

benefits to advocates and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto."

*The motion was adopted*

SHRI SOMNATH RATH: I introduce the Bill.

17.37. hrs.

INDIAN PENAL CODE (AMENDMENT)  
BILL\*

(Amendment of Section 500 etc.)

[English]

SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK (Panaji): I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Indian Penal Code.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Indian Penal Code."

*The motion was adopted.*

SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK: I introduce the Bill.

17.38 hrs.

PROHIBITION OF USE OF RELIGIOUS, COMMUNAL, REGIONAL AND SECTORAL NOMENCLATURES FOR POLITICAL PARTIES AND PREVENTION OF

MISUSE OF RELIGIOUS PLACES BILL-  
CONTD.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, we will take up further consideration of the following motion moved by Shrimati Basavarajeswari on the 31st July, 1987, namely:-

"That the Bill to prohibit the use of religious, communal, regional and sectoral names for political parties and to prevent the misuse of religious places, be taken into consideration."

Shri Sriballav Panigrahi to continue his speech.

[Translation]

\*\*SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI (Deogarh): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the other day I was speaking on the Bill moved by the hon. Member Smt. Basavarajeswari. But my speech was incomplete. While initiating my speech I was saying that India is an ancient country. Its civilisation is with a 5000 year old history and its cultural heritage is unique. We are proud of our ancient heritage and religion has always played a prominent role in it. Of course the religion has had great impact on our society during those days. It incalculates in us moral values. But the definition of religion is now being interpreted in a totally different manner. The religion today has a different meaning altogether. That is the most unfortunate thing. The meaning of religion was viewed from a wider angle during those days. It was based on spiritualism truth, beauty, the existence of God and

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\* Published in Gazette of India Extraordinary, Part-II, Section 2, dated 28.8.1987.

\*\* The speech was originally delivered in Oriya.

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above all love for humanity. The religion of ancient India is called Hinduism. But it was not limited to one caste or community. It was accepted by all classes of people living in India. Therefore, the venerated Gopabandhu who is remembered by everybody in Orissa and who was popularly called Gandhi of Orissa has rightly described in his poem. A Hindu is not born to work for achieving his self-interest alone, but his every drop of blood is meant for the welfare of the entire nation. The nation means the entire India i.e. Hindustani people living in Hindustan were called Hindus. As I was saying Dharma means, "Ja Dharayati Sa Dharma" The things which preserve all the good ideas and hold them together is called religion. But religion does not promote any narrow outlook and if it creates differences among the people of different castes and thereby leads to the division of the country, it cannot be called religion. Unfortunately the so called saviour of religion or the priests of different religions are giving wrong interpretation to religion and misleading the innocent people. The real purpose of religion is to build the real man, and to create the feeling of humanity in the hearts of every people. If we consider it from that angle the aim of every religion is the same. Every religion aims at building noble and cultured man and to purify their conscience. There is a clash taking place in the mind of every humanbeing. This clash is between the evil and the good, between divisive power and satanic power. As a result of which a man is not able to decide which is bad and which is good. At such critical hour it is the duty of the religion to see that the evil is defeated by the good atmosphere. As I have stated earlier every religion aims at creating good men and promoting brotherhood among the people all over the world. I would like to quote from Upanishad:

"ASOTAMA SADGAMAYA  
TAMOSAMA JYOTIRGMAYA"

which means lead me from the path of falsehood to the path of virtue and lead me from darkness to light. this should be the teachings of every religion. Our people should be guided by such religious teachings. But we are disappointed when we see the present situation in our society. The religion of today is not giving any guidance to the people in this direction. In the name of religion the religious leaders are trying to achieve their political end. They are misleading the devotees and creating confusion and chaos in the country by politicising religion. That is the greatest tragedy. The main aim of these religious leaders is to amass wealth and in order to achieve this objective they are giving wrong definition of religion. They are responsible for creating discontent in the minds of our people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, ours is the country of Budha, Ashoka, Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru. They were all spiritual people and were dead against communalism. They had preached secularism. It is regrettable that in their country of truth and non-violence, a group of people are promoting violence and anarchy. Our head hang in shame when we see communal riots are taking place in the land of Gandhiji. Religion is not bad. Religious feelings are not bad. But fanaticism or giving wrong interpretation to religious ideas are bad. Religion is a personal affair.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, religions are existing in advanced country like Soviet Union. There is christianity and also there is Muslim religion in that country. But no body bothers as to what religion who belongs to. Religion is treated strictly as a personal affair. It has no relation with the nation. But take the case of India. We have accepted secularism as our national policy. Secularism does not mean anti-religious society. It means all religions should be equally treated and equally regarded. No body can interfere with others religion. It is justified to feel proud

of our own religion. But one should not denigrate the religions of other communities. While saying so Sir, I would like to give the example of Jesus Christ. You know in what circumstances he met his tragic death. He was crucified. At that time he had said "Oh God please forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing." So Jesus Christ forgave the people who killed them. He prayed to God saying that those people are ignorant and they do not know what they are doing. They are under darkness. In order to light up their path they should be pardoned. Similarly, Sir, a group of people belonging to some religion are adopting destructive attitude in this country. They are killing innocent people. In the name of religion they are creating chaos and spoiling the peaceful atmosphere of this country. They are spreading violence and unrest among the people. They are striking at the root of Indian cultural heritage and tradition. Our heritage is unity in diversity. They are acting against this truth and weakening the country. They do not know what they are doing. Therefore, I pray to God that he would pardon them.

