

SHRI MORESHWAR SAVE
(Aurangabad): Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Constitution of India.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Constitution of India."

The motion was adopted.

SHRIMORESHWAR SAVE: Introduce the Bill.

15.45 1/2 hrs.

CONSTITUTION (AMENDMENT) BILL
(AMENDMENT OF EIGHTH SCHEDULE)
BY SHRIMATI DIL KUMARI BHANDARI-
CONTD

Mr. Chairman: The House will continue the further discussion on the Bill moved by Shrimati Dil Kumari Bhandari. Shri Zantya may speak now.

SHRI HARISH NARAYAN PRABHU ZANTYE (Panji): Sir, I fully support the amendment Bill moved by the hon. Member Shrimati Dil Kumari Bhandari to include Manipuri and Nepali languages in the Eighth Schedule of the constitution. This will give these languages their due recognition and also fulfil the aspirations of the millions of people who speak these languages to further enrich them.

Yet another language which is long overdue for including in the Eighth Schedule is the Konkani language, which is spoken by over 50 lakhs people in the States of Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra, Goa being the focal Centre.

Konkani is a modern Indo-Aryan language with Devnagari as its script.

As is the case with most Indian languages, Konkani is also derived from Sanskrit language and has close affinity with Marathi, Hindi and Gujarati. It is the official language of Goa and is the medium of instruction at the primary level. At present, it is also subject of study at the secondary, graduate and post-graduate levels. It is also one of the subjects for the UGO NET Examinations at the All India level for recruitment for lecturers and awarding of Junior Research Fellowships.

In 1975, the Sahitya Akademi, which is the highest literary court of the country recognised Konkani as an independent literary language of India. Since then, Konkani writers and authors have been receiving Sahitya Akademi Awards for their significant contribution to Indian literature.

Every year, hundreds of books are published in Konkani. The main publishing centers being Goa, Bombay, Mangalore and Konchi. Many periodicals are published from Goa, Bombay, Mangalore and Kerala. A Konkani news bulletin is also being broadcast from the Bombay Station of the All India Radio.

Appreciating the strong feeling of the Konkani speaking people, the Legislative Assembly of Goa has passed a resolution demanding inclusion of Konkani in the Eighth Schedule. Even the International Goan Convention held in Toronto, Canada in August 1988 sent communication to the Centre embodying these demands. But, apart from promises, there has been no positive response from the Government so far.

The Konkani speaking community is getting restless over the indifference towards their legitimate demands voiced time and again over the last four decades. A feeling is now growing amongst Konkani speaking people that they are deprived of the opportunities of participation in a number of programmes at the national level. Sensing this feeling of resentment, the 11th All India Konkani Sahitya Sammelan held at Karwar in Karnataka State on the 8th and 9th

February 1992 passed a unanimous resolution urging the Government of India to include Konkani in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution without any further delay and to put an end to the injustice to which Konkani speaking community has been so far subjected to. So, our request to our Government is along with Manipur and Nepali, Konkani may also be included in the Eighth Schedule.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria): Hon. Chairman, Sir, Shrimati Dil Kumari Bhandari has presented in this House a bill which will be welcomed by every one. That is why I would like to extend my as well as my part's whole hearted support to it.

It is an irony that Government has made it a practice to not enact a law even on a subject which has the support of all the parties unless a rebellious attitude is adopted towards it.

Today, the situation is that about one dozen youth from Manipur under the leadership of Yan Sarad Chandra, are going round Delhi meeting and motivating the various political parties, youth organisations and intellectuals to press the Central Government to include Manipuri and Nepali in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. Manipuri is the medium of instructions upto 12th standard in Manipur. Manipuri is also the language of the Legislative Assembly over there. The Government work is also done in Manipuri. But the youth of Manipur who receive education upto secondary level with Manipuri as medium of instruction do not have better prospects for making to All India Services, if they pursue their studies at university level with same medium of instructions.

Private Members bills have been presented in this August House in 1985 and in 1988 on two occasion earlier and several times prior to that for the purpose of including Nepali and Manipuri in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution. Government also gave assurances on those bills. Hon. Shri Chit

Basu is present in the House. I was going through the old proceedings when happened to see a bill presented in the House by him Governments come and go. Manipuri could not get place in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution despite several assurances given by various Government on this important issue.

Today, there is a atmosphere of revolt against Hindi and Manipur. Why is it so? The people there have got a feeling that the supernacy of Hindi is virtually a hurdle in the way of including Manipuri in the 8th Schedule of the Constitutions. This issue has assumed this proportion. What does the constitution of India say in the article 345:

"The official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script. Not withstanding anything in clause, for a period of fifteen years from the commencement of this Constitution, the English language shall continue to be used for all the official purposes of the Union for which it was being used immediately before such commencement.

The President shall, at the expiration of five years from the commencement of this Constitution and thereafter at the expiration of ten years from such commencement by order constitute a Commission which shall consist of a Chairman and such other Members representign the different languages specified in the Eighth Schedule as the President may appoint, and the order shal define the procedure to be followed by the Commission. It shall be the duty of the Commission to make recommendations to the President as to the progressive use of the Hindi language for the official purposes of the Union, restrictions on the use of the English language for all or any of the official purposes of the Unions, the language to be used for all or any of the purposes maintained in article 348.

Today the non-inclusion of Manipuri in the Eighth Schedule is adversely affective the propagation, promotion and progressive uses of Hindi, as envisaged in the Constitution of India. If the objective enshrined in the article 343 and 344 are to be fulfilled then

Manipuri should be included in the 8th Schedule.

Article 347 says -

"On a demand being made in that behalf the President may, if he is satisfied that a substantial proportion of the population of a State desire the use of any language spoken by them to be recognised by that State, direct that such language shall also be officially recognised throughout that State or any part thereof for such purpose as he may specify"

By untrue of this provision Manipuri became the language of courts in Manipuri and it also became the language of the Legislature and the medium of instruction upto middle school level. As Manipuri is not the language of communication with the Centre, separatist tendencies are raising their heads in this region. That is why, it becomes the responsibility of the Centre to include the regional languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution, to create harmony in the country.

Sindhi language was included in Eighth Schedule of the constitution by passing a bill in the House in 1968. History of India is witness to this fact that a very big part of Nepal was made a part of India by the English through treaty with Gorakhas for their luxury and comforts. They also gave a very large part of India to Nepal as a consequence of the treaty. As a result of that treaty, the entire region of Kumaon Garhwal and Himachal in North India and the Terai region of Nepal adjacent to Gorakhpur and Bihar has close relationship with U.P. and Bihar. Nepali is spoken in this entire region.

