

pan>

Title: Discussion on the motion to consider the Sixth Schedule to The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2015 (Discussion not concluded).

SHRI VINCENT H. PALA (SHILLONG): Thank you, Sir. I beg to move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India in its application to constitution of District Councils and powers of the District Councils and Regional Councils, be taken into consideration."

Sir, I intend to move three amendments in the Sixth Schedule. First is to increase the number of the members of the District Council from 30, at present, to 40, as originally envisaged in the Constitution of India and this number should be equal in all the ten Autonomous District Councils. We have ten Autonomous District Councils; four in Meghalaya, four in Assam, four in Mizoram and one in Tripura.

16.10 hours (Shri Arjun Charan Sethi *in the Chair*)

Second is to bring up traditional occupation of the tribals relating to mines and minerals legislative competence of the District Council and third is to protect the customary practices and interests of the tribals.

Before I move forward discussing the Bill, I want to move a little bit backward for telling the history as to how the Sixth Schedule had come into existence. If you look at the post-colonial era which we had in the North-East, especially in the Schedule District Act, 1874, during the British time, especially in the North-East, many areas had been considered as backward areas. So, those most backward areas were considered as Schedule Areas.

In the Schedule Areas, the rules, the laws, the practices of the tribals are totally different from other people of the mainland. Therefore, the British allowed them to practice those rules. So, in terms of laws which have been made in those areas they are different from the rest of India.

If you see the Government of India Act, 1919, where there were nine territories in the province of Assam were called backward tracts. These are Garo hills, Khasi hills, Jaintia hills, Mikir hills, North Cachar Hills, Naga hills, Lucha hills and others also.

Again in 1930, the Simon Commission recommended that areas did not ask for self-determination but for security of land, freedom in the pursuit of traditional methods of livelihood and reasonable exercise of their customs.

Again the Government of India Act, 1935, described areas as excluded areas. The basic point in governance of these areas was the power of the Provincial Assembly were not to extend to these areas. The excluded areas were to be determined by the Governor himself at his discretion. The advice of the Ministry was not necessary. The Governor was empowered to make regulation and good governance of these areas. These areas were outside the jurisdiction of the Ministry in a sense that the Governor is all in all for the backward areas. He can direct the Council to make rules. He can put anything without discussion with the Ministries or without the advice of the Council of Ministers.

Again if you see on 27th February, 1947, the Framing Committee of the Sixth Schedule under the chairmanship of Mr. Gopinath Bordoloi Premier of Assam had members who were prominent leaders of the North-East like Shri J.J.M. Nichols Roy, Shri Rup Nath Brahma, Shri A.V. Thakkar and Shri Mayang Nokcha. This Committee submitted the report to none other than Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on 28th of June, 1947.

The Committee noted hill peoples' anxiety about land, resources and fear of exploitation by more advanced persons, especially the moneylenders because of which the control of migration was desired. The sustainability of those people was also felt. Therefore, if you look at the history, a lot of specialty was given to the people in the backward areas of the North-East.

The introduction of the Sixth Schedule is based on principles of fraternity and equality. It was designed to bring States and non-States together at par under the constitutional framework. The members who had drafted the Constitution in the Sixth Schedule knew about the ultimate socio-political landscape that would be adopted.

It is for preservation, protection and to safeguard the interests of indigenous Jaintia *Khasi*, *Garo*, *Lusai*, *Mikir*, North Kachar hills and Naga hills. The leaders of the Nagas did not agree to the Sixth Schedule, but the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura agreed to the Sixth Schedule.

Sir, lately, there was a Report under an instruction from the National Commission to review the working of the Constitution under the Chairmanship of a former Chief Justice of India. Part IX of the Report especially deals with the North-Eastern Region and there is a special reference to the Sixth Schedule. There is a recommendation for the 123rd Amendment of the Constitution. The 123rd Constitutional Amendment is yet to be brought to this House. In the proposed Constitutional Amendment of the many recommendations made, one is to increase the number of members in the District Councils. As of now there are 30 members in the District Councils. While deciding on the number of members, the criteria is not the population but the consideration is the number of tribes in a particular State. The Committee that was constituted made a visit to the entire North-Eastern region to see as to what are the problems being faced by the people. So, the Committee recommended that whatever may be the population of a State, whether it is 30 lakhs or 40 lakhs, the number of members in the Council should be the same. Accordingly, they have recommended for 30 members for the District Councils.

I even met the hon. Minister in this regard. In the recommendation it was clearly mentioned that the number of members from the *Khasi*, *Garo* and *Jaintia* hills, the three main tribes, should be increased from 30 to 40. The Government should accept that and should be included that in the proposed 123rd Constitutional Amendment Bill, but in case of the numbers of members from the *Jaintia* tribe it will be reduced from 30 to 25 and the number of members from the *Khasi* and *Garo* will be increased from 30 to 40. But in other Councils in the Assam they will increase it, this is as per draft of 123rd amendments to the Constitution of India.

Sir, if you look at the history of the North-East, people from the *Jaintia* community have never taken up arms, but in case of other tribes they have taken to arms. So, the Government proposes to increase the number of seats for those areas where people take to arms and the Government proposes to reduce the number of seats for those areas where people do not take to arms. That means the Government, in a sense, is incentivising people for taking up arms. There has been recommendation since 1947 that an equal number of seats should be given to all the Councils so that the money also gets distributed equally as per the number of Councils and not as per the population of tribes residing in those areas.

Sir, in the Report of the Standing Committee of Law and Justice it has been mentioned that the District Councils, the Sixth Schedule, has more power but less finance. We should work out in such a way that the funds for the Councils are proportionate to their power. The District Councils have more power, they are over protected but they have no funds. In case of the Panchayati Raj Institutions they get direct funding from the States and they are better funded, whereas in case of Sixth Schedule areas, the District Councils are less funded.

Elections to the District Councils are conducted by the State Governments. I think, there must be a separate Commission for conducting elections to the District Councils, or the Election Commission of India should conduct elections to these Councils. For example, as of now, in my own State, seven seats are lying vacant. The State does not have money and for various other reasons, whatever may be the case, these seven seats are lying vacant. Elections are supposed to be held but are not being held. So, I think, the Election Commission should be given the responsibility to conduct elections to the District Councils.

Sir, in the District Councils there has been no provision made for reservation of seats for women. But in the Panchayati Raj Institutions and in some other places there is a provision for reservation of seats for women. So, there should be reservation for women in the District Councils also. It is because participation of women in tribal areas will encourage women. It will encourage parents to educate their girl child. Encouraging women would mean empowering women and therefore there must be representation of women in the District Councils.

The other point is about the Anti-Defection Law. In the Councils normally there are 30 members. So, you need 15 to 16 members to get a majority. In such a situation defection by two to three members can shift the majority in the Council and there can be a change in the administration within a period of just five to six months. This can happen only because the provisions of the Anti-Defection Law do not apply to the Councils.

Here, they have Anti-Defection Law. So, we will be scared that action may be taken against us and we may be disqualified. But in the Council, there is no Anti-Defection Law. I request that Anti-Defection Law should be there in the Council and in the 123rd Amendment, there should be a compulsory Anti-Defection Law.

Then, the mandate of the Council should be clear. As of now, there is a lot of clash of interests between the State Government and the Council. So, the mandate should be clearly mentioned like what is the duty of the State Government and that of the Council. As of now, money comes from the Centre and goes to the State and from the State, it is supposed to go to the Council. But in the State, they withhold the money, and at their own whims and fancies, they will release the money to the Council very late and the Council cannot do anything. There must be a mandate for it because some State Governments think that the Council should not involve itself in the development work and some State Governments think that it should. There is no systematic mechanism between one Council and another Council of one State and another State. So, there must be a specific mandate for the Council so that they can do other developmental works.

Regarding the funds which have come from the Centre to the Council, if they release them today, the Council will get them after six months. If they release the fund in the month of April, they will get it after six months. Normally, in most of the Sixth Schedule areas in the North-East, it rains almost for six months in a year. By the time it releases the funds in September, it is the time to submit the Utilisation Certificate. So, there must be a proper timing for releasing the funds considering the topography of the area and the funds should be released on time to implement the schemes.

As of now, in the Council, auditing is done by the State Government auditors. Since the money comes from the Centre, the CAG must audit the accounts of the Council and give a report on it. Actually, there is a mandate to the Governor that they should give a report every year but as of now, I think, that it is not regular. Therefore, auditing of the Council should be done by the CAG for better implementation and better benefits to the people of the areas of the Council.

Another subject which I want to touch upon is the mines and minerals. As of now, mines and minerals are outside the purview of the Sixth Schedule. Though it is mentioned for Nagaland, the Sixth Schedule mentions about the mines and resources, land and its resources. There is a series of judgements that whoever owns the land, all the mines and minerals below that land belong to the owner of the land especially in the tribal areas. But recently, there has been a judgement of the National Green Tribunal.

For example, in Meghalaya, the people there have been doing business in coal for the last 70 to 80 years. Since the period of the British, they have been living doing this business. But suddenly, somebody has filed a case and the National Green Tribunal has totally stopped the business of coal. So, people are left with no other option and have become bankrupt in many areas.

Therefore, I would request that, in the 123rd Amendment, the subject of mines and minerals in the tribal areas of the Sixth Schedule must be brought under the Council for better implementation. Then life will be easier for the people because most of the tribal areas have got small mines. It is not possible for them to come to Delhi to ask for mining plans and mining lease and at the same time, there is a lot of formalities to be done. So, it becomes difficult for the people there. The Coal India Limited has come to the North-East and started mining but it is not feasible because it is a difficult area. So, this has to be brought under the Council. I think a new amendment has to be made on this issue.

