today approximately 18 crore people are unemployed but the employment scheme is named after such person who really laid the foundation of unemployment in the country. In this country crores of people are homeless but the housing scheme is named after a person who is responsible for rendering the people homeless. There is no drinking water facility in the villages but this scheme is in the hands of those persons who had created water scarcity. So, Mr. Speaker, Sir, they contributed during their life time and after death money should be utilised in their names for developmental work. This thing has a bitter taste for some persons but such matters do not give decency or elegance to any democratic country and democratic thinking. So, I request the Government Bommai Saheb is sitting here who has been a disciple of M.N. Roy. He has been a person of radical thinking and he is against feudalism. I believe that when such type of Bill will be introduced in the House in future, then he will pay due attention on the question of changing the name wherever it is required. Thousands of people have sacrificed their lives in the freedom struggle. Lakhs of people have lost their lives but I can give you a list of thousands prominent persons. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would request the Minister of Human Resource Development to look into this particular matter of changing the name and after due consideration come before the House.

PROF. OMPAL SINGH 'NIDAR' (Jalesar) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission I am on my legs not to support this Bill because there are lakhs of villages in the country which do not have even primary schools. This is my challenge. Government should conduct a survey. The students have to walk 20 to 50 Kms. distance

for reaching inter-college, high school or degree colleges. We are giving permission to open their branches in foreign countries but the people of our own country, who are taking pain and working together for the development of the country, have not been provided with education facilities to their children and youth. I do not understand when somebody is suffering from cancer in your house, why are you worried about cough and cold? I want to say that the money which you are spending in foreign countries for opening its branches, why this fund is not being utilised for providing educational facilities in our own country? It is a matter of pain for me because many scams are taking place in the Indira Gandhi Open University but no provision has been made in the Bill to check such scams and punish the guilty. I am giving you a small example. On 10th March I had written a letter to Hon'ble Education Minister. I call him Education Minister because Human Resource Development Minister wants to develop human in the form of resources. In other words, he wants to create emotionless human. If human will become resources there, his soul will die. There will be no sentiments and pain. Now I correct my mistake and say that I sent a signed letter to the Minister of Human Resource Development. I would like to give one example. On 16th December, 1996 tender No. F-No.-1-35 M.D.D.-96-97 was invited duly signed by the Assistant Vice-Chancellor for supplying 800 M.T. of paper. One of the conditions of this tender was that the supplier must be a manufacturer of paper. The specification of the paper mentioned in the tender was that the size of the paper would be 30 X 40 Cms. The name of this quality was surface size offset printing. This was the situation. The condition for weight was 61 X 88 C.M.A. and 70 to 80 G.S.M. The tender came from such person who does not manufacture paper. I forwarded his name also. The cost of 800 M T paper was Rs. 2 crore and there is a scam to the tune of Rs. 20 lakh in this deal. They have supplied the paper of inferior quality. The Government should investigate into this matter. The tender was awarded to such companies which do not manufacture paper. I do not know whether their headquarters is in Delhi or not. Such a situation has been created under the very nose of the Government. There should be some standard. If Central Government get the paper at the rate of Rs. 21 per Kg. then the rate of Rs. 22-23 per Kg. for this paper can be charged from the Government. We have such examples that if this is available at the rate of Rs. 21 then the Government would purchase the same thing at the rate of Rs. 27 from some where else. Government is run on faith. The situation is that I have not received any reply from the Minister. As a courtesy the Department should have written two lines to me. When a hon'ble Member gave a starred question on this issue then I was deeply pained. In this regard the reply came that Nidar ji had raised this question. I

mean to say that you open its branches in foreign countries and take any amount of fund because that does not go from our pocket. That is hard earned money of the people of entire country. We have got right to spend this money. One thing should be ensured that the funds allocated should not be misused and it should be spend for the purpose for which it has been allocated. The Students and teachers should be benefited from it. We should protect the general morale of people. I would like to say to the Minister of Human Resource Development that one more clause should be added in the Bill that ethics and Sacraments would invariably be taught in this University because any student of this university, if he unfortunately becomes an MP then he may behave in a decent and polite manner.

[English]

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA (Kottayam) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I welcome this piece of legislation. This Amendment Bill enables us to have more Study Centres at distant places and in foreign countries.

The hon. Member Shri George Fernandes has raised a very flimsy argument regarding the change of name. When Shri George Fernandes came to power — though it was for a very few months — he changed the name of Willington Hospital to Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital. We have great respect for Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia who had contributed his life for the services of the nation. It is a practice the world over where people give the names of eminent personalities, eminent political leaders and eminent statesmen who contributed their entire life for the service of that particular nation to airports, institutions, hospitals and roads. We are not ashamed to name our Airport, our Trust, our Hospital, and our schemes like Rozgar Yojana in the name of eminent persons like Shrimati Indira Gandhi and Shri Rajiv Gandhi. We are rather proud of it. In the past, when Shrimati Indira Gandhi was alive, I knew Shri George Fernandes was critical of her. But I have a small request to him that she is no more and he should shelve his animosity against her. He should appreciate the services rendered by Shrimati Indira Gandhi throughout her life to this great nation.