Previously Sikkim was not a part of our country. After emergency such a situation arose that Sikkim became a part of India geographically. It was given a status of a State under our Constitution. When the Constitution was being written, when the provision for languages was being made,

when the official Languages Act was being made, then a great mistake was done by not treating Nepali at par with other languages of India. There was an excuse and a reason for that. Now when Sikkim has become an integral part of India, and Nepali is the official language of that State then there is no justification for not including it in the 8th Schedule of the constitution. So the language issue is also one of the reasons for the present day attack on the federal structure of the country. Rich and long history and long tradition of a language should not be the only criteria for including it into the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. Regional languages must be considered for inclusion in the constitution as they are the mirror of cultural heritage, history and traditions of the region. If we want the unity of the country also went and to maintain harmony in the country, we must include these two main languages of Eastern India in the Constitution. It will help the culture and heritage of that region mingle with the main stream Indian culture.

With these words, I support the bill which has been resented by Shrimati Dil Kumari Bhandari, because today growing separatist tendencies in eastern India are using language as an excuse, and as an inciting force. This excuse must be out an end because great linguist like Sunit Kumar Chatterjee had said that it is true that Manipuri is spoken in a limited area but a very few languages of India are as complete as this language. Such is the view and opinion of that great learned man and thinker. All the Sanskrit Granths whether it is Ramayan or Mahabharat or Tripitakas of the Prakrit language or other religious scriptures have been translated in Manipuri language. The entire literature of Sanskrit has been translated into Manipuri. From the point of view of the riches greatness and property of language, Manipuri has a claim to be included in the constitution of India.

With these few words I support the bill introduced by Shirmati Dil Kumari Bhandari. I would like to request the Government that this should not be neglected only on the plea that this bill has been presented by a private

Member. I want that the Government itself for the purpose of winning the hearts of the people of eastern India, should present this bill as a Government bill. With this, I would like to thank you also, for giving me an opportunity to speak.

16. 00 hrs

[English]

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY (Katwa): On behalf of my party, I also sincerely thank Shrimati Dil Kumari Bhandari for brining forward this important Bill. Truly, she is voicing the sentiments of many Members form various parties who moved similar Bills as private Members' Bills in this very House. Unfortunately, in the past, those Bills could not be adopted by this House. But on this occasion, I fervently appeal to the Treasury Benches and to the Government to adopt this Bill unanimously. All the political parties of our country are in favour of inclusion of Nepali and Mainpuri in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. Shri Advani has referred to one Private Member's Bill that was adopted in this House and made into a law. And I have in my hand fourteen such instances where, Private Members' Bills were passed in this House with the cooperation of the Government and made into a law. With regard to the present Private Mmber's Bill also I demand similar treatment.

Sir, this Bill is very important in the sense that over the years, people are agitable over this very sensitive issue. Cases for the inclusion of Nepali and Manipuri in the Eighth Schedule of our Constitution have been presented very strongly by the mover of this Bill as well as other hon. Members. I also want to remind this hon. House that there is no case for this House or for the Government to deny inclusion of these two languages. As a matter of fact, I have no objection if a third language is also taken into consideration. For example, there is a demand that Knokini should also be included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. Nobody can give any rational explanation as to why some languages are included in the Eighth Schedule, while some other languages which

are equally developed, equally capable of creative expression in literature, in science and in various aspects of life, do not find a place in the Eighth Schedule and dinned recognition. Can this sort of discrimination be allowed to continue any longer in our country? Can there be two types of treatments accorded to different languages? If somebody asks me a question as to why Bengali is there in the Eighth Schedule and why Nepali is not there, I really have no explanation. Shri Subhash giving may say that Nepali should not be included in the Eighth Schedule because it is a foreign language because it is spoken in a foreign country. This is a very wrong argument. Then English orginatd as a foreign language could not be included in the Eighth Schedule,

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA:
(Andaman & Nicobar Islands): Did he object really?

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY: There was some reference in the news papers. I really do not know. My point is that it is not are all necessary to create this sort of confusion. I do not know why this red-herring be introduced into this. It is a very old demand that Nepali should be included in the Eighth Schedule. This is the demand of all the parties and different parties have given support to this demand. Long ago, just after Independence, the Communist party demanded that these two languages should be included in the eighth Schedule. Sir, the four State Assemblies of our country, West Bengal Assembly, Tripura Assembly, Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim Assembly, unanimously passed a resolution not once but many a times but despite that it the Government continues to deny recognition to this language the people living in that part of the country will feel further alienated and they will fall victim to different fissiparous tendencies. a language should be the vehicle of unity. We cannot allow this language question to bring disunity in pur country. It is an age old language. I was going through the history of its development and I found that in the year 1975 the Nepali language was recognised as a major Indian Language

[*Sh. Saifuddin Choudhury*]

by Sahitya Akadami. I found that the Nepali was introduced as a vernacular subject by Allahabad University in 1911 and by Calcutta University in 1921. Nepali is the medium of instruction up to the Degree level in North Bengal University and is an elective subject for Honours and PHD students. Nepali is also recognised for the public service commissioner examination West Bengal. Nepali is the medium of instruction in West Bengal Secondary Education and Central Board of Secondary Education. West Bengal Government and also North Bengal university has set up a Nepali Akademi. This is the principal language of broadcast in Gangtok station of All India Radio and Karsing station of All India Radio. I think it is not necessary for me to enumerate all these things. But the question is we have to be sensitive to understand that any delay will be fatal in this respect.

I do not understand that if there is no financial implication, then why certain languages are mentioned in the 8th Schedule and certain others are denied of this right.

Similarly, we all know that Manipuri is an age old language. It is more than 2000 years old. It is very rich in expressing literary flavours, in expressing thoughts of human mind. It has a very rich heritage. These people have been agitating for a long time. They came here in New Delhi and undertook fast. We met these people. The agitation that has been going on in Manipur was referred to by Advaniji. They have a feeling of frustration and they are agitated over it. They may say that if their language is not recognised then they will not allow any programme in other language shown on their land. We do not consider it to be a secessionist's movement; it is a rightful movement of people of Manipur. They came here and we took them to the Prime Minister of our country. We submitted to the Prime Minister, a Memorandum stung by more than two hundred Members of Parliament belonging to various Parties. We submitted to the Prime Minister, a Memorandum signed by more than two hundred Members of

Parliament belonging to various Parties. I must tell you one thing. The discussion that we had with the Prime Minister was positive for the first time. He said that; "That kind of rigid closed mind the Government had before can no longer. The list has to be broadened." He gave an indication I am very happy for this -that for three languages, the Government's thinking is at a very advanced stage. If that is the case and if what the Prime Minister had said had been conveyed, to the Home Minister., then he should not have any problem in giving a clear commitment and also no problem in giving a really helping this private Member's Bill to be adopted in this House. This is very important. We have to very seriously dwell upon the aspect of language issue.