On this issue, our hon. Chief Minister, Shri Mukul Sangma, has written a letter to the Prime Minister of India and discussed this issue. The State Assembly of Meghalaya has passed a Resolution that this should be brought under the para 12(A)(b) of the Sixth Schedule. But nothing has happened as of now. So, it is high time that we should bring all these issues under the Sixth Schedule for better implementation of the programmes and life becomes easier for the tribals.

In para 12 (A) (b) of the Sixth Schedule, the President is all in all and he has lots of powers but that should be exercised on the advice of the

Ministers. As of now, actually we have written a series of letters to the President and to the Prime Minister so that the present Government can help us to pass the law in such a way that we do not have to come to Parliament. The hon'ble President will only act after the advice of the council of Ministers to the President of India to notify that. As per the practice and custom of the tribals this should be done.

Another very important issue is the protection of traditional heads. If you see the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Law and Justice under the chairmanship of Dr. Natchiaapan, they have suggested that there must be synergy between the tribal justice systems and the legal justice systems of the country. The Committee recommended that the Parliament may enact a law to set up tribal justice court system. The States would be permitted to modify the law as per their requirements. Such a law would give the tribal courts institutional framework in relation to appointment of personnel, salary and benefits, etc. Further, this would enable them to codify their customs, write judgements and orders, follow penal law and precedents. This would be similar to the recognition given to the Lok Adalat courts. It is a very strong recommendation given by the Standing Committee on Law and Justice on this issue. The synergy should be in such a way that the laws should be made easier, simpler and approachable by the tribals. These were the recommendations.

In December, 2014 the hon. High Court of Meghalaya has derecognised the powers of traditional heads. We call them *rangbah shnongs*. The custom in Meghalaya since British times is that the *rangbah shnongs* used to control the village. The entire village will elect a *rangbah shnong* and he will control the village. The village head, who we call *rangbah snong*, gives No Objection Certificates, Birth Certificates, etc. and that was recognised by the Government. But when a Judge from Jammu and Kashmir came to Meghalaya, who is not aware of the situation in Meghalaya, he gave an order. Due to that order, lots of Central and State Government projects had been held up because normally the headman used to help them even in getting the Utilization Certificate, controlling law and order in the village, controlling the expenditure, taking initiative to implement the Central and State's schemes. But when they de-recognised the powers of the headman, there is a big problem in the implementation of the schemes and there is a big problem regarding the law and order situation.

This was brought to the knowledge of the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee recommended that there must be a court which is familiar with the customs, the minimum procedures, cost effective, and timely delivery of justice. This matter has gone to the Supreme Court, but there has not been any decision on this so far. In-between this Council has sent a Bill to the State Government and the State Government has forwarded it to the Governor and the Governor forwarded it to the Central Government. Actually, as per the Sixth Schedule, the Governor is all in all for the Bill. He can object, he can re-send the Bill to the State Government.

Governor is all in all. There is no rule that the Governor would send the Bill to the Central Government. I do not know the reasons. For various reasons, the Governor wants to avoid all this. There is a big problem in society because some say that law is over-protecting the tribals whereas tribals say that they need protection, and that we are only 24 lakh people. There is a lot of misunderstanding. Whatever is wrong, we should say so. If any correction is required, it should be sent back to the State Government or to the Council to rectify it. It is lying here for the last six months. No action is taken on this issue. I think, it affects the powers of the traditional tribals. All this has happened because there is no proper mandate given in the Sixth Schedule. Hence, the same needs to be amended.

Many of you must have heard about Bodoland. There is a problem in Bodoland. If you look among all the Councils, Bodoland Council has all the powers. Maximum money has been given to the Bodo Territorial Council. This money should be spent based on the guidelines given by different Governments. When the Congress Government was there, they had different guidelines. When the BJP Government was there, they had different guidelines. There must be proper guidelines as to how to utilise the money, as to how funds should be released and as to how schemes are to be implemented. The Council is not made accountable properly. As the CAG is not auditing the accounts, that is the reason why there is misuse of funds. There is delay in the issuance of the Utilisation Certificate and in the release of second or third or fourth instalments, whatever may be the case. Therefore, proper instructions should be given. I am citing only about the Bodoland Council as an example. There are other Councils too.

As of now, an agreement with the Bodoland Council which was signed in 2003 is in place. This should be rectified. There must be more dialogue on these issues so that same can be resolved. This is one of the Councils which is most powerful and it is located in the most populated area in the North-East, that is, in the Bodoland. All the issues can be resolved only if we follow the recommendations of the Standing Committee.

One of the main features of the Sixth Schedule is to preserve and protect the culture of the people. We have lots of festivals. One of the most important festivals we have among the Sixth Scheduled Areas is Behdienghklam, which is celebrated in Jaintia Hills. It is not only a festival of dance but it is also a religious event. This festival is celebrated for four days. People pray first. They carry out the rituals in the house first, then in the community, then in the village. Then, they go and dance. This is one of the most important festivals of the people who live in the Sixth Schedule Areas.

There are hundreds of such festivals in the North East - in Assam, Mizoram and Tripura, and in different areas. But these festivals, these cultural programmes should be incentivised. Funds should be allocated by the Centre. As of now, for Behdienghklam, the Ministry of Tourism at the Centre allocates some money. Sometimes, it releases Rs.5 lakh, sometimes it is Rs.10 lakh, and some other times it is hardly Rs.2 lakhs. There is no consistency in providing finances for these programmes. It affects the mindset of the people. People think there is no consistency in releasing the fund. Hence, there is no seriousness in the Government to preserve and protect the culture of the North East, especially the culture of the tribal people who live in North East.

I do not know how many of you have seen the Behdienghklam dance. It is a wonderful dance. Last time even the Hon'ble Governor of Meghalaya danced with the public and even the Chief Justice of Shillong High Court came and enjoyed it. This is one of the best examples of rich tribal culture. The tribal people are very well cultured, well behaved and they organise these festivals very systematically. In Arunachal Pradesh also I have seen many such programmes. Our Minister of State for Home Affairs is from Arunachal Pradesh and he knows very well how these cultural festivals are still celebrated. It is not possible to protect and preserve the cultural heritage of the Northeast with the fund provided by the State Government or by the North East Council. It needs to be funded by the Ministry of Culture of the Government of India.

Then, there is another festival called Shadsuk Mynsiem which is being celebrated for many decades. This festival also has to be funded by the Government of India. We have Wangala dance in Garo Hills. The Wangala dancers come to Delhi during the Republic Day celebrations. They used to come to Delhi and perform here. Then, there is another important dance form called Nongkrem dance. So, all these dance forms and festivals should be funded by the Government so as to protect them. There must be institutions set up to preserve these art forms and teach the young generation so that they can practice them, whether in Arunachal Pradesh or Meghalaya or Assam. So, I would request the Government to build infrastructure in the Northeast so that there are schools to teach these art forms and preserve these rich culture of the Northeast.

Another thing I want to mention here is about the land tenure system in the North East Council areas. Some of the areas in the North East Council are over protected. For example, building roads is very difficult. Getting land for building Highways or Airports in the tribal areas is very difficult. So there must be a law in the Sixth Schedule areas which exempts the Government from taking NoC from different agencies for building National Highways, Airports, railway lines etc. So, the State Government must be empowered in this matter. Until and unless there is development, there will be no employment; until and unless there is employment, there cannot be empowerment to the tribal people. Therefore, for the tribals to be employed, for the tribals to be developed, for the tribals to be competitive with the people of the mainland, infrastructure development is very important. I think the Government should look into this matter and recommend whatever is required for the development of the tribal areas.

Sir, the Standing Committee on Law and Justice has recommended that there must be a comparative study of tribals and regular justice system and this should be done under the project, 'Access to Justice for the Northeast'. They said that this may even be followed for the State of Jammu and Kashmir. They also recommended that participation of women in public affairs should be encouraged. The Committee observed that many tribal societies do not permit their women to participate in public affairs. Further, their property rights are also restricted. The Committee recommended that representation of women in tribal bodies and district councils may be encouraged. This would bring gender equality in local administration as provided in the Constitution.

So, these are very important and strong recommendations of the Standing Committee. Therefore, I would request the Government that when they bring the 123rd Constitution Amendment, they should look into all these issues and implement these recommendations properly. The Committee even recommended that there must be a separate High Court for each State. My friend has already demanded setting up of a separate High Court for Arunachal Pradesh. We have High Courts for Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur and Sikkim but not for Arunachal Pradesh. I do not know about Nagaland. The Committee has recommended a High Court for the North-East. In 2008, the Committee had recommended that a separate High Court be established in the North-Eastern Region. The Committee said that the High Court could play a role in the codification of Tribal laws. Codification is very important. The judgment of High Courts will be treated as precedent and its interpretation of the customary law should be documented. This, with time, can evolve into written and codified laws. The Committee recommended that independent judicial academies should be established in every State.

Why has the Committee made these recommendations? It is because they have seen that when the Judges from one area go to the North-East, and if they are not aware of the problems of the people of the North-East, if they are not aware of their customs; if they are not aware of the customary laws, if they are not aware of the culture of the people of North-East, they may deliver a different judgment. All this would bring problems within society. When there are problems within societies, that creates further problems. Due to all this, some of the youths may get misguided and go to the jungle. That would take time to help them, to come back.