We have always laid emphasis on preserving our cultural heritage and maintaining the unity of this country. We are marching ahead on the path of progress. India has always taken lead in spreading peace and spiritualism in the world. The hermits, saints, politicians of India like Shri Arbindo, Gandhi and Jawaharlal have shown the real path to the people of India. They have spread spiritual light in the life of our people. The people now indulging in separatist activities in the country should think of the contribution made by the greatmen to our country and they should stop creating division in the country. They should search their hearts and join the national mainstream. When we are determined to maintain our secular character and when we are marching ahead on the path of progress, they should join the national mainstream and work for the all round

development of the country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, now I would like to give some suggestions as to how the above objective can be achieved. Inaugurating the Budget session our hon. former President addressed the Members of both the Houses. He gave an indication in his address that a Government Bill delinking politics from religion would be brought in Parliament. We are eagerly waiting for that Bill. But the Bill has not been introduced in the Parliament so far. Had the Govt. brought forward that Bill it would not have been felt necessary on the part of our hon. Member to move such Private Member Bill in this House. Therefore I would like to request the Govt. through you to bring forward such Bill as early as possible. Because politics should not be allowed to be linked with religion any more. Religious places should not be misused. No political party should bear religious name. Those who are indulging in fanaticism and those who are religious fundamentalists should be debarred from taking part in politics. They should not be allowed to fight election. Some stringent provisions should be made on the Bill so that such people cannot take part in politics. I must blame the political leaders for politicising religion. At the time of election the political parties select some candidates on the basis of caste and religion. If a man can draw more votes from a particular caste or community; he is selected as a candidate of a political party to fight election. Moreover the political leaders very often, visit the religious places at the time of election campaign. A party may not win the election or will get less votes if the help of religious leaders is not obtained or the candidate is not selected from a particular religion. The administration should take strong attitude against the persons who are spreading fanaticism ideas. Such people should be kept away from parliament and assemblies. If necessary severe punishments should be given to the people who are spreading communalism in the name of re-

[Sh. Sriballav Panigrahi]  
ligion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have passed anti-defection Bill in this House. This Bill was accorded massive support from all sections of the people of the country and members belonging to all political parties extended their wholehearted support to this Bill. But what happened after 2 1/2 years. It is most unfortunate that some leaders of opposition parties have gone to the High Court challenging the anti-defection Bill. They are doing this to achieve their narrow political interests. Such doings by any political party should not be excused.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to say that religion and politics are two different things. Religion is a personal affair. It has no relation with politics. The affairs of the nation is reflected in politics. It is the business of the political parties to manage the national affairs. They have to play greater role in finding solution to the problem of national importance. Religion should not have any place in national affairs. Therefore the Bill should be brought before the House as early as possible and all these provisions should be made in that Bill. Once the Bill passed and made an act it will go a long way in solving this problem. Once the Act came into force the people misusing religious places for political purposes and indulging in spreading communalism will be punished and thus a peaceful atmosphere will be created all over the country. Sir, I am concluding in another two or three minutes.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our children are very simple and innocent. While in school they are in the formative age. Any thing taught to them at that stage creates a great impact on them. So a prayer of containing the good things of all religions should be taught to them. If they recite that prayer a feeling of equal respect to every religion will come to their mind. Because the aim of all

religions are the same and the themes of all religions:

"Iswar Allah Tere Nam, Sabhko sanmati De Bhagwan" contains in the prayer of Mahatma Gandhi and therefore this prayer should be recited by all students. The main theme of all religions should be taught to the students in their schools. The students must have a general idea of our cultural heritage. Besides yoga should be taught to the students. They should practice yoga regularly. We can achieve two things if they do so. Yoga can discipline the minds. It will help in their physical and mental growth. This is also very essential to maintain good health. At the same time we should lay emphasis on imparting good education to the students. Such education should be provided on all the schools. The students should be given financial grant to go on excursion. They should go different places in the country so that they will be acquainted with the cultural heritage of entire India. Then they can adopt wider attitude towards different religion and people living in different parts of the country. They are the future of the nation. So we must provide them this facility.

Sir, I would like to say a word about inter-religion and intercaste marriage. When our students will get better education and will have better understanding about different castes and religions they will have the freedom to go for inter-caste and inter religion marriage when they will attain marriageable age. So our aim of promoting inter caste marriage will be easier achieved.