We have so many languages, developed and less developed and under-developed. We also have the dialects. We were not at all informed about them. We are a very big and a great country composed of so many languages and what is wrong, if the world is told about it in a proper manner, in a statutory manner that this is the country where 2000 languages are spoken. It includes various dialects also. We believe that we should keep our unity and integrity intact. If we give due recognition to all such languages, then what harm that will do? We have a wrong notion, we have a wrong way of thinking that only by an authoritarian imposition of this language or that language, we can really safeguard the unity and integrity of our country. No. By forcibly imposing a privilege on a particular language and denying the same privilege to other languages we are not helping to keep the unity and integrity intact. We are not helping unity to grow. We are really helping disunity to spread among the people.

In respect of languages, our title is very clear. Some languages are there in the country which do not have a script of their own. Such a language was there in Tripura. Kogbarak language is there. Previously, they did not have the script of this language. When, our Government came to power, we tried to help them and really developed a script

for it. It is not the Party, but the people, the research workers, the experts, who did that. This has to be the democratic attitude. People should be allowed to think about their expressions; their education; their communication with the Government in their own language and so on. Only by giving this kind of right, can we create a situation where, voluntarily, people will accept one language as the link language and not as a kind of imposition, as a kind of privilege and denying the same privilege to others. So also, if anybody is really interested for promotion of unity in the interest of unity, as a link language in our country it is at the heart of our Members- then he must also be very sincere to ensure that all other languages, the demands for which are there in our country that they should be duly recognised and should be given a proper place. This is very important. That is why, I do not want to take much of your time but this demand is a democratic demand and should be accepted. This is also supported by a democratic movement.

If we are really working scientifically, if really our mind is working scientifically, then we should not delay this.

So, I conclude by saying that there is nothing sacrosanct about not broadening the list of Eighth Schedule. There is nothing like it. We should not be afraid of that. If we allow these three languages or two languages, then some other demands may also come.

We should not be afraid of that; we are not going to lose by that. We have to allow flourishing of the genuine aspirations of the people; and by that way only we will be helping this country's unity to be strengthened; and all the achievements that we had in the past would really make further achievement with the rich heritage that we have to carry forward for new civilisation.

With these words, I hope this Government will come forward and really support this Bill and does not delay inclusion of these demands any further that have been made through this Bill.

SHRI A. CHARLES (Trivandrum): I am thankful to you for giving me this opportunity to participate in this very important discussion.

Shrimati Dil Kumari Bhandari has introduced this Bill for inclusion of Manipuri and Nepali in the Eighth Schedule thereby giving some sort of more recognition to these two rich languages.

As we all know, the scope of a Private Members Bill is often limited in the sense that under ordinary circumstances it is not the procedure or convention of this great House to pass a Private Members' Bill; but it does give an opportunity to highlight an issue, to bring to the notice of the House a matter of urgent public importance and through the discussion to the whole country about the need for this urgent business. To that extent, this Bill has served a great purpose, through I am not supporting the passing of the Bill. I am happy to convey the hon. Member, Shrimati Dil Kumari Bhandari, who has moved this Bill, that I am in total agreement with the contents of the Bill and the spirit of the Bill. I may be excused for this. After hearing the hon. Leader of the Opposition and hon. Member from West Bengal, Shri Saifuddin Choudhury, if I, may say I was not inclined to tell that till I heard the speech of Mr. Saifuddin Choudhury, I may remind him what transpired during the National Front Government. The Marxist Party was supporting it. There was a categorical assurance by the then Prime Minister, Shri V.P. Singh that Nepali Language would be accepted. But that still remains a problem.

When the Janata Government was in power from 1977-80, at least Shrimati Dil Kumari Bhandari may know, the then Prime Minister said that Nepali was not an Indian language. You should not forget that.

SHRIMATI DIL KUMARI BHANDARI (Sikkim): That was sufficiently opposed and condemned the Nepalese speaking people of India, and the Government of India, which is now being ruled by the Congress Party has stated that Nepali is not treated as

foreign language. Are you contradicting that? He said that he agreed with the letter and the spirit of the Bill. But then, he says he can not support the Bill simply because one hon. Member from the opposition had supported the Bill. I am really very sorry. If this is the feeling in democratic country of which we are proud of being the greatest living democratic country in the world. If the member from Ruling Party feels like that, I am really very sorry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: At the end of the debate, you can reply.

SHRI A. CHARLES: I am really said that I am totally misunderstood by the hon. Member. What I said was that after hearing Shri Saifuddin Choudhury, I was telling him, that the Prime Minister during the period 1977-80, said that it was not an Indian language and I am telling that Nepali is an Indian language.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY: We did not accept the formula of the then Prime Minister. We condemned that attitude and it was not accepted by anybody in this House.

SHRIMATI DIL KUMARI BHANDARI: For that matter, Shri Morarji Desai — with all due respect to him you consider whatever he had said — said that the annexation of Sikkim was not proper. Can you accept it? He said that Sikkim's merger was annexation and it was greatly condemned by both the Houses, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. If you go by his words, then you have to leave out Sikkim also. That is my contention.

SHRI A. CHARLES: I am sharing your concern. I am with you. I am telling you that I am supporting the Bill and its contents and I may at this point of time, go even a step forward, by saying that if Nepali is not an Indian language, to say so, it is as good as to say that Nepalis are not Indians. Can you say that? They are very much in the mainstream. They are the proud citizens of this country. We can never forget the great leadership given by the Nepalis during the

freedom struggle. They are the flesh and blood of this country and my honest conviction is that as quickly as possible they should be brought to the main-stream of the country. There is no doubt about it. But the question is, as posed by Shri Saifuddin Choudhury, there are other languages, there are other claims and all those should be considered by a responsible Government and I do say that even in West Bengal, the statistics show it — I stand corrected — that there are about 277 languages or dialects only in West Bengal and almost 35 of them are foreign languages and 18 out of the 277 have only some scripts. The others are dialects.

What I mean is to say that every language has to be given equal importance may be easy, but it is not possible. Nepali is a rich language. It is a developed language. We do not have any doubt about it on this side of the House. But it is only a question of procedure. I am sorry that I am misunderstood totally by her.

SHRISAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY: Very badly misunderstood by a lady!

SHRI A. CHARLES: Sir, ours is a great country. There are different languages, thousands of languages and different dialects, different traits and different cultures. Though we claim to have a composite culture as our heritage, it is our responsibility and duty to protect the identity of every small group, however small it may be. Then only the unity and diversity which is the essence of the source of our democracy can be built up.

I am not against this Bill. However, from the statement of objects and Reasons it is seen that there are sufficient grounds that the demand made should be accepted. After all, there are at least two Governments, Sikkim and West Bengal where this language has been accepted as an official language. And four other State Governments have recommended the inclusion of Nepali in the Eighth Schedule.

There are other cases also, like those in

Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh where there are some sections of people who speak the Dogri language. Even, the honorable from Goa he was a Minister for ten years there — has mentioned that they are also demanding the inclusion of Konkani language. so, my point is that the Government should come forward as quickly as possible with suitable legislation under the procedure laid down in Article 345 whichever is necessary to accept this. Only then the long pending demand can be fulfilled and the aspirations of the people can be met.

I would like to say that the people who speak a number of languages, are demanding to include those languages also in the Eighth Schedule. That should not come in the way of including Nepali and Manipuri languages because these two languages have to be considered definitely. Certainly these two languages should get priority.

Our country is now undergoing a great period of crisis. There are a number of problems. Languages, religious and regional feeling - these are all some of the very dangerous messages that go in the disintegration of this country. So, it is time for us to have are-thinking on all these.

I must also give a word of caution or a sense of my feeling to the Members of the BJP. Though Kashmir issue is not directly connected with this, I am very concerned about what is happening in Kashmir. Every group of people or every race should have a sense of belonging to this great nation. Article 370 is the only Clause under the Constitution which binds Kashmir with this great country. and if a message (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI (Jhansi): Sir, the hon. Member may be asked to be relevant to the subject. Whatever he is saying is not relevant.

[English]

SHRI A. CHARLES: Mr. Chairman, Sir,

I am not yielding. the moment I say about Article 370, he is not all right.

As a dutiful citizen of this country, it is our duty to respect our Constitution. Through you, Sir, may I ask a question to them? Have not they given a declaration that they are under the Constitution and stand by every Clause of the Constitution? How boldly enough can they say that Article 370 shall be scrapped? That will be the greatest injustice done to this great country. That will go under the root of the national integration. Their Ekta Yatra and Rath Yatra will not carry this country anywhere. Shri-Advani is a dear friend of mine. that is another thing. I must tell him that this is a country where even the minorities should have a sense of belonging and we will have to be very careful in dealing with such sensitive issues.

I am happy that this Bill has been presented at the very right time. I would request the hon. Minister, who is in charge of Home Affairs, who is looking after this matter to consider this. Definitely the Minister will understand the feeling of both the House. I think, the feeling is unanimous. And the Nepali and Manipuri languages should be given due to recognition they deserve. This is a long pending case.

I mentioned about Konkani. I mentioned about Dogri language. I have also mentioned about some other language also. It is the responsibility of the Government to constitute a Committee for amending the Constitution and within a time frame to bring forwards a suitable legislation fulfilling the aspirations of the minorities and long neglected people so that they may not feel that they are out of the mainstream.

I hope that at least now Madam Bhandari will understand the spirit with which we on this side are supporting the great cause for which she and her people are fighting. They are about 10 million people. That is not a small number. We have to accept their feeling. I am sure that it this great step is undertaken, those ten million people - they are already in the mainstream and they have contributed so much in building up this country - will be in the forefront to see that

[Sh. A. Charles]

this great country march towards the 21st centre as a great country, giving a lead to the whole world.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN (Kishanganj): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to support the Bill submitted by the distinguished Member Shrimati Dil Kumari Bhandari.

I recall at this moment that the question of inclusion of additional languages in the Eighth Schedule has been raised in the Parliament in many ways - in Parliamentary Questions, in Statements and, of course, through Private Members Bills. There has been a stock reply from the Government which has lost its cutting edge today. It is no longer relevant. In fact, it was never convincing. The Government's argument always been well all languages are national languages. We want all languages to develop. But, the, all languages need not be in the eighth Schedule. It is this discrimination which has caused a political situation in the country to which - in relation to Manipur - the Leader of the Opposition was kind enough to draw our attention. The question of language is not just a question of language. It is not just a linguistic question; it is an emotional question; it is a sentimental question; it is a psychological question; it is a national question. For all of us the sweetest language is one in which our mother has sung us the lullabys. Our sweetest language is one in which we first spoke out, first articulated ourselves first uttered a few words. There cannot be anything more personal than that. Therefore, if a citizen gets a feeling in a ploy linguistic a state like ours that his language is not being treated as an equal language is not being given its due, is not being recognised, this surel hurts him. We must as co-citizens appreciate that feeling, appreciate that sentiment and do everything possible, for us to remove that sting from his heart, and make his feel absolutely at ease, feel equal and assure him that he cannot be discriminated against. Today, we are at the threshold of a new age in the world what has been called the age of ethnicity and when you consider the ethnic

identity of any social group more than anything else it is the language. Therefore, it is not surprising that all languages demand recognition, all linguistic g groups demand equality at the bar of the nation.

I would like to remind you of the example of Canada. Canada saved itself from distruction, form disintegration by giving equal status to French.

I recall one moment, a very surprising moment in my diplomatic life. I was at a Conference which was being addressed by the Foreign Minister of Canada. When I suddenly realised that he was no longer speaking in English and found that he was speaking in French and then again he started speaking in English. At the end of the Conference, I went up to him to find a solution to this riddle. He told me that they had accepted by law that French and English are equal. Therefore, in every public statement, in every official statement, the spoke one paragraph in English and the next paragraph in French. He alternated. This is the way nations are built. This is the way national unity is established. This is the way the national integration is reinforced not by in po-ition, not by negligence, not by omission and not by disrespect to peoples' sentiments.

Ours is a multi-lingual State. We must also recognise that although linguists speak about a score of languages and hundred of dilects, there are some developed languages - languages which are not dialects by stretch of imagination, which have grammar, which have literature. And among "thēm" are languages which are spoken by a substantial number of people which from a very high percentage of population. At least within a some administrative unit or in some state, or in some districts of some States or even in some sub-districts of some districts of some States. But there are concentrations.