Therefore, the Government has to spend a lot of money on this issue. These are a few recommendations of the Committee, which are very important.

Sir, in terms of funds for mines and minerals, actually the MMDR Act, 1957 had been amended in 2015. There is a District Mineral Foundation Fund. The entire North-East is very rich in minerals. We have uranium; we have limestone; we have coal; we have even platinum in certain areas. In my Constituency, we have all the minerals. So, as per the Act, the Chairman of the District Mineral Foundation will be the DC. But the land owner has a very less role to play. Therefore, in the District Mineral Foundation, the owner of the land who has the rights over land, who has the rights over surface of the land, must have a say. He must also be a Member of the Foundation compulsorily. Any action or use of the land must be in consultation or permission of the land owner. I am saying so because in the tribal areas, some land is owned by a community, some land is owned by the village as a whole and some land is owned even by the king. So, in these lands, many people depend on the resources, which they get through their land. But if the Government takes away their land, the livelihood of the owner of that land is badly affected. Whenever the tribal people suffer, they would take loan or mortgage their land. Even sometimes, they would sell their land. So, land is a very important factor. If the Government does not take the land owners into confidence in the Committee of the District Mineral Foundation, they would feel that the law is not for them. So, I think that there must be a special provision in the Sixth Schedule concerning these issues of the tribals.

The royalties, which have been collected from the other parts, should be properly used for building infrastructure, for building roads, schools, hospitals, etc. We should encourage the people. We should sensitise the people. On implementation of all these things, we should inform the people. Whatever programme we want to do, should be known to the people so that they do not object at any point of time. May be, in between the construction works, people may object and create obstruction. If on the entire stretch of the road or the entire stretch of the mines, one or two land owners go to the court, it would delay the whole project. So, to avoid all such things, there must be proper regulations in the law. These are some of my suggestions on this issue.

Sir, another very important point regarding the Sixth Schedule Areas is the livelihood of the people. We have a series of programmes about the people of the North-East, which have been announced by the Government. But the guideline of this Government, be it in the North East, be it in Sixth Scheduled areas, be it in Bihar, be it in West Bengal, is all the same. But in the people of Sixth Schedule areas are different. Therefore, the guidelines should also be different. For example, in my Constituency, Shilong, there is no Municipality. I mean, there is Municipality but there is no election for the last 20 or 30 years. So, the money which comes from the Centre cannot be utilized. It has to be either refunded or deducted. Even when JNNURM was implemented, we faced a lot of problems because there was no election to the Municipality. So, there must be exemptions. The money, which has been sent to the States, should be sent with guidelines that in such a way it should be spent. We should not penalise the people only because their customs are different from the rest of India. I think, we have to look into it also. The One Hundred and Twenty-third Amendment

of the Government, especially, in the Sixth Schedule areas, has to come.

Thank you, Sir. I have taken a lot of time. But I look forward that everybody will support my Bill. I request all of you to support my Bill. I commend my Bill for the consideration of the House and later on it will be passed with the support of all of you. Thank you very much.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Motion moved:

"That the Bill further to amend the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India in its application to constitution of District Councils and powers of the District Councils and Regional Councils, be taken into consideration."

श्री भैरों प्रसाद मिश्र (बांदा) : माननीय सभापति जी, माननीय विनसेंट एच. पाला जी ने जिला परिषद, जिला परिषदों तथा क्षेत्रीय परिषदों के गठन में, इसके उपयोजन से संबंधित भारत के संविधान की छठवीं अनुसूची का संशोधन करने का जो विधेयक प्रस्तुत किया है, मैं उसके समर्थन में बोलने के लिए खड़ा हुआ हूँ।

निश्चित तौर से नॉर्थ ईस्ट की स्थिति पूरे देश से अलग है और वह हमारे देश का महत्वपूर्ण भाग है। इसलिए संविधान में ऐसी व्यवस्था की गई थी और उस समय की वहाँ की स्थितियों को देखकर वहाँ क्षेत्रीय परिषदों का, जिला परिषदों का गठन किया गया था और उनको कुछ विशेष अधिकार दिया गया था, जिससे वहाँ की स्थितियों के अनुकूल, वहाँ की पहाड़ की जो हमारी स्थितियाँ हैं, उनके अनुकूल वहाँ पर कार्य करके, नियम बनाकर वहाँ का विकास करने में वे सफल होंगी और वे काफी कुछ सफल भी रही हैं। राज्य सरकारों ने, केन्द्र सरकारों ने उनका सपोर्ट भी किया है। समय-समय पर संविधान में परिवर्तन भी होता रहा, नियम भी बदलते रहे और नियम बनते भी रहे हैं, लेकिन जैसा विधेयक प्रस्तुत करते समय पाला जी ने कहा है, अभी उनको और भी अधिकार सम्मत बनाने की ज़रूरत है। निश्चित तौर से वह आदिवासी बहुल एरिया है, उसमें उनके अधिकार अलग होते हैं, वनों पर ही आधारित उनका अपना आदिवासी समाज होता है, तो कम से कम उस आदिवासी समाज को भी उनको वनों में अधिकार होना चाहिए, जो वहाँ का फॉरेस्ट प्रोड्यूस है, अन्य चीज़ें हैं, उसमें उनका अधिकार होना चाहिए। वह क्षेत्र खनन के लिए भी जाना जाता है और वहाँ पर बहुत ही बहुमूल्य खनिज वस्तुएँ पाई जाती हैं। जैसा माननीय सदस्य ने मांग की है कि निश्चित तौर पर जिला परिषदों को भी राज्य का एक हिस्सा होना चाहिए, उसमें उनको टैक्स लगाने का, खनन पट्टे देने का अधिकार होना चाहिए, ऐसी मांग उन्होंने की है। मैं समझता हूँ कि एक कमेटी बनाकर इस पर विचार करना चाहिए, क्योंकि जब तक जिला पंचायतें संपन्न नहीं होंगी और आर्थिक रूप से मज़बूत नहीं होंगी, तो फिर कैसे काम कर पाएँगी? इसलिए एक कमेटी बनाकर उस पर विचार करना चाहिए और उनको भी एक हिस्सा राज्य का देने का काम होना चाहिए।

महोदय, मैं बुंदेलखंड क्षेत्र से आता हूँ। हमारे यहाँ जिला परिषदों का गठन किया गया है। मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि अन्य क्षेत्रों की स्थितियों को देखते हुए, मेरे बुंदेलखंड क्षेत्र में भी बुंदेलखंड विकास एरिया का गठन हमारे मध्य प्रदेश एरिया में हुआ है, लेकिन हमारे उत्तर प्रदेश के एरिया में नहीं है। जैसी स्थिति नॉर्थ ईस्ट की है, वैसी ही स्थिति हमारे बुंदेलखंड की भी है, उसकी भी एक अलग सी स्थिति रही है और शुरू से एक अलग राज्य की मांग वहाँ बहुत दिनों से हो रही है। वहाँ की जो स्थितियाँ हैं, वहाँ की जो गरीबी है, लोगों का पलायन है, उसको लेकर भी लोग चिन्तित रहते हैं और कोशिश करते रहते हैं कि वहाँ पर अलग राज्य बनना चाहिए।

मान्यवर, उनका विकास जब ठीक से नहीं हो पाता, वहाँ पर विकास की योजनाएं ठीक से नहीं लग पाती हैं, इसलिए वहाँ अलग राज्य बनने की मांग इसलिए उठती है। मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि जिस प्रकार से नॉर्थ ईस्ट में विशेष व्यवस्था रही है, उसी तरह से हमारे बुंदेलखंड में भी होनी चाहिए। राज्य बनने का निर्णय तो अलग है, यह एक राजनीतिक निर्णय है। इसके लिए तो कई प्रांतों की सहमति बनानी पड़ेगी। दो प्रांत - उत्तर प्रदेश और मध्य प्रदेश को तो इसके लिए सहमति बनानी ही पड़ेगी, लेकिन, तब तक बुंदेलखंड विकास परिषद का गठन करके वहाँ भी विकास के लिए योजनाएं बनानी चाहिए।

उसमें सदस्यों के चुनाव की बात आई है। उसमें सदस्य बढ़ाए जाएं। जैसे नॉर्थ-ईस्ट में क्षेत्रीय परिषदें हैं, वैसे ही बुंदेलखंड के लिए जो कमेटी गठित होगी, वह भी उस पर विचार करेगी। बुंदेलखंड विकास परिषद का जो गठन होगा, उसमें जो सदस्य होंगे, वे भी इस पर विचार करेंगे। इनमें से कुछ नॉमिनेटेड होंगे, कुछ इलेक्टेड होंगे। इसके लिए भी संविधान में व्यवस्था करके उसे अधिकार संपन्न बनाने का कार्य करना चाहिए। हमारे मध्य प्रदेश में जो बुंदेलखंड विकास परिषद है, वह सिंचाई की योजनाएं बनाती है। हमारे मध्य प्रदेश में सिंचाई की अल्टी योजनाएं बन गयी हैं, लेकिन हमारे उत्तर प्रदेश में 'प्रधानमंत्री सिंचाई योजना' में भी वे जिले नहीं लिए गए हैं, जबकि वहाँ पर भयंकर सूखे की स्थिति है। मैं समझता हूँ कि बुंदेलखंड विकास परिषद का भी गठन करके उसे अधिकार संपन्न बनाने का काम करना चाहिए।