Then I would like to express my views on joint participation in festivals. As you know India is a multilingual country. People living in different region celebrate different festivals. There are some specific purposes for observing different festivals. No festival should be limited within a particular community or in a particular region. If our religious leaders and the social reformers desire and



they take lead in every festival can be celebrated by all people in this country. If the religious leaders, social reformers and political leaders irrespective of religion and caste join together in the festivals like Id, Nabama, Car festival, Sonia and Pongal etc. Secularism will be strengthened and a feeling of brotherhood will be created among the people. A peaceful and healthy atmosphere will be created if the religious leaders given joint discourse in educational institutions and the religious places. They tell the true meaning of religion. As I had said earlier the aim of all religions is one and the same and every religion preaches the welfare of the man kind. If this suggestion is implemented it will go a long in preserving the unity and integrity in the country. In this context I would once again like to suggest that the Peoples Representatives Act and the Constitution should also be amended if we want to bring some changes in our society. We are now marching towards 21 century. Only after 12 or 13 years we will step into 21st century which would be the century of science and technology. The world has made remarkable progress in the field of science and technology. But modern science & technology. will lead us to destruction if spiritualism does not prevail upon it. Without a sense of element of religion, element of spiritualism, it may be destructive, it may mean destruction, it may spell destruction for the entire mankind. In order to save the mankind from destruction, we have to take some steps. In the situation prevailing in world today, it is India which can take the lead in guiding science and technology in the right path. Our modern invention can be used for peaceful purposes and not for destructive purposes. As you know, Sir, United States of America is one of the richest countries in the world which is also one of the most advanced nations so far as science & technology is concerned. But hundreds of youths belonging to that rich country are getting depressed and they are coming to India to study its religions. They are being attracted towards

Indian spiritualism. There are being attracted towards Indian spiritualism. They are coming in Iskon team and they coming as Hippies. Hundreds of them visit our festival at Puri and take part in Sankirtan, i.e. chanting of hymns. So India has always shown light to other countries and can also give right direction to the entire world in saving the mankind from destruction.

With these words I extend my whole hearted moral support to the Bill keeping in view the indication given by hon. President to bring forward such a Government Bill I hope the hon. Minister will make it very clear while replying to the debate. Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, for having given me the opportunity to speak on this Bill.

[English]

SHRI GADADHAR SAHA (Birbhum): I am very thankful to the hon. Member for the Bill under discussion, for an opportunity that has been given to this House, this Government and the States to discuss the role they have played and the stand they have taken in combating communalism and communal riots and also an opportunity has been given to the House and the government to expose the danger inherent in communal understanding and in communal riots; and evolve ways and means of preserving communal harmony and national unity and integration of India, which are considered most important for we all want one strong India, one strong nation to stand against the divisive forces and to retain sovereignty that we got at our cost. In a situation of pervasiveness of communalism in society and the intensity of communal riots in society, we all agree that the urgent need of the hour is to preserve communal harmony and national unity and integration and sovereignty and to ensure peace. Now in a situation of pervasive communalism, it is thought and realised the cost of secular movement and mass mobilization is still very high and the softer option

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is chosen by most of the political parties, in elections. It has been pointed out by the participants in Research Methodology Course that to study communalism during 1950 even the secular leadership of Congress Party chose a nationalist like Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad in the Muslim majority constituties for him. It has also been pointed out that left parties blundered conceptually and compromised electorally with the communalists in Kerala. It was also pointed out by them that communalism was wrongly seen before independence as a pre-capitalist ideology, the ideology of feudal section. the root and genesis of communalism is in politics, not in religion; and it is watered by religious sectarians and flowers in an environment of uneven capitalist development.

18.00 hrs.

As is seen what it is in India today. Despite these two pit-falls in conception and practice, it has been observed by the participants - the left political parties were the only political and ideological force that could lead the struggle for secularism and we should remember also the role of national political parties in combating this communalism and communal riots. The national political parties like the Congress Party, the Janata Party, Lok Dal, and the BJP had been using all along communalism in an opportunist fashion while the Akali Dal, RSS, Muslim League, Shiv Sena and Jama-ete-Islam are also propagating and promoting communalism as an ideology.

You will all be happy to note that the pitfalls that were earlier seen in the left parties were overcome, rooted out. Now, the positive bold steps have been taken for breaking away the relations with communal parties. A noticeable feature is that concessions are sought by the communal and religious based parties and granted also by the party in power. It is sought by the religion-

based communal parties and what is the impact of these concessions to these parties? It is damaging. The leaders of the communal parties are legitimised generally as representatives of their communities or groups. And, on the other hand, the secularists are isolated. this is the impact of the concession given to the religion based communal parties. Some times allegations are made against Police administration, Government and the State. The question whether it is true or not is the most serious important question. It is alleged, some Indian administrators had become partisan towards co-religionist, caste followers but indifferent towards socially, educationally and economically unprivileged sections of the society.

It has also been pointed out that police personnel are demoralised. What are the causes? It has been pointed out that it was due not only to low salary but also due to the training without proper orientation and frequent transfers and political interference. Television, Radio, Cinema have not directly preached communalism. But these powerful media have not taken a clear cut stand on communalism, communal riots and have not opposed them. The media has promoted religiosity, fatalism and superstition. These are not elements of communalism but they have contribution in the existence and persistence of communalism.