I do not want to take much time of this House. This Indira Gandhi National Open University has done tremendous work. Now opening its Study Centres outside the country to conduct programmes will definitely add more prestige to our country.

[Translation]

SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR (Bareilly) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir I do not want to say much. This university has completed its 12 years. I would like to say that its output should be evaluated. I have written

three letters to the Minister of Human Resource Development that the degrees awarded by this university to the students are not being recognised by some universities and the students are also not getting admission in some other institutions. I come from Rohelkhand area and I know that students of Indira Gandhi Open University are not given admission there. In spite of my repeated letters, no action has been taken so far. As Shri Nidar ji was telling that we are celebrating 50th anniversary of our Independence, so on this occasion, the Government should issue orders to open primary schools in 5.5 lakh villages in the country.

[English]

SHRI SAMIK LAHIRI (Diamond Harbour) : Sir, I would like to extend my support to this Bill which has been piloted by the Minister of Human Resource Development. I see this as a good initiative on behalf of the Government. But I would like to draw the attention of the Government to one thing. Many Study Centres have been established all over the country and many new professional courses have been introduced over there. But there is one shortcoming. The University is not teaching at the various Centres in the regional languages. This is a serious lacuna.

Another thing is, the aspect of diversity of our country is totally kept out of the mind of the University authorities who are running this Indira Gandhi National Open University. I hope, the Government will look into these two aspects.

I am extending my support to this initiative of the Government.

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker Sir, this University was established in 1985. My hon. friend Shri George Fernandes objected to the name of this University. The name has been given ten years back when the Act was passed by the Parliament.

Now, I am bringing only a small amendment. Therefore, the question of changing the name does not arise. But I do see a point in what Shri Fernandes has suggested and I would like to say that whenever we give a name to an institution or a university we must keep in mind all the national leaders; they may belong to any party and whether it is Shri M.N. Roy, I do not want to say...(Interruptions)

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : I want to say that.

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : Therefore, the question of naming depends on the time the Government takes a decision; and now Parliament has already passed it. Therefore, only an amendment is there to this Act. But of course, the Government would keep in mind the suggestion of Shri George Fernandes.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : I thank the hon. Minister for this.

SHRI P.C. CHACKO (Mukundapuram) : Sir, we do not understand which suggestion of Shri George Fernandes the Government is going to keep in mind...*(Interruptions)* We are not saying that. If a partisan opinion is expressed and if that too is politically based, how can the hon. Minister say that the Government would take care of that?...*(Interruptions)* This is not the way...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : I would request the hon. Member to please listen to me...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI P.C. CHACKO : No, Sir, the hon. Minister is not supposed to express an opinion which is not a part of it. This is not the way.

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : Sir, what I am saying is...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI P.C. CHACKO : What does it mean?...*(Interruptions)* They were in the Government including the hon. Minister at that time and we know that the name of a hospital was changed to Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital. We have respect for Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia but the whole contribution of that Government was that within two months they changed the name of that hospital. People are saying that that name should not be given...*(Interruptions)* What is the contribution of the previous Prime Minister to the country? This is nothing but due to political bias. This is not correct.

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : I supported what he has...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI A.C. JOS (Idukki) : No, the hon. Minister said 'that the Government would keep in mind'...*(Interruptions)* Sir, when an hon. Minister says it on the floor of the House, it is a very serious thing...*(Interruptions)* I do not understand what the hon. Minister means by that.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Let the hon. Minister reply, please.

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : Mr. Deputy-Speaker Sir, I only said that the names of all the national leaders, irrespective of the party, should be kept in mind. That is the only thing I said and I support it, I am not opposing it.

The very purpose of this University is only to give an opportunity to the people who are not able to get continuous normal education because of poverty, unemployment and backwardness. The University gives distance and correspondence education.

I am proud to say that 20 per cent of the students of this University are women. The speciality of this University is that it opens a centre in a college, the

teachers of that college teach them and the material of that college is used. There were correspondence courses in various universities but there was no teaching like this University has. Here actual teaching takes place.

There are only 268 centres in this country. I want it to be expanded. There is another opportunity which is available in this University and which is not available in other universities, that is, a science student cannot take arts subject in other universities. Here in this University, there can be a combination of an art subject and a science subject. Some people, who are employed and who could not continue their education, can take advantage of these centres. This should be expanded more, particularly in hilly and other areas, in this country, I agree.

Now, we are opening it outside the country because there are a number of NRI Indians who are demanding Indian degrees and Indian education. To help them, to aid them, we are opening this University. They are self-financing. We are not investing a single pie there. Teachers will be given honorarium. They are self-financing. The Government is not incurring any expenditure. We are giving our own degrees to most of the people, who are Indians. Therefore, this is a proper system and I appeal to everybody to support it.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is :

"That the Bill to amend the Indira Gandhi National Open University Act, 1985, as passed by Rajya Sabha be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Now, the House will take up Clause-by-Clause consideration of the Bill.

The question is :

"That Clauses 2 and 3 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 2 and 3 were added to the Bill.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is :

"That Clause 1, the Enacting Formula, and the Long Title stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Long Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : I beg to move :

"That the Bill be passed."

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is :

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.