महोदय, एक और विचारणीय पृष्ठ है। जैसे हमारे देश में, हमारे उत्तर प्रदेश में जो जिला पंचायतें या जिला परिषदें काम कर रही हैं, उनमें सदस्यों का चुनाव सीधे जनता के द्वारा नहीं होता है। जिला पंचायत के जो सदस्य चुने जाते हैं, वे तो जनता द्वारा चुने जाते हैं। लेकिन वहाँ पर एक चर्चा आई थी और कई बार यहाँ सदन में भी उसकी चर्चा हो चुकी है कि वहाँ पर जो जिला परिषदों का गठन हो रहा है, उसमें जो खरीद-फरोख्त होती है, हॉर्स ट्रेडिंग होती है, उसे कैसे दूर किया जाए। निश्चित तौर पर, यह भी एक विचारणीय पृष्ठ है कि वहाँ पर जिला पंचायतों के प्रतिनिधियों के चुनाव भी सीधे जनता के द्वारा कराए जाने चाहिए। इस विषय पर सदन को कानून बनाना चाहिए।

जैसे नॉर्थ ईस्ट में क्षेत्रीय परिषदें हैं, वैसे ही हमारे यहाँ क्षेत्र समितियाँ हैं। उनके प्रमुख को ब्लॉक प्रमुख कहते हैं। उनका चुनाव मेम्बर्स द्वारा होता है। जो उनका बी.डी.सी. चुनाव जाता है, वह जनता द्वारा चुनाव जाता है। जब ब्लॉक प्रमुख के चुनाव करने का काम आता है, जिसे क्षेत्र पंचायत का अध्यक्ष कहते हैं, तब वे सीधे सदस्यों द्वारा चुने जाते हैं। पहले नगरपालिका परिषदों में भी ऐसा होता था, लेकिन फिर सीधे जनता द्वारा कर दिया गया। इसलिए आज उसमें हॉर्स ट्रेडिंग बंद हो गयी है और उसकी पूरी व्यवस्था ठीक हो गयी है। मैं समझता हूँ कि इसके बारे में भी सदन को कानून बनाना चाहिए, जिससे वहाँ जिला परिषदों और क्षेत्र पंचायतों का गठन सीधे जनता के द्वारा हो।

महोदय, हमारे साथी ने इस विधेयक को नॉर्थ-ईस्ट को तक्ष्य रखकर बनाया है, लेकिन हमारे देश में जहाँ-जहाँ भी ऐसी विशेष स्थितियाँ हैं, उनके बारे में भी चिंता करने का काम करना चाहिए। वैसे ही मैंने बुंदेलखंड के लिए कहा है कि वहाँ बेरोज़गारी है, वहाँ से लोगों का पलायन हो रहा है। खनिज सम्पदा से हमारा बुंदेलखंड बहुत ही संपन्न है। वहाँ इतनी खनिज सम्पदा है कि मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि वहाँ उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार में कुछ लोगों ने उसे दोहन के लिए लगा रखा है। वहाँ पर जो पुरानी सरकारें रही हैं, मैं उनका नाम नहीं लेना चाहता हूँ, लेकिन बारी-बारी से 15 सालों से वहाँ पर दो पार्टियों की सरकारें रही हैं। उन्होंने अपने एजेंडस वहाँ पर लगा रखे हैं। वहाँ पर बहुत खनिज सम्पदा है, लेकिन उस खनन का उपयोग उस क्षेत्र में नहीं हो पाता। यहाँ तक कि वहाँ उनकी नीतामी भी नहीं होती है। उनका दोहन नदियों से हो रहा है। इस स्थिति से उसे कैसे बचाया जाए?

मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि जैसे माननीय सदस्य ने नॉर्थ-ईस्ट के बारे में कहा है कि वहाँ पर क्षेत्रीय परिषदों को खनन का अधिकार होगा, खनन को पट्टे पर देने का अधिकार होगा, तो वे राज्य से संपन्न होंगे और आर्थिक रूप से मज़बूत भी होंगे। जैसे मेरे यहाँ जब बुंदेलखंड विकास परिषद बन जाएगी तो वहाँ पर उसे खनन को पट्टे पर देने का अधिकार होगा। वहाँ पर जो टूट मची है, हमारी राज्य सरकार जिस तरह से वहाँ तूटने का काम कर रही है, उससे उसकी बचत होगी। उन लोगों ने वहाँ पर एजेंडस बना रखे हैं। साथ ही, वे अपना निर्णय स्वयं ले सके। जैसे वहाँ पर कोई भी प्रस्ताव आता है तो कहा जाता है कि राज्य सरकार द्वारा प्रस्ताव आए। जैसे नॉर्थ-ईस्ट की क्षेत्रीय परिषद है, वैसे ही जब बुंदेलखंड विकास परिषद द्वारा प्रस्ताव जाएगा तो फिर उस स्थिति में वहाँ पर निर्णय लेने में आसानी रहेगी। वह राज्य सरकार को भेजेगी। मैं तो कहता हूँ कि इन परिषदों को सीधे भेजने का अधिकार होना चाहिए। राज्य सरकार के द्वारा जब वे जाते हैं तो कहीं न कहीं राजनीतिक कारणों से विकास के प्रस्ताव रूकते हैं। जैसे हमारे उत्तर प्रदेश में बहुत से प्रस्ताव रूके हुए हैं। यहाँ से मांगा जाता है, लेकिन प्रस्ताव नहीं आते हैं। छोटी-छोटी सड़कों तक के प्रस्ताव वहाँ से रूके हुए हैं। कोई केन्द्रीय विद्यालय बनना है, लेकिन जब राज्य सरकार का प्रस्ताव जाएगा, तब बनेगा। मैं समझता हूँ कि ऐसी क्षेत्रीय परिषदों को अधिकार सम्पन्न बनाना चाहिए कि सीधे उनके

द्वारा जो प्रस्ताव हों, वे स्वीकार हों और उस पर केन्द्र सरकार निर्णय ले सके।

हमारे माननीय प्रधानमंत्री जी की विकास के लिए रूढ़ि है, उन्होंने सब विभागों को, माननीय मंत्रीगण को लगा रखा है कि कैसे हम देश का विकास कर सकते हैं, दो साल के अंदर जिस प्रकार से देश में विकास की गति बढ़ी है, जिस प्रकार से योजनाएं बनी हैं, जिस प्रकार तेजी से काम हो रहा है, तो उसमें राज्य सरकार का जो प्रस्ताव रोज़ा होता है, अगर क्षेत्रीय परिषदों को हम मजबूत करेंगे, अधिकार सम्पन्न करेंगे तो ये परिस्थितियां दूर होंगी। जो प्रस्ताव उनके द्वारा प्राप्त होंगे, उन पर केन्द्र सरकार निर्णय ले सकेगी।

नार्थ-ईस्ट के लिए बहुत अच्छे-अच्छे निर्णय लिए गए। जहां ट्रेनें नहीं जाती थीं, वहां ट्रेनें जाने का काम हुआ। जहां कभी नार्थ-ईस्ट के लोगों ने सपना नहीं देखा था कि हम भी कभी ट्रेन देखेंगे, वहां ट्रेन भिजवाने का काम हमारी सरकार ने किया है। आज वहां पर स्टेशन है। आज वहां पर लोग उतरकर ट्रेन का आनन्द ले रहे हैं, वहां ट्रेन की सुविधा मिल रही है। वहां मिनरल्स हैं, हमारा नार्थ-ईस्ट प्राकृतिक सम्पदा से भरपूर है। वहां पर्यटन की अपार संभावनाएं हैं। हमारी सरकार ने इस पर चिंता करने का काम किया है, वहां पर्यटन के लिए योजनाएं बनाई हैं। वहां के विकास के लिए अलग से योजनाएं बनाई हैं, इसका असर भी हुआ है। आपने देखा होगा कि असम की जनता ने इसको एक्सेप्ट किया और सरकार को वहां पर समर्थन देने का काम किया है। वहां पर एक अच्छे मुख्यमंत्री बैठे हैं, वहां से जो भी योजनाएं आएंगी, उससे निश्चित तौर से एक सकारात्मक पहल होगी। हमारा जो एरिया पिछड़ा रह जाता था, इसकी वर्षों से उपेक्षा होती रही है। पुरानी सरकार ने उसके लिए कभी चिंता करने का काम नहीं किया। हमारी सरकार उस पर चिंता करने का काम करेगी और वहां से जो प्रस्ताव आएंगे, उनके आधार पर उस क्षेत्र का पूरा विकास होगा, पूरे पूर्वोत्तर का विकास होगा, ऐसी मैं अपेक्षा करता हूं।