Here, I have got some data from the 1991 Linguistic Census. The languages which are presently included in Schedule VIII of the Constitution, cover roughly 95 per cent of the people. Five per cent of the total

population is not covered by those languages. But then substantial number in various States are not covered. For example, in Jammu and Kashmir, over 27% of the people are not covered by the languages which are today included in Schedule VIII. In Manipur, for example, 98 per cent of the people are not covered by our present Schedule VIII. In Meghalaya, 86 per cent of the people are not covered by our present dispensation. In Nagaland, 90.7 per cent of the people are not covered by the present list. In Sikkim, 93.65 per cent of the people are not covered by our present arrangements. In Tripura, we have again 23 per cent. If you take small States, in Arunachal Pradesh, 83 per cent; in Goa, 58 per cent; and in Mizoram, 91 per cent are not covered. In at least eight States, a majority of the people are not covered by our present Schedule VIII - Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli, which, of course, is a very small Union Territory. The point I am making is this that if we take at least the States which are equal members of the Union, a majority of the population of those States do not find their languages duly respected and included in Schedule VIII of the Constitution. We have no right to console them by saying yes, we care for your language but we are not prepared to put it in Schedule VIII. My Counter question to the Government has always been that why not then abolish Schedule VIII.

SHRICHITTABASU: All languages are national languages.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: All languages are national languages and, therefore, you should have a national criteria. The linguistic picture, it is a dynamic picture, it is an evolving situation. We can lay down certain criteria and we can say that any language which can meet those criteria shall be automatically included in Schedule VIII at the appropriate time, if not today, tomorrow. There may be other grievances. Today we are talking only about Manipuri and Nepali though I would like to emphasise that it is not just a question of Manipuri and Nepali alones in my view, there is also the question

of Konkani, there is also the question of Santhali which is recognised in Bihar and which is a full-fledged language. It is also a question of Dogri, it is also a question of Maithili, it is also a question of Khasi and it is also a question of Rajasthani - Mr. Lodha is not here, he had submitted a bill in that regard - and, if I may say so, because I come from that area, also of Bhojpuri. But I am not speaking of all other variants; but at least Bhojpuri, I must mention.

Now we can have a uniform criteria, as I said, whether it is not a dialect but a language, that books and journals are published in it, that it has a literature, that a substantial portion of the national population, say one per cent, declares that language as its mother tongue, that the substantial population in a given State, say ten per cent, recognise it as its mother tongue and as its household language. One per cent, of the nation and ten per cent of the given State or UT. Or that in absolute numbers, the number is large enough, say, it exceeds one million, if it is recognised as a medium of instruction — as Nepali is — not only upto high school level but right upto highest university level, if it is recognised as a language to be taught not only at the primary school level but upto university level, if it is recognised for national awards by Sahitya Academy - which Nepali is, which Dogri is, which Konkani is, which Maithili is - if it is a language of the media in which you produce films, in which you publish newspapers, then such a language - which meets some of this criterion - must, of necessity, be recognised as an official language, by one or more States, if not for the whole State at least for a district and included - Once it is recognised as an official language by one State - for the whole of the State or a part of the State it must then be automatically included in the VIII Schedule of the Constitution.

As far as the case of Nepali is concerned, I cannot do better than what Madam Bhandari has already done. She had pleased her case extremely well. She has pointed out that it is one language in whose favour the Legislature of four States have passed legislations. I have, here, some figures. There are

substantial pockets of Nepali speaking people in Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Delhi. I am taking the figures of over 10,000. There are, of course, two States where substantial - very substantial - number of people speak this language. As I said Sikkim has 94 per cent of the people speaking Nepali and it commands a majority at least in some districts of West Bengal. So, the case of Nepali has been made out extremely well. Every party, including the ruling party, supported the cause of Nepali and of Manipuri in the last elections.

I would suggest that the Government could do no better today than adopt this Private Members Bill submitted by Madam Bhandari. Let that be accepted unanimously by the entire House. We would, of course, like to have a commitment from the Government that they would then consider the other pending claims of the other languages which meet the criteria that I had mentioned about and give them similar senior treatment as soon as possible.

I want to say one word about the question of Nepali being a foreign language. I simply do not understand this logic. Nepali is not a foreign language. For one thing it is an Indo-Aryan language and secondly more than a million-and-a-half people in India declared Nepali as their mother tongue.

SHRI PETER G. MARBANIANG (Shillong): No, it is ten million people.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: I am talking about 1981 census. I do not know about your figures. I find that in at least one State in the Union the majority of the Nepalese-speaking people. In that sense, please permit me to say, I do not even consider English a foreign language any more. There are people in India whose mother tongue is English. There are States in India which - for their own reasons, like Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland - have accepted English as their official language.

All languages belong to man and in the case of human language, we cannot, sort of draw a line cutting mankind across. For example, shall U.S.A. discard English because English language's original home is England? I just gave you the example of Canada which has embraced French. Therefore, I frankly feel that this is a very far-fetched argument that Nepali is a foreign language. The word 'Nepal' is there. Nepal is the name of another country. That is there. I agree. But Indian Nepals are Indian citizens. There are millions of them they live in India. Their mother tongue is Nepali. Therefore, we should have the grace of accepting with an open heart, Nepali as an Indian language as a national Language.

With these words, I fully support the Bill that has been submitted in the House for consideration. Thank you.

SHRI CHITTA BASU (Barasat): Sir, I rise to support the Bill of Shrimati Bhandari. In this connection I also like to remind the House that a similar Bill was also introduced by me in the other House of the Parliament and it was also discussed. But due to the position taken by the Government at that time, the Bill could not be translated or transformed into an Act.

Sir, the case of Nepali and Manipuri have been well established by speakers who produced me, and it is not necessary for me at this stage to further dilate upon that particular aspect which entitled these two great languages of India to be included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. But, Sir, taking advantage of this discussion I want to draw your attention to some other important aspects of our Constitution. The provisions of the Constitution regarding language is incorporated in Chapter XVII of our Constitution. Articles 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, and 351, all relate to the language of our country. Unfortunately, Sir, there is no mention about the rationale, or no provision is there in the Constitution in spite of the fact that a whole Chapter is there in relation to the languages of our country. There is no specific provision in the Constitution regarding the qualification of a

