

[*English*]

11.44 hrs.

(ix) **Demand for financial assistance to Vidyasagar University in West Bengal**

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE  
(AMENDMENT) BILL

[*English*]

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Bankura):  
Sir, it has become impossible for the University of Calcutta alone to respond to the need of the rising student population for higher education in West Bengal. A 10% increase in the seats allotted to Post-Graduate Studies of Calcutta University was a meagre attempt to accommodate this rush. So, the urgency of establishing a new university was seriously felt.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now, we are taking up item No. 4, Consideration and Passing of Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill.

Shri B. Shankaranand.

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE AND MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): I beg to move:

In November, 1975, a twelve-member committee was appointed, under the chairmanship of the then Education Minister, which proposed for opening of Vidyasagar University as a teaching-cum-affiliating university. In framing the guidelines for the course curriculum, the committee suggested blending of non-traditional subjects with traditional subjects. On this basis, on 24th June, 1981, Vidyasagar University Act was unanimously adopted in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly.

"That the Bill further to amend the Representation of the People Act, 1950, be taken into consideration."

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the Bill is a sequel to the Constitution (Sixty-first Amendment) Act, 1988 amending article 326. The Amendment has come into force with effect from 28th March, 1989 having been ratified by the legislatures of more than one half of the States, as required by the proviso to article 368 (2) of the Constitution. It has reduced the age of voting from 21 to 18 years.

Sir, the State Government has already spent a sum of nearly Rs. 7 crores. But the UGC has not granted a single paise till this date. In spite of this financial burden, the University is running 13 departments of non-traditional, and traditional subjects and 12 departments at the post-graduate level. Almost 30,000 students from 32 affiliated colleges are studying under this university.

Section 19 (a) of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 specifies the age of voting as 21. After the Constitution (Sixty-first Amendment) Act, 1988 this has to be amended with retrospective effect from 28-3-1989.

Under these circumstances, I urge upon the Government to release funds for the Vidyasagar University and save this newly created institution of Higher learning in West Bengal.

Under Section 14(b) of the 1950 Act, the "qualifying date" in relation to the preparation or revision of every electoral roll means the 1st day of January of the year in which it is so prepared or revised. Elections are due this year and if the electoral rolls are revised and updated, in the usual manner, with 1st January, 1989 as the qualifying date, the younger generation in the age group of 18 to 21 which has become entitled to vote from