Textbooks on history are more prone to communal interpretation. History can never be broken into sectarian periods like Hindu period, Muslim period or Sikh period. The History of India cannot be divided into British India, Muslim India, Hindu India and Christian India. A scientific division of history is possible and it can be divided on the basis of geographical area and the stages of development. For example, feudal period with agriculture as main activity and capitalist period with industry as main activity. What is the good impact of this division on student?

No communalism can grow in their minds and the students who are taught History on this scientific classification are kept free from communalism and provided with scientific secular facts and thoughts.

It has been pointed out that the notion that communal riots had their own dynamism could be tackled by independent of various complex social processes, unleashed by the changing socio economic formation was not only partial but counter productive.

Sir, communal riot was a conjectural outcome of the pervasiveness of communal ideology and had its linkage with communal competition, unemployment, pauperisation are some of the objective facts produced by our Socio economic formation. Communalists are able to use the sense of insecurity arising out of competition in trade and industry and for jobs. The element of protest ideology, lack of access to normal channels of grievances redressal, absence of normal methods of interest articulation are some of the significant factors in any particular communal riot.

Instigators or vested interests, who are responsible for communal riots must be brought to book. It is the planned nature of communal rioting, which is one of the factors influencing intensity of such rioting. Further, passivity of the State and popular participation from among the lower sections accentuates its intensity.

It is also serious matter and allegation that Indian State was getting more communalised and crimes have also been communalised and the State had acted actively or tacitly given support to engineer communal riots on many occasions. The Delhi, Kanpur, Rourkela riots of Nov. 1984 were cited as examples. Religious symbols are freely used in public celebrations at Government functions and even to launch pro-

gramme for environmental protection in recent years. The need of the hour is to cut connections between religion and politics. Only a democratic, secular socialist polity vigorously promoted can be an effective and appropriate antidote to communal politics. This can only be achieved when the focus of politics is not merely on winning elections but on generating strong pressures through political campaigns and mass mobilisation for solving people's socio-economic problems and communal problems. A massive campaign has to be mounted for this purpose. Caste and communal politics can only flourish in the absence of such mass movement. So, the only way to combat this is to cut connections between religion and politics. The need of the hour is to separate politics from religion and national secular political parties from religion based communal politics and parties. And the slogan should be no more concessions to the communal and religion based politics and politicians and parties.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: We have already exhausted the time. If the hon. Members wish, we can extend some more time. I think, if the House agrees, we may extend the time by 45 minutes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

SHRI Y.S. MAHAJAN (Jalgaon): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member Mrs. Basavarajeswari has rendered a great service in bringing this Bill before the House. The objective of one political and social policies is to establish in this country a secular State, a State in which all the religions will be equally respected, but a State in which no religion will be able to dominate the Government machinery. But may I say we have not yet taken any concrete steps to really establish a secular society in this country. We have allowed, under the name of religion, political parties which have always pursued group interests or the interests of their re-

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ligionists. The result of this sort of things that went on in this country before the achievement of freedom also resulted in the partition of this country. Those tendencies have continued even now, unfortunately, though year in and year out, day in and day out we say that we want to establish a secular society in this country. This Bill, therefore, is very welcome. I regard it as the first step towards the evolution of a secular society. It says that the use of religious, communal, regional and sectoral nomenclature in the title of a political party shall be prohibited. I think the best thing we can do is we can give up all religious or regional names for our political parties and ensure that any religious place shall not be utilised by any person or a political party to achieving his or its political aim and that no political speech shall be allowed to be made in any such place. There are parties which claim to be secular but, in fact, they make use of religious places for their propaganda, they make use of religious places for giving religious or communal education to the children for stacking arms and for creating dissatisfaction against the Government. Under these circumstances, it is not possible to evolve a society which is wedded to secular ends. We want a society in which the fundamental rights given under the Constitution will be enjoyed by everybody, everybody will have the right to freedom of speech, everybody will have right to claim employment, everybody will have the right to freedom of movement, freedom of association and freedom of expression. These are the liberties or freedoms which are secured by the Constitution and when these freedoms or these rights are enjoyed by every citizen, there is no reason why any group of people should organise themselves into a political party under the guise or under the name of any religion. Even if they have religious names but follow the secular ideals, it would not matter. But unfortunately, we find that there are people who stock arms in mosques, some in *mandirs*. Punjab is a case

in point where the Gurdwaras became arsenals, places where stacks and stacks of arms were kept and they were used for killing innocent people. Can there be anything more tragic than this sort of thing in this country? Let us, therefore, pursue secularism resolutely, without fear or favour, and see that such things do not happen.

The Bill brought by the hon. Member, therefore, is highly welcome and this is the first concrete step. We know that thought in Punjab, there is a Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee which has the responsibility of keeping the Gurdwaras free from such undesirable tendencies, the Committee allowed the Gurdwaras to be controlled by extremists. The extremists would kill innocent people outside and go back and take shelter there. Can there be anything more irreligious than this? We have to see that we follow religion in the proper sense of the term. Religion is concerned with the relationship between man and the creator. We have no intention to interfering in one's right to worship. But if under the guise of our religion, such sectional interests are pursued which are inimical to the unity and integrity of the country, then they should be put down with a heavy hand. Therefore, it is my humble view that it is a good attempt on the part of Shrimati Basavarajeswari to bring forward this Bill and see that these temples, these mosques and Gurdwaras are examined regularly. The Bill says that they should be examined twice a year. No, Sir. Whenever there is any suspicion, the police and the army personnel should have the right to enter the Gurdwara, temples and mosques. Whenever there is any suspicion there should be no hesitation on the part of the administration to clean those places of worship. Places of worship where arms are stacked are not places of worship. I am not in favour of protection being given to them and they should be strictly controlled. If a temple becomes an arsenal I should not mind if it is bombed. It is not a house of God.