चूंकि, मैं बुटेलखंड का हूँ, उत्तर प्रदेश का हूँ, इसलिए मैं जरूर कहना चाहता हूँ कि ऐसी ही एक व्यवस्था, जैसी कि नार्थ-ईस्ट में है, हमारे बुटेलखंड में बुटेलखंड परिषद बनाकर उसे अधिकार सम्पन्न बनाया जाना चाहिए, उसको अधिकार दिया जाना चाहिए। अपने राजस्व के लिए वह चिंता करेगी। खनन के विषय में वहां लूट मची हुई है। वहां हाई कोर्ट ने सीबीआई इंक्वायरी का आदेश दिया है। आज वहां पर जितने भी लोग हैं, जो खनन में रहे हैं, वे अब भागे-भागते घूम रहे हैं। इसकी वर्षों से मांग हो रही थी। सरकार से प्रस्ताव मांगा गया, लेकिन उसने कुछ करने का काम नहीं किया था। अभी वहां पर हाई कोर्ट ने जब आदेश किया तब जाकर उसकी चिंता हुई है। खनन के जो माफिया हैं, आज वे भागे-भागते घूम रहे हैं। वहां उन्होंने नदियों की सूत खिगाड़ दी, बुटेलखंड में नदियों की सीरत बिगड़ गई है, मैं समझता हूँ कि अगर बुटेलखंड परिषद का गठन होगा, जिस प्रकार से नार्थ-ईस्ट में है, तो उससे भी उस क्षेत्र का विकास होगा। वहां बेरोजगारी का आलम है। हम संपर्क कृति से आते हैं, वहां से जो भी ट्रेनें आती हैं, जैसे महाकौशल आती है, आप देखेंगे कि दिल्ली, मुंबई या दक्षिण भारत में जो भी ट्रेनें जाएंगी, वे बेरोजगारों से भरकर जाती हैं। वहां पर बेरोजगारी का यह आलम है, यही हाल नार्थ-ईस्ट के भी रहे हैं। मैं समझता हूँ कि नई सरकार के आने के बाद से उसमें बहुत कुछ परिवर्तन आया है। नार्थ-ईस्ट के लोग आपको दिल्ली और दूसरे शहरों में काम करते हुए मिल जाएंगे। आप देखिए कि उस क्षेत्र के लोगों की क्या हालत है? जगह-जगह कहीं भी आप देखेंगे तो छोटे बच्चे तक काम करते हुए वहां पर दिखाई देते हैं। इस प्रकार से उनकी उपेक्षा हुई है, उनके पास वहां पर काम नहीं है। वहां बेरोजगारी का आलम है। वहां लोगों को खाने को नहीं रहता है तो अपने बच्चों तक को नौकरी करने के लिए भेजते हैं। कुछ तो भाग कर वते आते हैं और फिर गलत चंगों में फंस जाते हैं, ये स्थितियां यहां हर जगह रही हैं।

16.59 hours (Shri Hukmdeo Narayan Yadav *in the Chair*)

मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि यही हाल मेरे बुटेलखंड का भी है। वहां से भी लोग भागकर सब जगह पहुंच रहे हैं और वहां काम कर रहे हैं। यहां तक कि छोटे-छोटे बच्चे जब जाते हैं तो उनको फैक्ट्रियों में एसिड में हाथ डालना पड़ता है। बहुत लोगों को तो ईंट-भट्टे में बंधक बना लिया जाता है। उनको उनकी मजदूरी तक नहीं दी जाती है, ऐसी स्थितियां हैं। मैं समझता हूँ कि क्षेत्रीय परिषदों और जिला परिषदों को अधिकार सम्पन्न बनाने से ऐसी समस्याओं का निदान होगा। उनको निश्चित तौर से अधिकार सम्पन्न बनाना चाहिए, लेकिन उनकी लोकतांत्रिक व्यवस्था को जरूर कायम करने की चिंता करनी चाहिए।

17.00 hours

जैसे मैंने कहा कि जो भी सदस्यों से चुनाव होता है, उसमें हॉर्स ट्रेडिंग, उन्हें डराने, धमकाने की शिकायतें आती रहती हैं। देश में जिला परिषदों, क्षेत्र पंचायतों का चुनाव सीधे जनता द्वारा कसया जाना चाहिए, सदन को ऐसा एक प्रस्ताव लाकर निर्णय करना चाहिए जिससे जो हॉर्स ट्रेडिंग हो रही है, भ्रष्टाचार हो रहा है, उस पर रोक लग सके। कोई व्यक्ति एक करोड़ रुपये लगाकर ब्लॉक प्रमुख बनता है, कोई 10-15 करोड़ रुपये लगाकर जिला पंचायत का अध्यक्ष बनता है। आखिर क्या स्थिति होगी। फिर वह लूटने का काम करता है। हमें इस बारे में चिन्ता करनी चाहिए।

मैं बुटेलखंड की बात कहना चाहता हूँ। जो उपेक्षित एरिया रहे हैं, वहां स्वास्थ्य सुविधाएं हों। जैसे उस एरिया में एम्स देने का काम हुआ है। अभी और जरूरत है। वहां कई प्रांत लगते हैं। सुदूर के क्षेत्रों में स्वास्थ्य सुविधाएं बढ़ाने के लिए काम करना चाहिए। उत्तर प्रदेश बहुत बड़ा राज्य है। हम कह दें कि एक या दो एम्स दे रहे हैं, लेकिन वह शुरू नहीं हुआ है। रायबरेली वाले को जमीन नहीं मिली थी। गोरखपुर में बहुत मुश्किल से जमीन दी गई है। माननीय प्रधान मंत्री जी वहां उद्घाटन करके आए हैं। वह कब तक बनेगा। उत्तर प्रदेश लगभग चार प्रांतों के बराबर है।

नार्थ ईस्ट के एरिया में उद्योग-धंधों की जरूरत है। वैसे ही बुटेलखंड क्षेत्र में उद्योग-धंधों की जरूरत है। वहां उद्योग-धंधे लगाए जाने चाहिए। मैं जिस संसदीय क्षेत्र से आता हूँ, बांदा में एक कताई मिल थी। जब मैं वहां बात रखता हूँ तो कहा जाता है कि राज्य सरकार की कताई मिल है। वह मिल बहुत दिनों से बंद है। जब राज्य सरकार का प्रस्ताव आया तब भारत सरकार उस पर कुछ काम कर सकेगी। अगर राज्य सरकार का प्रस्ताव नहीं आया, तो जो कताई मिल बंद पड़ी है, जिसके मजदूर काफी दिनों से बेकार बैठे हैं, लोगों को काम नहीं मिल रहा है, फिर इसका निर्णय कैसे होगा। हम सबको इसे देखने का काम करना चाहिए। इसी प्रकार चित्तूर जनपद में एक शोध केन्द्र लिमिटेड कंपनी की तरफ से लग रहा था। उस समय राजीव गांधी जी प्रधान मंत्री थे। वे भी वहां गए थे। श्री नरसिंह राव भी गए थे, फिर वह अपने एरिया में ले गए। उसका काम बंद हो गया है, वह अधूरी पड़ी है, उसकी सब मशीनें नीताम हो गईं। उसकी चिन्ता कैसे होगी। वह कैसे शुरू होगी। उसे कम से कम शुरू कराने का काम करना चाहिए।

नार्थ ईस्ट में जैसे मिनरल्स की बात आ रही थी। मिनरल्स पर आधारित उद्योग लगने चाहिए। जैसे बुटेलखंड में सिल्का रॉड, ग्रेनाइट बड़ी मात्रा में पाए जाते हैं। अगर उस पर आधारित उद्योग उस क्षेत्र में लगेंगे, तो लोगों का पलायन रुकेगा। जैसे हमारे साथी बता रहे थे कि जो खनिज पाए जाते हैं, अगर उन पर आधारित उद्योग लगेंगे तो लोगों को काम मिलेगा, राजस्व आएगा। इसकी चिन्ता करनी चाहिए। अगर इसके लिए राज्य सरकार किसी कारण प्रस्ताव नहीं भेज रही है तो सीधे जिला परिषदों और क्षेत्रीय परिषदों से प्रस्ताव मंगवाकर विकास करने का काम करना चाहिए।

जैसे मैंने शिक्षा के बारे में कहा। इस बारे में चिन्ता करनी चाहिए कि वहां उच्च शिक्षा संस्थान हैं या नहीं। ऐसे ही बुटेलखंड क्षेत्र में शिक्षा की बहुत कमी है। वहां उच्च शिक्षा संस्थान खोलने चाहिए। मैं चित्तूर जनपद से आता हूँ जो मध्य प्रदेश के बार्डर पर है। वहां हमारे नाना जी ने ग्रामोदय विश्वविद्यालय की स्थापना की। क्या हम उसे केन्द्रीय विद्यालय बना सकते हैं? स्वामी राम भद्राचार्य जी ने नेतृत्व का विद्यालय खोला, जिसे विकलांग का नाम दिया गया था, लेकिन प्रधान मंत्री जी ने दिव्यांग विश्वविद्यालय कहा है। क्या हम उसे केन्द्रीय विद्यालय बना सकते हैं? हमें इस बारे में चिन्ता करनी चाहिए। ऐसे ही नार्थ ईस्ट में क्षेत्रीय परिषदें और जिला परिषदें शिक्षा के बारे में जो प्रस्ताव दें, हमें उन्हें देखना चाहिए।

यही कहकर मैं अपनी बात को विराम देता हूँ और इस विधेयक का समर्थन करता हूँ। बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद।

श्री भर्तृहरि महताब (कटक) : सभापति महोदय, जो बिल लाया गया है मैं उसी के ऊपर बोलूंगा, मूल ऑफ दि बिल विन्सेंट पाला जी, ने विस्तार से नार्दन स्टेट के बारे में ब्योस दिया है, काफी विस्तार से बताया है। कुछ प्वाइंट्स हैं जिसे मैं उजागर करना चाहता हूँ। जो शब्द उन्होंने व्यवहार किया है 'customary lives of the tribes'. It is protected under our Constitution, not necessarily only in the Sixth Schedule. But the customs of every citizen of this country are protected by the Constitution. जो हमारी पूजा है, जो हमारी व्यवस्था है, जिस परंपरा पर हम विश्वास करते हैं, यह कंस्टीट्यूशन हमको प्रोटेक्शन देती है कि हम उसी धारा में आने चलेंगे, किन्तु एक विशेषाभास भी है। हमारे कंस्टीट्यूशन मेकर चाहते थे कि मार्डनिटी को अपनाएं, माडर्न थॉट को अपनाएं। ऐसा नहीं है कि हम ट्रेडिशन ऑफ थॉट को अपनाते रहेंगे तो मार्डनिटी को नकारते रहेंगे, मार्डनिटी को भी अपनाया होगा और उसके साथ