language for inclusion in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution — which are the languages, why, under what rationale and under what reason a particular language will be in the Eighth Schedule and a particular language will not be part of the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. This is the most relevant question because—of course, if you excuse me, Sir, I have got a letter from Mrs. Indira Gandhi dated August 16, 1980. She was kind enough to write to me regarding this Nepali language after my moving the Bill in that year. Here a major question was raised by her. She wanted me to delink the Nepali language from other languages which also aspire after inclusion in the Eighth Schedule. Her simple treatment was — I am criticising her, I am not criticising anybody in that way. I knew she had a particular problem. The problem was of pick and choose — which language she will choose and which language she will not choose. That was the concern for her, and she was right in expressing her concern. Sir, I am not reading out the letter. She said, 'The case of Nepali may be considered if it is delinked from other languages. That was the promise made in her letter as I have mentioned earlier. On the other hand, I am reminded that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru made his position regarding language a little more flexible. What did he say? He said, "The list of the language in the Eighth Schedule is not completely exhaustive." That is the Eighth Schedule which contains 15 languages is not the last one. It may be extended, many other languages may be included. It indicates that. Therefore, Sir, my submission to you is, and I support the contention made by Shri Shahabuddin that there should be some constitutional provision or some kind of mechanism by which we can measure the standard of the language to be included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. As a matter of fact, my feeling is every language is a national language. There cannot be a regional language; there cannot be a national language, because in the words of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, each language has its own history, development, assimilation and expansion. Each language has its own vocabulary, pattern of expression, construction etc. with distinctive

characteristics. Therefore, every language is to be treated equally and on the basis of equality, they should have the respect of the people of the country as a whole and that respect should be shown by the Constitution itself. That can alone strengthen the oneness, that can alone strengthen the sense of unity and that can alone build up India as a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, united, strong, prosperous and a forward looking nation. So, there should be a criterion. This criterion is to be made after a wide range of discussions amongst linguists. Some suggestions had come from Shri Shahabuddin in this regard. I think the Government should take note of it.

Sir, coming back to Nepali, Dr. Suniti Chakraborty was specific about Sindhi and Nepali. He said:

"Other Indian languages are to be added in the English Schedule following the wishes of their speakers and their importance, namely Sindhi and Nepali."

It is a matter of great satisfaction that Sindhi had already been included in the Eighth Schedule. But Nepali has not yet been included and I think, that has to be done now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The time is about to expire. We shall have to extend the time for this Bill. Can we have one- and- a- half hours more?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Many Members want to speak on this Bill. So, we extend the time for this Bill by One- and- a- half hours.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Sir, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had also given his views as to what should be the broad criteria for the recognition of a language to be included in the Eighth Schedule. He said:

"If a language is to be recognised, it must fulfil two important criteria. One, the more widespread

character of the language and the use of the language by a large number of people.”

These two criteria had been suggested by him and I think, from these two broad criteria, Nepali and Manipuri can be easily accepted as two languages which are qualified to be included in the Eighth Schedule.

Some objections have been raised regarding Nepali language by calling it as a foreign language. I think, this Parliament also had the opportunity of giving its views regarding that particular objection. In a Parliamentary question, it was replied that the language spoken by a person is not related to the criteria of the right of citizenship of India. A person can be an Indian national by birth, by descent, by registration and naturalisation under the provisions of the Citizenship Act. Therefore any Nepali speaking Indian citizen had got the citizenship right under the particular law of our country. The question whether he speaks Nepali or Bengali or any other language is not the criterion for the citizenship of the country. therefore, our Citizenship Act is very clear. Anybody who is an Indian citizen can speak any language and that language is not a criterion to decide about his citizenship. Yes, it is a fact that in Nepal, a sovereign friendly country of India, Nepali is the language spoken by the majority of the people. Somebody may feel since Nepali is spoken by Nepali citizens in the sovereign State of Nepal, Nepali is a foreign language.

16.57 hrs.

[SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARAYA -
in the Chair]

The former Prime Minister has erred in his judgment in this respect. Indian citizens speaking Nepali are also Indian citizens. I want cite an equal and parallel simile. Bangladesh is a free sovereign independent friendly country. Majority of the Bangladeshi citizens speak Bengali. We also speak

Bengali. That does not mean, speaking Bengali is something wrong. Bengali is my mother-tongue. Bengali is also the mother-tongue of many Bangladeshis. Therefore, in the Indian citizen speaking Nepali and the Nepali citizen speaking Nepali, there is no element of animosity between the same language group inhabiting different parts of the world. Therefore, that argument also does not hold good.

A question has been raised about Gorkhali. I do not want to enter into any controversy on this subject particularly which relates to the emotional question of language. As a matter of fact, Nepali is a known language. I would stand to be corrected there is no such language as called Gorkhali - If somebody wants to give Nepali, the name of Gorkhali, I have got nothing to oppose. If Gorkhali is one element of Nepali language, I also do not have any objection to accept it. But on that issue, whether it is Nepali or Gorkhali, there should not be any controversy and this controversy has been raised from certain quarters in order to stall the recognition of the Nepali language.

I conclude that this Bill which contemplates the inclusion of two languages, namely Manipuri and Nepali should be immediately accepted.

17.00 hrs.

So far as inclusion of other languages is concerned, Khasi, Maithili, Rajasthani, Konkani Dongri and all other languages should also be included in the Eighth Schedule on the basis of certain criteria to be fixed up subsequently by the Government in consultation with all the parties concerned. That will be the scientific approach to solve any problem of our country. That will be the only method, the only way, how to unify India on the basis of multi-linguism, on the basis of multi-ethnicity and that will contribute to the strength of the nation as a whole.

With this appeal I conclude and once more I request that recognition can be given to Nepali language and Manipuri language. These two languages are to be immediately

included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

Many friends have already mentioned about the recent movement in Manipur which threatens the unity of the country also, because of the fact some of the advocates of the Manipuri language - Recognition Committee have taken to the wrong path, have taken to the path of anti - Hindi feeling. This is also not a very good sign.

Hindi is the official language of our country. Hindi is a national language. We are all for the development of Hindi as the main language of our country. But the development of Hindi should not be a factor for the impediment of the other languages.

Therefore, I appeal to the leadership of the Manipuri Language Recognition Committee not to fall victims to parochialism, to the propaganda of interested lobbies in our country which want to divide the country instead of uniting the country.

With these words, I appeal to the Government to accept right now the proposal of inclusion of Manipuri language and Nepali language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of the Country.

SHRI PETER G. MARBANIANG :
Madam Chairman, I rise to support the private Member Bill moved by Shrimati Dil Kumari Bhandari, the hon. Member from Sikkim.

India is a great country and it is decorated with hundreds of flowers growing together with different colours, with different beauties, with different heights. All these flowers add colour in totality to the greatness of this country.

We should remember that when the founding fathers of the Constitution chalked out the Eighth Schedule, we were hardly four years as free citizens of this great country of ours.