No temple, mosque and Gurdwara should be allowed to give shelter to or become places for extremists taking arms. With these words I support this Bill.

DR. G. VIJAYA RAMA RAO (Siddipet):  
Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member, Shrimati Basavarajeswari has introduced this Bill with good intention. What I think and feel is that this Bill will solve the problems of this country. She intends to get over these problems with the passing of this Bill. Sir, in the Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bill, what she emphasised mainly is on the religion and she has also pointed out about the regionalism and the regional parties. So, I would like to state something about the regional parties.

Sir, in the last 40 years, in our country, only one biggest regional party has been continuously ruling our country. The people of the country are agitated that the party in power has been indulging in major corruption and abuse of power. The people in particular parts of the country have been disappointed. Ultimately, after waiting for a longtime, they were looking for other big parties like the Communist Party or the Janata Party to make their contributions. But in certain States, the biggest party could not become an alternative to this ruling party which has been continuously in power. The people are agitated over this. The people have now come to the conclusion that there is no point in waiting for other parties like Communist Party or some other parties to come to power at the Centre. So, under these circumstances, the people have to opt for the regional parties and the regional parties are also doing better than national parties. There is nothing wrong in having the regional parties in some parts of the country. What I would like to emphasise is that as long as our regional parties pursue the national approach, as long as they could rule the people in the most satisfactory manner, the

regional parties are not harmful to our country and the people will encourage them. Ultimately, one day the national parties would lose their identity in our country. Therefore, what I would like to point out here is that unless corruption is completely removed, unless no agitation is there among the various political parties, certainly you will find the regional parties taking the place of national parties. So, my advice to the hon. Members belonging to the national parties is that they must serve the people of the country. As long as they give a good administration, certainly there will not be any regional parties.

Coming to the religion, this is not a new thing in our country. For centuries together, when you see the history, the religions have been there in our country. People have been suffering from illiteracy, ignorance and poverty for centuries. Wherever there is illiteracy and poverty, people will not become conscious about the bad effect of religion. After independence, what happened? What is the outcome of our education? I can say, even after 40 years of our independence, in spite of our improvement in the literacy area, wherever you go, religion has grown up like anything. Casteism has grown up like anything. Even the educated people, scientific people also in our society follow certain religion, follow certain caste and certain principle pertaining to the religion. So, the Government since beginning has not tried sincerely to root out the ill-effects of religion. On one side, you go for religion and on the other side, you say, there should not be any effect of the religion. How is it possible? Neem tree naturally gives neem fruit and it cannot give mango fruit. You want to grow a neem tree and wanted to get mango fruit. How is it possible? As long as you have religion approach, as long as you encourage religious feelings, as long as you yourself behave in that way-your way of dressing, your way of dealing with your neighbours-it will have

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some impact on the society. Most of the people who are sitting in the high offices and high position always advocate some religious feelings. I do not want to name anybody. But even Ministers-whether it is State or Central-are behaving like that. Their dress itself indicate some religion. This particular Minister having a Tilak goes to a Muslim man. How will he receive this Minister? He does not have secular approach. He has got certain religious belief and religious thinking and he wanted other religious man to have secular feeling. What I feel is, as long as you continue to practise religion, and as long as individuals are not away from the religion, it cannot be ruled out. Similarly, if one individual becomes religious-minded, naturally he will encourage his religion; he will try to improve his religion people and naturally this sort of difficulty will be created in our country.

What I advise is, you must be a secular man and you must leave your religion, you must leave your traditions and you must leave your caste and creed. Then only, a secular society will be possible and a good society will be there and this problem will not be there.

[*Translation*]

SHRI HARISH RAWAT (Almora): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to support this Bill.

Our constitution envisages a secular State but the term 'secular' does not denote that in the name of democracy we should allow parties to be formed on the basis of caste and religion. If we permit religion based parties to be set up, it will definitely create feelings among others that so and so party is based on a particular religion. For the people following other religions this will inadvertently lead to the creation of feelings of alienation towards this party. In this Bill, it

has been proposed to put an end to such thinking. I support this Bill and urge the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs that religion should be separated from politics and this point has been made by learned people more than once both inside and outside the Parliament.

The main reason behind the situation in Punjab today is the mixing up of religion and politics. Religion plays such a dominant role in Akali Dal that it has been reduced to a party belonging to a particular religion only. The root of the current problem in Punjab can be traced here.