आइडेंटिटी के लिए जो ट्रेडिशन है, कस्टम है, हम उसका भी पालन करेंगे, मैं मुवर्स ऑफ दि बिल विनसेंट पाला जी से पूछता चाहता हूँ कि आप दोनों के बीच सिनर्जी कैसे लाएंगे। यह देश के सामने बहुत बड़ी दुविधा है, नागरिकों के सामने भी है। हमारा पांच हजार सालों का ट्रेडिशन है, सिविलाइजेशन है, विश्वास है, आस्था है, कस्टम हैं, इसको बचाए रखते हुए जो माडर्न थॉट है, प्रोसेस है, माडर्न व्यवहार है, माडर्न सिविलाइजेशन है, उसमें हम सिनर्जी कैसे लाएं। हमारे बीच भी ऐसे कई लोग हैं जो कहेंगे कि अद्वारहवीं सेंचुरी का या चौदहवीं सेंचुरी का या तीन-चार सौ साल पुरानी व्यवस्था को ही रखते हुए हम आगे बढ़ेंगे लेकिन हम कैसे आगे बढ़ेंगे। विश्व में कोई भी सिविलाइजेशन, कोई भी सभ्यता पुराने को रखकर आगे नहीं बढ़े हैं। We have to leave certain customs which do not help us to progress and we have to adopt certain methods by which we can make our progress more strong.

I am able to recollect that this was a major question before the Indian National Congress, which Mr. Vincent Pala belongs to, before we got Independence when the struggle for freedom was going on. At that point of time there were traditional people in the country, who wanted this country to be free. But, at the same time, they did not want to adopt modern views of the Western world. There they found Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, who was a believer of modernity but, at the same time, believed in Indian culture and tradition.

In that respect I put this question to Shri Vincent Pala. The question that was before the Congress, not an individual but before the Congress, still haunts us even today when we think of the tribal people of our country, especially of the Northeast.

सभापति महोदय, आप तो रामायण के ज्ञाता हैं। आपने तो महाभारत भी पढ़ी है। आपने रामायण में कभी 'किरात' शब्द का उल्लेख नहीं सुना होगा। बाल्मीकि जी ने जब रामायण लिखी थी, उसमें उन्होंने किरात शब्द को नहीं लिखा। यद्यपि उन्होंने भारत वर्ष के कई स्थानों का उल्लेख किया है, तथापि किरात शब्द का उल्लेख नहीं किया। किरात शब्द का उल्लेख महाभारत में व्यास जी ने किया है। महाभारत में 'मणिपुर' शब्द भी आता है। ये दो शब्द हमारे नॉर्थ ईस्ट को मैन लैंड से जोड़ते हैं। अगर हम गंगा-यमुना बेसिन को समझें, तो महाभारत इसी के साथ जुड़ता है। इससे क्या पता चलता है; यही पता चलता है कि जब रामायण लिखी गई थी, उस समय सागर, महानदी, नदी एवं हद आदि सभी की व्याख्या रामायण में है। हरेक संप्रदाय की व्याख्या है, आस्था की व्याख्या है, लेकिन किरात की व्याख्या नहीं है। नॉर्थ-ईस्ट के बारे में उसमें कहीं कुछ नहीं लिखा गया। इसका यही कारण है कि कवि जो लिखते थे, उनकी दृष्टि वहां तक नहीं गई थी, क्योंकि वहां तक उनका संपर्क नहीं हो पाया था। परन्तु जब महाभारत लिखी गई, उस समय, जो सिविलाइजेशन इस तरफ था, उसका संपर्क वहां से हो गया और संपर्क ऐसा हुआ कि अर्जुन जब वनवास में थे, तो उन्होंने मणिपुर की राजकन्या के साथ शादी भी की। ... (व्यवधान)

DR. THOKCHOM MEINYA (INNER MANIPUR): I am from the State of Manipur and would like to say very respectfully that the Manipur mentioned in *The Mahabharata* is not the Manipur of the North-East. There is a controversy over there. I would respectfully appeal to the hon. Member not to speak about this because this is a dangerous thing. The present Manipur is not that Manipur. The Manipur which was referred to in *The Mahabharata* was the Manipur which is in the present day State of Odisha. There is a whole problem. Please take it back. We have no relation with *The Mahabharata*. ... (Interruptions)

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB: I thought Professor would be happy to have a princess like Chitrangada!

DR. THOKCHOM MEINYA: I am talking of a historical fact. Chitrangada is there, but the relation is not there. The epics are written. When epics are continuously progressing, they allow to connect history with other parts of the area. This is a problem.

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB: Sir, sometimes, it happens.

सभापति जी, कभी-कभी हमारी माइथॉलॉजी और हमारा इतिहास मिल जाते हैं। उससे थोड़ी तकलीफ होती है। हमारे ओडिशा में भी कई विद्वान हैं। वे कहते हैं कि लंका, यह श्रृंखला नहीं है, बल्कि हमारा स्वर्णपुर, यानी सोनपुर है, जहां लंका देवी का टेम्पल है, वही लंका है। इस प्रकार देखें, तो माइथॉलॉजी और हिस्ट्री को मिला देने से थोड़ा-बहुत अन्तर आ जाता है।

महोदय, जो मैं कह रहा हूँ वह मेरी अपनी गवेषणा की बात नहीं है। कई विद्वानों ने इस तरह का जो अमलगमेशन, हमारे भारत वर्ष की जो कल्पना हमारी माइथॉलॉजी में हुई है, हमारे पुराणों में हुई है, उसका जो चित्र वर्णन हुआ है, उसके लिए एक तर्जुमा उन्होंने किया है, जिसका उल्लेख मैं यहां करना चाहता हूँ। जो 'किरात' शब्द है, मैं उसी के ऊपर फिर आना चाहता हूँ कि किरात शब्द नॉर्थ ईस्ट के स्पेशली मंगलौड्स के जो फीचर रहते हैं, उसी के ऊपर कहते हैं कि किरात के फीचर्स होते हैं।

महोदय, विश्व में जैसे तीन तरह के लोग होते हैं- एस्ट्रो-अफ्रीकन, लीनेज में जो आते हैं, जो केस्पियन या यूरेपियन या जिन्हें हम स्वतांग कहते हैं, उनकी तरफ से कुछ लोग आते हैं। कुछ मंगोलाइड्स भी आते हैं। मैंने जो किरात का शब्द कहा, वह नार्थ ईस्ट के जरिये ही भारत वर्ष के सम्पर्क में आया है। आज जो बिल आया है, उसमें कस्टम्स के बारे में कहा गया है, क्योंकि हर जगह अलग-अलग कस्टम्स हैं। ओडिशा के सांसद, जो यहां ट्राइबल अफेयर्स मिनिस्टर हैं, जुएल ओयाम जी को यह भली भांति मालूम है। ओडिशा में ट्राइबल्स बहुत अधिक हैं। वहां कई ट्राइब्स हैं और हर एक का अपना-अपना कस्टम है। हर ट्राइब चाहता है कि मैं अपने कस्टम को बरकरार रखें। इतना ही नहीं, जितनी भी सरकारें ओडिशा में आईं, उनकी भी यही कोशिश रही कि हर ट्राइब अपना-अपना कस्टम बरकरार रखे।

सभापति महोदय, जब ओडिशा म्यूजियम की गोलडन जुबली मनायी गयी थी, तब इंदिरा जी वहां आयी थीं। वे अपने देहांत के दो दिन पहले, यानी 31 अक्टूबर को उनका देहांत हुआ और 29 अक्टूबर को वे भुवनेश्वर म्यूजियम की गोलडन जुबली सेलिब्रेशन में आयीं। वह छोट्टा सा समारोह था, जिसमें डेढ़-दो सौ आदमी थे। मैं भी उस समय वहां गया था। उन्होंने कहा कि हम अपने आदिवासी लोगों को एक म्यूजियम पीस बनाकर कहीं नहीं रखेंगे। वे हिन्दी में कह रही थीं। पता नहीं, मैं उस शब्द को यहां कैसे कहूँ। They should prosper on their own. The Government should be the facilitator. We should not make them a museum piece. We should not show-case them before others. They have human dignity. It should be protected at every cost. That was the mind of our leaders of this country.