Having been in the reign of foreign

powers, many of the hill areas of this country had no chance to develop socially, economically, politically and they have not been able to appreciate the significance of the development of the languages of all these areas. As such, hurriedly the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution was constituted. Many of the different languages prevailing in this great country of ours have not got recognition to be included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. We are now 40 years enjoying the freedom as free citizens; we have seen the 40 years of development, 40 years progress and we are enjoying them. For the last 40 years, our people have tried their best to make this country great. The people who are here in our Parliament - some of them are the founding -fathers of the Constitution - will revise and will bring amendment to the Constitution. So, the time has come when new thinking should be done on the inclusion of language which have come up to the standard to be included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

I want to make it very clear that I support the Bill moved by the hon. Member from Sikkim. I consider that Nepali language an Indian language which has grown richly in all its different stages. It is a language which is spoken by 10 million people living in India; it is a language which has produced great books by different writers. There are poems written by different - poet - Laureates which have been acclaimed by the Sahitya Akademy and other organisations. As far as this language is concerned, many a time resolutions were passed in the all-India Conference demanding the Government of India to include the Nepali language in the Eighth Schedule. Therefore, I entirely support the arguments put forward by Shrimati Bhandari, the hon. Member from Sikkim, who has very diligently and in a very non-controversial manner, tried to put this Bill to be passed in this august House.

I just want to bring to the notice of the House one thing. I come from the North-Eastern Region. Coming from Meghalaya, I would like to say that like the Manipuri, language the Khasi language has come up to the standard where it needs immediate

by Shri Advani on behalf of cur party.

recognition not only by the Sahitya Akademy but also needs immediate recognition by the Government of India for the inclusion in the Eighth Schedule. The Khasi language has been recognised up to the Doctorate level by the North Eastern Hill University. Many doctorate degrees have been conferred on different men and women who have submitted their theses. We do feel that the Khasi language has also come up to the standard to be recognised in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. It deserves that. We have grammar book in the Khasi language; we have poetries in the Khasi language; we have novels in Khasi language; we have newspapers in the Khasi language; we have different literatures in the Khasi language; we have got the Bible and we have many other important books which we have produced in the Khasi language.

As a language of the North-Eastern region, the Khasi language has a status to be considered for its inclusion in the Eighth Schedule. Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister of State for Home, who is present here - not that I am against the Bill - that in case he ask for time to reconsider it, then he should remember that there are languages in the North-Eastern region which need to be given recognition. The Mizoram language has come, the Garo language has come, the Konkani language has come. These are the different languages which the Home Minister will have to take in to consideration.

I appeal to him that as the Bill has included Manipuri and Nepali languages in the Bill, he should allow this Bill to be passed. It is a Private Member's Bill. It is moved by an hon. lady M.P. from Sikkim. I strongly support the Bill and I want that we all should support this Bill.

[Translation]

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA (Mandsaur): Madam Chairman, I raise to support the present Bill as also to speak further in pursuance of the views expressed

Language is a medium through which people easily express themselves and that is why different languages have their own importance and own entity. The present Bill seeks to include Nepali and Manipuri in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. Nepali and Manipuri can both be called rich languages in the linguistic field. Even from the point of view of norms on the basis of which a language is recognised, these two languages fulfil the conditions. If a language has its grammar, literature, a cultural history behind it and is spoken by a large number of people, it can be called a language. On this basis if we judge Nepali language, we can definitely say that it is a rich language. It has its own literature, own grammar and is spoken by lakhs of people. It is therefore, most appropriate that this language is included in the Eighth Schedule. Manipuri also holds the same position. It is a rich language and is spoken in a vast area. The Bhartiya Janata Party has on this very ground mentioned clearly in its manifesto to include Manipuri and Nepali languages in the Eighth Schedule. I would like to say that while on the one hand different problems of North-Eastern States have been referred to in this manifesto, on the other a mention has also been made that Manipuri and Nepali languages be included in the eighth Schedule of the Constitution. Our Party therefore holds the view that both these languages should be included in the Eighth Schedule. I would not like to repeat as has already been said here that those two languages have been given special status and place by different institutions - viz Sahitya Akademi or other institutions of literature. From this point of view, I would like that this demand which has been there for years, should be fulfilled. Because, Nepali is not the language of a particular section, nor it is a language of any race but it is a language spoken in vast area. It is a medium of instruction. It has been a medium for all educated people in the area right from primary stage to the stage of universities. It has also been stated here that this language is prominently spoken in different States which include Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Tripura and Sikkim.

Some of these States have accepted it as a State Language. So this language should be included in the Eighth Schedule. When different legal-instructions or legislatures reach at a consensus on a thing, it becomes imperative for this House to consider that with all seriousness. When four of our States have pleaded for this language it should be included in the eighth schedule, I think it would be practical to include it. It would have been much better had a Bill in regard to these languages been brought forward by the Government and passed by the House unanimously, yet I hope that even though this Bill has not been brought forward by the Government, this should be passed unanimously so that wishes of crones of people could be fulfilled.

Some people see this agitation in the context of Hindi. I had, however, recently been to North-Eastern States where I did not see any protest against Hindi anywhere. It is, however, argued that there is protest in Manipur against Hindi, but there is nothing like that there. They want their language should be recognised. When they do not get they protest against all other languages. As long as their own language is not recognised, they cannot accept other languages. So it is wrong that there is a protest there against Hindi. They want that Manipuri-language should be recognised. Keeping this in mind they have made this request. The subject has been raised in the House several times. So it is now high time for us to accept that. It has also been said that there are various languages in different areas which are in the form of dialects. they do not have their natural grammar, wide literature and cultural tradition. That is why such languages are only in the form of dialects. It would not be proper to accept them as languages. They can be called languages but not before they are improved upto the level of other languages are included in the Eighth Schedule. I would like that the Government should accept this Bill. I support the views expressed by the leader of our party and also support the Bill presented by the hon. Member. Shrimati Dil Kumari Bhandari, I request that Nepali and Manipuri should be

included in the eighth Schedule and the Bill should be passed unanimously by the hon. Members and they should extend their support in getting this Bill passed.

*SHRI SWARUP UPADHYAY (Tezpur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, Mrs. Dil Kumari Bhandari has brought this Constitutional Amendment Bill for which I congratulate her. this is a noble effort by her because of which all the Nepali speaking people of India are very much hopeful.