Similarly, we have other parties in the name of religion like the Muslim league etc. I don't know what sort of internal character the Muslim League has but from what it appears, it seems that it does not present a healthy example. Therefore, I will request the hon. Minister of Home Affairs that Government should not only profess but take concrete steps to ensure that religion is separated from politics. We not only have to say it but also give it a practical shape.

Secondly, there are regional parties. These parties are formed on the basis of particular regions. A party has been formed in the name of Gorkhaland and another in the name of Telugu speaking areas. Similarly, there are other regional parties. Such parties create difficulties and put hindrances in the emergence of a democratic set up. I am not accusing the Telugu Desam or any other party. What I want to say is that such things should not be supported as it would encourage regionalism. They may say it or not but others tend to feel that they indulge in regional politics and thrive on this basis and even establish their rule in their particular areas. This naturally incites people living in other States to have their own regional party to govern them as well. That is why, the Telugu Desam or any other regional party will encourage regionalism

even if it has a healthy economic and other policies. Government should give a serious thought to the fact and see that in the name of religion or casting 'sena' is raised as 'sena' has been raised in Bihar on caste basis. These forces are trying to fight among themselves.

. India is a country where all religions of the world are in existence. Here several languages and associate languages are spoken. Customs and traditions also vary from area to area. If such tendencies are allowed to be developed then a time may come when inspite of Government's sincere endeavours, it may not be able to control the situation. Therefore you should impose restrictions on these parties and groups which are taking political advantage of regionalism, religion or such other separatist politics and efforts should be made to ensure that such forces are not able to strike deep roots in the country.

With these words, I support this Bill.

SHRI KEYUR BHUSHAN (Raipur): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Shrimati Basavarajewari has initiated the discussion and brought out facts in detail. Today, our country is really threatened by communalism and regionalism. These forces have endangered our nation. In this situation, it is appropriate to propose that such elements should not get political protection. Demands have been made to put restrictions on them and that no political party should have its nomenclature based on any religion or region. No one can deny that it is essential to do so. It is true that we are living in a scientific age but we are yet to realise the essence of religion. The basis on which Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and other religions were founded is right but they have been narrowed down to caste. At present one community is being alienated from another, one religion is being separated

from other, basic values are being eroded when even in this scientific era, our spirituality teaches us truth, love and compassion which are the main sources of every religion and there cannot be any deviation from it except in the other manifestations. Today, we take recourse to science to fight with one another and to destroy each other. But these superficial differences will not exist for long and the underlying unity will come to the fore. Only by separating religion from politics will not work, we will have to change the thinking of the people. Until communal and casteist feelings exist in the hearts of people, it will emerge in other forms and the situation will remain as it is.

I remember the political parties which existed before independent. During our national struggle for freedom an assessment was made of the regional feelings. We accorded equal importance to every regional language even in those times. Today recognition has been granted to only 14 Indian languages but in those days every regional language was equally encouraged. Songs were composed and all sorts of cooperation was received. The distortions which have crept into linguistic fanaticism today could not have been there if we could have carried on our work as before. We will have to readopt that. We have to pay attention to the problems of every region. India consists of many regions and every region is an independent unit with a separate language. Similarly, there are several religions. Besides the main religions, there are many sects, each sect having several branches and every one of them are recognised. We cannot deny them recognition because they are in existence for so many years. Looking at Shri Chaube, I just realised as to why religion has been equalled to opium, it is because religion has been used to get power and to maintain it. If we go into the fundamentals of religion, we will find that there are no such distortions.

[Sh. Keyur Bhushan]

The intention behind this proposal is very good that religion should not be used for political gains and for individual interests. It should be binding that religion cannot be used for political purposes. I appreciate the intention of the Bill and request the political parties also to appreciate the essence of all religions which contain the spiritual ideals and should encourage them and also use them to spread the message of communal harmony and unity. We should promote these ideals which emphasise the unity of all religions. The difficulties of every region should be treated as national difficulty and due efforts made to remove them. When a practical shape will be given to these thoughts then automatically regionalism and casteism will come to an end. As we are busy in the task of nation building, if we consider these aspects also, the feelings of regionalism, communalism and religious fanaticism will banish. With these words, I will conclude.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I am extremely grateful to our private Member, Shrimati Basavarajeswari, who has moved this Bill. About 21 hon. Members have participated in this debate and almost all of them have given very constructive suggestions keeping in view the developments that have taken place in recent years in our country and based on religious feelings.

Some of the Members have said that we have a 5,000-year old tradition, culture and civilization and we considered, in all these years, religion not as any kind of thing belonging to any faith or to any community. Members have said that religion is that which maintains wisdom and gives a kind of light to

the humanity to develop as a whole. I share the sentiments of all the hon. Members. Some Members have appreciated this Bill and have urged upon the Government to bring forward a Bill from the government side on similar lines or a comprehensive one to cover all these view-points. It has also been suggested that the present election laws should be amended for this purpose. Consultation with various political parties has also been suggested by many of the Members.

I was reading the speeches of the hon. Members. Very constructive suggestions have been given. So, the discussion on this Bill has helped in creating public opinion in this matter and getting support from various political parties also.