आज विनसेंट पाला जी यह विधेयक लाये हैं -- Despite the Sixth Schedule, the protection of the customs is merely on paper. यह विधेयक के जरिये न होकर अपने विचार से होगा, क्योंकि हम जो पहले सोचते थे, वह आज नहीं सोचते। हमारी 1940 के दशक में जो विचारधारा थी, वह आज 21वीं सेंचुरी में नहीं है। यह विचारधारा बदलती रहती है और बदलते रहने के कारण हमारी सभ्यता पांच हजार साल की है। Since we have adopted modernity, we have rejected what needs to be done. इस हिसाब से हमें आगे बढ़ना है। हमें सिविलिजेशन शैड्यूल में ऐसा कुछ नहीं करना चाहिए। हम उनके ऊपर यह न थोपें कि यही करना है। विनसेंट पाला जी ने एक बहिया रिपोर्ट का उल्लेख किया है, जिसे पार्लियामेंट की स्टैंडिंग कमेटी तॉ एंड जस्टिस ने पार्लियामेंट में प्रस्तुत किया था। इस रिपोर्ट में जस्टिस डिलीवीरी मैकेनिज्म के बारे में कहा गया है। इसके ऊपर हर सांसद, हाउस और सरकार को ध्यान देना चाहिए। आज भी ओडिशा में वही दिक्कत है। जितने भी ट्राइबल पापुलेटेड डिस्ट्रिक्ट्स हैं, वहां भी यह प्रॉब्लम है कि हमारे यहां जूडिशरी सिस्टम, जो कई सालों से प्रचलित है, जो कोडिफिकेशन ऑफ लॉ है, वह सब लोगों को पता नहीं है।

एक फिल्म बनी थी, शायद आपको याद होगा, यह फिल्म काफी चर्चा में आई थी, इसका नाम था - मृगया। इस फिल्म के लीरो थे मिथुन चक्रवर्ती, जो कई महीने राज्य सभा के सदस्य भी रहे थे। उनकी वह पहली फिल्म थी। उसकी स्टोरी यही थी कि एक आदिवासी युवक ने देखा कि अन्याय हुआ है, गलत हुआ है तो उसने कपिट का गला काटकर, उसे पकड़कर थाने में आए और कह कि तुम तो न्याय देते हो और मैं न्याय करके आया, क्योंकि आपने कुछ नहीं किया। It is a story written by our Tathagata Satpathy-jji's maternal grand uncle Shri Bhagabati Charan Panigrahi who was a famous Communist leader during the freedom struggle. जिनके नाम पर भुवनेश्वर में कम्यूनिस्ट पार्टी ऑफ इंडिया की जो डेववार्टर बिल्डिंग बनी है, उसका नाम है भगवती भवन। यह उनकी स्टोरी थी और करीब 50 साल बाद यह फिल्म बनी। इसकी स्टोरी यही थी कि कुछ हंटर्स वहां गए थे, एक डिग्ग को मार दिया और इस आदिवासी युवक को लगा कि यह गलत हुआ है, इन लोगों ने तॉ ट्रेक किया है, इसलिए इनको मारकर मैं थाने में जाऊंगा, क्योंकि उन्होंने इन लोगों के खिलाफ कुछ भी कार्रवाई नहीं की है। Simplicity of the tribal life needs to be protected which is never found anywhere. At the same time, they should get modern health support, they should get modern education and they should get better living standards. परन्तु जब हम ये सारी चीजें वहां पहुंचाते हैं तो उसी के साथ विधेय भी वहां पहुंच जाता है। दूसरे लोगों के प्रति संदेह

भी वहां पहुंच जाता है और मानसिकता बदल जाती है। इसमें कैसे सिनर्जी लाएं, यह अगर मूवर ऑफ दि बिल श्री विन्सेंट पाला जी हमें बता दें तो शायद अच्छा होगा और हमें आगे का मार्ग भी मिलेगा। एक अन्य चीज मैं कहना चाहता हूँ, जिसके बारे में इन्होंने भी उल्लेख किया है, वह यह है कि आज वह हालात हमारी उसी काउंसिल में हो रही है। एक जमाना था जब इंदिरा जी ने असम का डिवीजन किया, उसे भी करीब 40 साल हो गए। पहले पूरा नॉर्थ ईस्ट एक ही स्टेट था, उन्होंने जब डिवीजन किया, असम के सारे लोग उसके खिलाफ हो गए। उनका विचार यह था कि अगर ये सेपरेट डिस्ट्रिक्ट स्टेट्स बन जाएं तो अपने हिसाब से अपने राज्यों का वे विकास करेंगे। राज्य तो बन गए, कभी अगर बाद में यहां चर्चा होगी कि नॉर्थ ईस्ट का डेवलपमेंट वास्तव में कैसा हो रहा है तो उसमें ये सारी चीजें आएंगी। उस समय की सरकार और उनके मन में यह विचार था कि अगर हम छोटे-छोटे राज्य बनाएंगे तो विकास होगा। उस समय शिलांग असम की कैपिटल था, गुवाहाटी नहीं बना था। उस समय वे चाहते थे कि अगर ये छोटे-छोटे राज्य बन जाएंगे तो वे डेवलपमेंट के बारे में अपने तोगों पर ज्यादा ध्यान दे सकेंगे। कितना हुआ है, कितना नहीं हुआ है, इसमें शायद हमारे दो मत हो सकते हैं, लेकिन पोलिटिकल लीडरशिप जो उभरनी थी, जब अरुणाचल प्रदेश के मंत्री जी यहां आते हैं तो हम देखते हैं कि वहां की लीडरशिप उभरी है और लीडरशिप कैसे उभरी, वह हमने छः महीने पहले भी देखा था।

कई राज्यों में सालों तक इंटरजेंसी चलती रही। नागालैंड में हाल ही में कुछ सिम्लबैंस ऑफ पीस प्रतिक्रिया हुई है। मिजोरम में बातचीत करके, उनके साथ समझौता करके शांति की स्थापना हुई है। मणिपुर में अब भी स्थिति सामान्य नहीं है। मेघालय में आपस में काफी दिक्कतें हैं और जो ऑटोनॉमस काउंसिल बनी हैं जिनकी सदस्य संख्या 30 से 40 करने के लिए इसमें प्रस्ताव रखा गया है, वे ऑटोनॉमस काउंसिल्स किस तरह से चल रही हैं, How is it functioning? इसीलिए मुझे बोलना पड़ रहा है कि No doubt it needs more attention; it needs more funding but the money should also percolate to the bottom. इस हिसाब से ट्रेडींशंस, कल्चर और कस्टमस को बरकरार रखते हुए हमको गॉर्डरनिटी वहां पहुंचानी है, इस हिसाब से मैं यही चाहूंगा कि सरकार की तरफ से कोई बोलें। Delhi is the nerve centre of the entire administrative network. यहां आप थिंक टैंक बनाइए। जितनी सारी यूनिवर्सिटीज हैं, उनमें कई सलैवटेड में इस विषय को पढ़ाइए तो वहां से कुछ प्रस्ताव आएगा जिसे हम विप्रान्वित करने के लिए आगे बढ़ पाएंगे। धन्यवाद।

माननीय सभापति: अभी कई माननीय सदस्यों को इस पर बोलना है, इसलिए आप इस विषय से संबंधित अपने विचारों को संक्षेप में ही रखें। जितनी लिस्ट है, उस हिसाब से तो तीन दिन तक बहस चलेगी।

श्री मल्लिकार्जुन स्वइंगे (गुलबर्गा): यह सदन बहस के लिए ही है।

माननीय सभापति : लेकिन सदन के समय की सीमा भी तो है।

श्री मल्लिकार्जुन स्वइंगे : आप जो सीमा तय कर देंगे, वही सीमा है।...(व्यवधान)

SHRI SANKAR PRASAD DATTA (TRIPURA WEST): Hon. Chairperson, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution (Amendment) Bill 2015 introduced by Shri Vincent H. Pala. We all know that at the time of adoption of our Constitution, it was written that Scheduled Castes at that time were 15 per cent and Scheduled Tribes were 7.5 per cent of the total population of our country; so, the State, that is, the Central Government, would take necessary initiative for the upliftment of SCs and STs. The intention of the founding fathers of our Constitution was that within 10 years of the adoption of the Constitution, the SCs and STs would be brought in the mainstream and they would become advanced people of our country.

Hon. Chairperson, what we have seen is very well known to you. At the time of the V.P. Singh Government, the Mandal Commission report came which stated that not only the SCs and the STs of our country are backward, but also there are about 52 per cent more people who belong to other backward communities. They are backward in terms of social advancement, economy, education and health and that is why they are called the Other Backward Community. Taking this into consideration, the Central Government provided 52 per cent reservation for them but only 27 per cent reservation could be implemented because of the ruling of the Supreme Court which says that reservation should not be more than 50 per cent. Earlier, we had 15 per cent and 7.5 per cent reservation for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes respectively. Another 27 per cent reservation makes it to 49.5 per cent. We all know it very well.

After 66 years of the adoption of our Constitution, we see that the Scheduled Tribes are not getting proper treatment from the Union of India. There is still unrest among the tribals of the North-Eastern States. There is unrest within the tribal people of our country. Extremism is now growing. Why there is this extremism? If we could provide security to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and others, this extremism would not have been there. As the Government could not provide them the social security, adequate education, adequate healthcare, the extremism has been growing.

I would like to mention that in the North-East there are 16 Autonomous District Councils. Why have these Autonomous District Councils been formed? These Councils have been formed for the purpose of socio-economic development of the tribal people of that region. Sir, these 16 Autonomous District Councils make up 28 per cent of the North-East region and 45.58 million people reside in these District Councils.

In Manipur, these Autonomous District Councils are formed under Sixth and Seventh Schedules of our Constitution. In Manipur, there are six Councils. In Assam, Meghalaya and Mizoram there are three Autonomous District Councils in each State. I come from Tripura, and there is one Autonomous District Council called Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council. Sir, 70 per cent of the land of our State is under this Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council and 30 per cent of the population is within the purview of the Autonomous District Council.