Everybody knows - and all the Members have also stressed - that ours is a Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic. We have chosen a path which many countries in the world have not chosen. I am reminded of the great Poet Robert Frost who has said in one of his immortal poems:

"Two ways lead into the woods  
I took to the road less  
travelled by  
And that makes all the  
difference"

There are various systems of Government in the world. Some have chosen their path as parliamentary democracy, but they have not chosen their path to achieve a socialist society. Others have decided to have a socialist State but not through parliamentary democracy. Ours is the only country which has chosen the both because our forefathers, who fought for country's independence and sacrificed their lives, had decided that we must travel the path which is less travelled by. We have chosen the both: we have to establish a socialist order of society but through the parliamentary system of



democracy. Therefore, what is the difference that we are finding today? We have chosen an difference that we are finding today? We have chosen an untravelled path, a path not travelled by many countries in the world. Therefore, whenever we pass from one stage of society to another, whenever there is transformation from one stage to another stage, say, from agricultural society to industrial society, and we have to establish a socialist order of society, at every stage whenever you transform through a parliamentary system of democracy, we have to face internal contradictions, and the contradictions have to be met through the parliamentary system of democracy. The other countries which have adopted other systems have their own ways how to meet the internal contradictions. Therefore, whatever difficulties today we have is because of this. Here we have declared ourselves Socialist, Secular, Democratic, Republic. Here, all the religion, everyone of us have respect for all the religions and it doesn't mean that we are based on religion.

Some friends were telling that Congress has a kind of communal bias. Never. History of Indian National Congress shows that it is a continuous process of maintaining its composite culture. Mahatma Gandhi gave his life, Shrimati Indira Gandhi gave her life. Panditji has said that India's culture is a composite culture. Therefore, whatever sacrifices our countrymen have made, all our leaders have made, it is just to maintain this composite culture of our country where we equally respect all. In recent days, we find that there has been misuse as some of our friends pointed out, that there has been misuse of religion and religious places for political ends. Article 25 guarantees freedom of religion. But reasonable restrictions can be imposed by the Government. It is there. Religion being a sensitive matter, we always take action in consultation with various political parties and intellectuals. Recently the Home Minister has assured the

House to bring forward a Bill for separation of religion from politics. The National Integration Council in its various sittings also discussed this problem of how to find solution to separate religion from politics. But many Members have suggested that the best thing is to have built up a strong public opinion in this matter and also to put voluntary restraint by various management bodies of the places of worship to prevent the use of religious places for criminals and political activities. We have given right to form associations. Therefore, it may not be possible unless we built up public opinion and politically educate our masses. Well, to push through this kind of a Bill we have to prepare the background for that.

Regarding nomenclature of political party, there are people who are giving their names because they say that by giving a name to the ruling party, they can get elected. But ultimately it doesn't last long. We have seen the history. A young man or Member may have come today or tomorrow to this House but he may not be knowing anything about this. We have seen this during the last 50 years. We have seen this. Therefore, we are not very much bothered about this. One of the Chief Ministers has also said about corruption who thinks that so much of corruption should not be there.

Sir, the Ministry of Law have initiated action for making specific provisions in the Representation of the People's Act, 1951 to avoid use of religious places for election purposes. I am sure, final decision is to be taken in the matter after consultation with the various political parties and I hope, the process has started. Keeping in view the above facts and keeping in view all the suggestions which the Members have given, I hope, the Government has taken note of these suggestions and perhaps, the action process will start either in the National Integration Council or in consultation with the political parties. We have to see that religion and

[Sh. Chintamani Panigrahi]

politics are separated. Therefore, I would request the Hon. Member to withdraw this Bill. The Government is seized of this matter and also all the political parties are thinking on these lines. Therefore, I request the Hon. Member to kindly withdraw the Bill. She has highlighted the dire necessity of the day and all the Members have supported her. I hope it will help the Government and all the political parties to come together and decide something in the near future. We are adjourning this session. May be, in the next session something positive will come out of our discussion. It will help realise her aims and our aims also.

I again request her to withdraw this Bill.

\*SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESWARI (Bellary): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am happy to state that more than 20 hon. Members of this august House took part in this vital debate. All of them have given valuable and constructive suggestions to keep politics away from religion. In fact all of them are of the same opinion. None of them is in favour of mixing politics with religion.

The hon. Minister of State for Home has clearly stated his intentions to keep politics and religions separate. He has assured this House to bring a comprehensive Bill in this regard. Our hon. Home Minister Shri Buta Singh has expressed his views on this matter. He has expressed his shock over the communal clashes while taking part in the discussion on "Communal disturbances" he has regretted these incidents.

I completely agree with the views of our hon. Minister. There should be freedom to the citizens to practice their own religions. If the religions come in the way of unity and integrity of the country then the Govt. cannot keep quiet. Religion should never be a

hurdle to the progress and all round development of the nation. Communal disturbances are like Cancer. Prevention is better than cure. This is true especially in the case of Cancer which is a deadly disease. Communal disturbances are more dangerous than Cancer. Hence the communal disturbances should not be allowed to occur.

The term "Secularism" was not there in our Constitution earlier. This has been adopted through 42nd amendment of the Constitution.

Reorganisation of States has been made on the basis of languages for the convenience of the people. All the national languages mentioned in the 8th Schedule are treated equally.

Similarly all religions are equal. The Constitution lays down some conditions also. Religion or community cannot pose any threat to the unity and integrity of the nation. Even after 40 years of our independence, we are still coming across some unfortunate and shameful instances like refusal to sing national anthem, disrespect to national symbols etc. etc. Hence it has become very essential on the part of the Govt. to take firm steps to see that our future generations do not take part in such activities. In fact they should be enthused to become great patriots.

God has created only two classes - female and male. The other classes which are created by man are only hurdles in our development and progress.

Some hon. Members from Telugu Desam party spoke on this Bill previously and today also. I do not agree with them. The member from Telugu Desam who spoke today referred to the achievements of his party. He says that Congress-I has not ful-

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\* The speech was originally delivered in Kannada.

filled the promises which were given at the time of election. This is totally wrong. He should know that Congress-I has a long history and it has liberated the country from the clutches of Britishers. He said that Congress-I people are all corrupt. He went on praising Telugu Desam Members. He takes pride in the programme of distribution of rice at Rs. 2 per KG in Andhra Pradesh. He should not forget the assistance given by our Central Govt. in the form of subsidy to help the poor masses of our country. I hope, at least in future the hon. Member will not make such unfounded allegations.

I respect all the languages and religions. In fact, the synthesis of all religions is the same. But we should not bring communal or regional or religious feelings in politics.

The incidents which are happening in Punjab are shocking and they are threatening the security of our country. Some places of worship are being used for storing arms and ammunitions. Some terrorists are taking shelter in these holy places. This activities must be stopped once and for all. Nations unity and integrity is more important than other things.

I hope and trust that the hon. Minister will take into consideration all the constructive suggestions given by various members while framing a comprehensive Bill which will be introduced in this august House in the near future as assured by him. I thank the hon. Minister for giving this assurance and I thank the Deputy Speaker for giving me this opportunity to speak on this vital Bill and before concluding my speech I would like to give some concrete suggestions. I withdraw my Bill as the hon. Minister has assured this House to bring a comprehensive Bill to separate religion and politics completely.

19.00 hrs.

My suggestions are as follows:

1. Our Intelligence should be improved and should be trained particularly for these tasks (anti-communalist).
2. Peace committees should be formed at the village, taluk and district level comprising of all sections of the community.
3. Ban political parties whose members belong to one community and which incite communal violence.
4. The head of the religious institution should be answerable to the activities going on in the temple, mosque, gurudwara, etc.  
  
They should not allow its followers to hoard arms or use the place for subversive activities.
5. Our education system should inculcate broadmindedness, toleration and secularism.
6. Persons inculcating violence should be treated as criminal offenders and they should be dealt with an iron hand.
7. Religious heads should be banned from making comments on political issues or asking a particular section of the community to vote for a particular party.
8. Media should be made use of for preaching secularism.
9. The press should not exaggerate incidents.
10. Special courts should be set up for deciding cases speedily and bringing the offenders to book.

[Shrimati Basavarajeswari]

11. Special anti-communal forces should be formed and trained so that they can deal with these kinds of sensitive situations.

In view of what I have stated, I seek leave of the House to withdraw my Bill.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:

"That leave be granted to withdraw the Bill to prohibit the use of religious, communal regional and sectoral names for political parties and to prevent the misuse of religious places."

*The motion was adopted.*

SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESWARI: I withdraw the Bill.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The next item on the agenda is Schools (Taking Over and Uniform Syllabus) Bill to be moved for consideration by Shri Balasaheb Vikhe Patil. He has written that he may not be here today for moving this.

Then, the next item is to be moved by Shri Hannan Mollah. He is not here.

Shri Piyus Tiraky.

19.06 hrs.

CONSTITUTION (AMENDMENT) BILL

(Amendment of Article 244, etc.)

[English]

SHRIPIYUS TIRAKY (Alipurduars): Mr

Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Constitution of India, be taken into consideration."

I have already stated in the Statement of Objects and Reasons that Article 244(2) and Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India provide for the administration of tribal areas in the States of Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura and creation of autonomous districts in these States, but there is no such constitutional provision for the States of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan. Government had also stated that in eight States, there are scheduled areas. Scheduled areas mean areas which have been earmarked for the development of adivasis there, because this community all over India are very backward in comparison to other communities. The Government has rightly said that this community, which consists of various types, their culture, their language, their way of life and their common laws must be preserved. Apart from the thinking of the Government, it is also rightly mentioned in the Constitution itself; some reservation has also been given there to safeguard their interests, help them to grow and come in the mainstream of the nation.

Right from the beginning, the Government has been very much serious and already a lot of money has been spent for the development of tribal people and scheduled areas. But our efforts and the efforts of the Government has not so far reached the actual people, the people for whom the money and energy had been directed so far. The Government and others who are supposed to be their friends and want to help them, have been thinking that they should be spoon-fed, but the money or the help has not reached them because of the structure in the Government. We have seen that in spite of