In Tripura, as rightly mentioned by our hon. Member, Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab, tribal people should move forward and the money which is being spent inside the tribal areas should be spent properly. It is a good advice. For that very reason, the Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council in Tripura, which is within 16 Autonomous District Councils, made Village Councils like Panchayats in other areas of our country. These Village Councils serve the purpose of a small village or two or three villages so that people of that locality take interest and participate in the day-to-day work of ADC through the Village Council.

The women empowerment also is there inside TTAADC Village Council. If you can have a visit to our TTAADC, you can see it for yourself. Our Central Government Ministers and officers who are regularly going to Tripura Autonomous District Council, after seeing the livelihood of that area, they are also saying that something good is happening inside TTAADC. For this very reason, the maximum number of women are taking part in this

area.

Why is TTAADC performing well? It is because of effective management of natural resources of the area, because of improvement in education and health in the hilly areas and due to regional autonomy which has been given in this Autonomous District Council Area.

The separatist movement was there and we know it very well but due to advancement of the tribal people of that area, the separatist movement of this region has been tackled. To give rehabilitation to the Zumia - the shifting cultivators - an initiative has been taken to give shelter to them.

Now I would like to place some demands before our Central Minister and I think he would look into the matter. First of all, tribals are now-a-days coming to the city. In the year 2001, three per cent tribal people were coming to the city but according to one assessment of 2011, near about 11 per cent people are coming to the city. For this reason, my demand is that under the ST sub-plan money should be provided according to the population, as was done earlier. But in this year's budget, money has not been allocated according to the population. Only half per cent has been allocated to the ST people. So, the money should be provided according to the ST population of the country. Thirdly, more money should be provided to all the ADCs of the North-East region. Fourthly, the Central Government is now snatching the rights of the tribal people. That should not be done. *Kokborok* is the mother tongue of the tribal people of Tripura. So, I would like to request the Union Government to include this language in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution.

Sir, finally, there are many town areas inside the tribal areas of Autonomous District Council. So, like Municipalities, on the lines of Municipal Councils, Town Committee should be formed inside the Tripura Tribal Area Autonomous District Council.

With these words, I conclude.

Thank you.

SHRI KONDA VISHWESHWAR REDDY (CHEVELLA): Sir, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to participate in the discussion on the Bill.

Sir, who understands the local issues better than the locals? It is definitely not the State Government, definitely not the Central Government. When the Government made an attempt to empower the Gram Panchayats, this was the essential principle. It is the locals who understand themselves the best and they should not only be independent but they should be empowered. So, I rise in support of the Bill moved by hon. Member, Shri Vincent Pala.

The Bill seeks to provide for formation of District and Regional Councils in the Sixth Schedule. In principle, it is a very good Bill. That is what it tries to do, but in practice it falls short. So, the provisions of the Bill, as contained, seek to increasing the power and to make laws of traditional occupation relating to mines and minerals. Although today we have the District Councils and the Tribal Councils, the voting percentage, as explained earlier, is not much and just a few people control the entire District Council. It is very important to make it much more broad-based. In most of these Councils, I think, there is no provision for reservation of women. I think, that is also very important.

Sir, I come from the State of Telengana and it is a Fifth Schedule State. We have a sizeable tribal population in our State. Of course, we do not have Tribal Councils in the State. We have other forms of local administration. But we sympathize with the views expressed by Shri Vincent Pala. It is because culture cannot stand alone. Culture, traditions, festivals are intertwined with economies and laws and sense of justice. What we think as right and just is totally different when somebody else from a different culture views it. We have seen it in the State of Telengana much more than in many other places. We have the *Gond* community. And although I am not a tribal, I share the same name, the Konda Reddy. In Telengana we have the *Chenchus*. I want to explain here one tradition of the tribals.

Around Holi time there is another tradition amongst the tribals. They throw stones on each other's roof breaking the clay tiles there. In other traditions and cultures this is a crime. But actually it is intertwined with the local culture, the local economy and the local law also. If you break somebody else's roof top tiles, they have to put new tiles which means it gives a job to the local potter. This goes on and they do it with fun, just like in Holi when out of fun we throw colours at each other. But in some of the places where new cultures clash, it becomes a crime. The *Gonds* were the greatest meteorologists during the medieval times. The Arabian Sword was made by them. The Ispat was exported from here. The pillar which last for hundreds of years is made by the *Gond* tribals. The mineral wealth of the region belongs to them. I think, we did not recognize this.

Sir, coming back to the issue of the potter, if you look at European cultures, they preserve the traditional works and the clay tile maker became a potter who started making earthenware; who started making ceramics and bone china and then you have modern crockery from Royal Dalton and Veggywood. Not only that, some of the ceramics used in defence there did not come out of modern science research. They came out of traditional craft.

There is one more example which is used in defence and solar energy. Only Germany and Italy make it and not the United States or Japan. It is a particular metal which is used in solar energy. It came out of the chandelier industries of the medieval Italian times. The glass in chandeliers,

when heated by the candles, expands and the holder is a metal ring and that also expands and contracts. If they do not expand and contract at the same rate, the glass will crack. Modern science did not find a solution to that. It is only the Italian chandelier makers who are now manufacturing it. There are only two companies in the world that make that because the science of it came from the traditional craft.

I think that is what we are hinting at. We need to empower them. Let us not lose our traditional knowledge, traditional know-how, and most importantly, let us look at all the tribal knowledge, tribal wealth and the know-how more as a national wealth and they should be empowered.

I have a lot of points to make but I do not want to cover all of them now. Thirty three per cent of them do not have access to clean drinking water. Illiteracy rate is very high.

One of the things which I would like to bring up at this moment is, we share our sentiments with them.

I will take this opportunity to bring two other issues. One is, we have our local bodies. The Fourteenth Finance Commission has awarded Rs. 1.87 lakh crore to the local panchayati raj institutions which are called as MPTCs and ZPTCs. It is not empowering our local bodies. We have a similar problem there.

The other sentiment on which I fully agree with Shri Vincent Pala is, every State should have its own High Court. Telangana does not have its own High Court.

I fully support this Bill. Thank you, Sir.

SHRI PREM DAS RAI (SIKKIM): Hon. Chairman Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to participate in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2015 brought by Shri Vincent H. Pala, Member of Parliament.

This is a Bill to further amend the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India in its application to the Constitution of the District Councils and powers of the District Councils and Regional Councils.

Sir, I would just like to state that in the federal polity of our nation, and in our democratic set up, it is a very important thing to look into all forms of societal aggregation and how society is organized. Especially in the tribal areas of the North-East, we have the Sixth Schedule which gives certain powers and tries to ensure that there is equity and equitable development of the tribal people of the North-East.

Now, this is very important from the point of view that the Statement of Objects and Reasons given by Shri Pala points at increasing the number of members in the District Council from 30 to 40 as originally envisaged in the Constitution, bring traditional occupations of tribals relating to mines and minerals under the legislative competence of the District Council and to protect customary practices and interests of tribals thereto.

So, he has brought this Bill to guarantee them without diminishing the autonomy which the Constitution guarantees for the tribals under the Sixth Schedule.

At the outset, let me make it very clear that I fully agree and support this Bill brought by Shri Pala. In many ways it is to strengthen the Sixth Schedule and to give further powers to the District Councils and the Regional Councils. The hon. Minister of Tribal Affairs is present here. Through you, I would like to ask of the Government whether there has been any study done about the operation of these Councils, and whether the Councils have actually been able to effectively pursue their objectives insofar as the tribal people falling under the Sixth Schedule.

Now, this is very important from the point of view of how they find space for development, how they find space to harness tribal culture, how they find space to be able to build their own forms of development and to maintain that traditional and cultural heritage to their own advantage and to the advantage of the country at large.

I completely agree with Shri Mahtab who had spoken earlier. There are times when we feel that tribal culture is exploited only in showcasing rather than in actually deepening the bonds of tribal culture within themselves and with the rest of the country. That is why it is important to note that this Bill seeks to enhance those powers so that their own autonomy can be further strengthened.

It is very interesting that in North Sikkim we have Dzumsas which is the local body of the people of that particular area. The tribals of that area, of the Lachung Pass and the Lachen Pass, who occupy the northern district of our State have Dzumsas. Instead of having the panchayati raj system there we have what is known as Dzumsas. These Dzumsas are highly democratic in terms of how they elect the head of the Dzumsa. All the work which is assigned for development in those areas actually passes through the Dzumsas and the Dzumsas have a way in which the funds available due to devolution are equitably distributed. This is one area where we can always say that these tribal areas have the kind of equality, equity and inclusiveness that we all in the rest of the country are striving to achieve.

Earlier in the day there was this whole aspect of Sustainable Development Goals, on which there is a discussion which is underway under Rule 193. If you look into tribal culture and if you see their way of life, we do not need to seek any further. You will see a huge amount of sustainability in the way the tribal people live. You will see a huge amount of sustainability in the way they find their food, and in the way they actually have their cultural practices.

I would like to give one instance out here. The Apatanis of Arunachal Pradesh live in an area in which they worship the forest. The reason they worship the forest is to ensure that nobody cuts those forests thereby, ensuring their own contribution in mitigating climate change. There is another important reason for that. In these forests, birds live and all the flora and fauna exist. When the rain comes, the humus that is collected below becomes the kind of manure, flows down into the valley area, which the Apatanis actually cultivate. Year after year in a sustainable manner, without having to put in any more fertilizers, you can see how they grow their food in terms of rice or vegetables or pulses. These forests, where they live in harmony, is the best example of sustainable living. So, there is so much to learn for the rest of the country on sustainability and in achieving the SDGs.