[English]

I know, I cannot speak in Nepalese. That is why I spoke in assamese which is included in 15 languages; so I started in Assamese. this is the impediment people face. This is the highest body of our country. There are people and citizens of this country who cannot take oath in their own mother tongue. Why? What is their crime? We say that in our Constitution we have given equal rights to all the citizens. What about those citizens whose mother tongue is not included in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution? Are they not citizens of this country? they cannot use their mother tongue even to take oath in this House. That is why there is a feeling not only in the minds of the Nepali people, but other small linguistic groups, the disadvantaged and the backward that this country, though it calls itself a democracy, yet in the practical sense of the term this is a dictatorship of the advanced and larger nationalities and lager linguistic groups of this country. If they tomorrow raise this bogie, if they tomorrow shout this slogan in the streets of different parts of the country, we have got no argument to refute it.

Today while the Nepali people are coming for the recognition of their language, some people say that this is an alien language. Some others can say that this is an advanced language and has got so much of relationship with Sanskrit, Hindi and other languages. Why not? Even if there is no linkage with Sanskrit or Hindi, have they not got the right to demand for the inclusion of their language or to see that their language

*Translation of the speech originally delivered in Assamese.

is included in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution? In our Constitution is there anything like only the Aryan group of language should be included in the Constitution or is there any bar that certain groups of languages should not be included in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution?

What is the impediment? Why not these languages are included? This is the big question in the minds of those people.

I would like to speak on the Gorkha and Nepalese languages. This is out of frustration that certain sections of people are acting when they say that Nepalese is a foreign language because this is the national language of Nepal. That is why they say, change the nomenclature of the language. All right. Call it Gorkha language.

I would like to tell you regarding Gorkha and Nepalese language, with authority. This language was initially known as Khas language which is now called the Nepalese language. In course of evolution it was known as Parvatey language. After this for some time it was known as Gorkha language and after this the developed form of the language at present is Nepalese language. The linguistic community is known as Nepali. If I have to give my community identity, I say, I am a Nepali and come from Assam. If you call me a Gorkha, I do not mind because I do not find a difference between a Gorkha and a Nepali. There is no difference at all, so, it is like creating a confusion between Gorkha and Nepali languages. If we deny their right for the inclusion of this language in the Eighth Schedule, this would be an injustice done to the Nepali speaking people of this country.

Let me now come to my other language, which is a developed language, spoken in the State. These people are demanding for the inclusion of their language. Some members have said that if we open this flood gate what would be the situation. My answer to them is that if we do not open this flood gate what would be the situation, if tomorrow

all the backward people, the linguistic minorities start saying that this is not a democracy; this is a dictatorship of the advanced nationalities; and we will not call it a democracy. Then what would be the situation? Let us think about it seriously, because every community, every linguistic group, every racial or ethnic group is bent upon preserving its identity. At the same time, such communities are willing to develop on par with other, developed communities of this country. If they see in the Constitution, in the administration in the social system of this country, any impediment in their all round development, they will not tolerate it. Today, this fight seems to be feeble; but tomorrow these people, these deprived people of this country, deprived nationalities of this country will raise and jump. Before they rise, before they start feeling that our country, our nation and our Constitution is denying them the right, we must accord them their rightful demand. We must meet their rightful demand.

The Nepalese and Manipuris have been demanding inclusion of their language in the Eighth Schedule. Let us start with it and give them this recognition. This would be the message to all the smaller nationalities, smaller groups that if we demand and if we convince them, then our language would also be included in the Eighth Schedule and so that would be the assurance; this assurance means that they will be treated as equal citizens of this country.

If you say that Nepalese are foreigners, all right, Nepalese are foreigners; so do not include their language in the Eighth Schedule. I admit that. But what about Santhali? They are in far-flung areas of India. they have come earlier to this country. Did you include or did you try to develop their language? Did you attempt to do it? Similarly what about Mondari? What about the border people of Assam? What about Nagas? More or less, they are the inhabitants of this country. Did you think about them? You are not thinking about them. This is not my saying; but they are saying that. You are not thinking of this. Simply you are seeking certain excuse to deny the rightful demand of the different

communities of this country. If we do not incorporate them, if we do not try to bring them into mainstream of this country, the measures would be very disastrous. That is why, I request through you, Madam, this House and this Government that if possible, as has been said by Shri Advani, this Bill may be introduced by the Government and passed by the Parliament. If it is not possible and if the Government feels that it is not proper to pass this Bill as it is Private Member's Bill, the Government should give an assurance immediately that the Government is going to introduce a Bill include Nepal and Manipuri languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. At the same time, the people of India and this august House of India are giving an assurance to the smaller nationalities of this country - smaller linguistic groups of this country - that the nation is committed to develop their languages and the nation wants to see that one day after being developed, their languages will also be included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

SHRI JITENDRA NATH DAS (Jalpaiguri): Madam, I do support the Constitution (Amendment) Bill moved by Shrimati Dil Kumari Bhandari for the inclusion of Nepali and Manipuri languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. This is not a new step. On the floor of this House, this issue was raised so many times and even in this session also, it has been raised.

We are unanimous about the question of inclusion of the Nepali and the Manipuri languages in the Eighth Schedule of the constitution. I am very sorry to say that what are the constraints and what are the difficulties due to which the Government is not thinking to introduce these languages in the Eighth Schedule of the constitution of India? We should not underline any language. I have got no objection and should not have any objection if all the languages of this country are introduced in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. It is not proper to underline any language. Is the Government thinking like this? If these two languages or other languages be taken into consideration

for inclusion in the Eighth Schedule of the constitution of India, the market of. The 15 languages already in the eighth Schedule will be downgraded. If not why is the Government not taking into consideration to introduce this Bill? I would like to say that the refusal of this kind of proposal is the source which will hit the integration of the country. We are very much cautious to maintain the integrity of the nation and integrity of the country. But the Govt. is not thinking about all these and not about the minorities and their languages which are to be taken under consideration.

It is a long-standing demand of the people irrespective of any political party for inclusion of the Nepali and Manipuri languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. A large number of people speak in these languages. These are the mother tongues of the Nepalese and Manipuris. I would like to quote Rabindra Nath Tagore. "The mother language is the mother milk." We know that no nation can prosper or improve if it is deprived of its own language. At this stage, there is no scope but to introduce these two languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. We cannot deny, at this stage, the importance of these two languages. Madam, you know that Nepali language has been declared as the official language of the State of Sikkim and West Bengal. These four states, namely, Sikkim, West Bengal, Tripura and Himachal Pradesh are unanimously demanding that Nepali language should be included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. I am from North Bengal. In the North Bengal University, Nepali language has been treated as one of the subjects of study upto the post-graduate and doctorate degree level. Questions are being set in these languages and students are answering questions in Nepali language. Other Universities are also following this path of the North Bengal University. There are number of examinations in which questions are being set in Nepali language. The Sahitya Academy has also given recognition to Nepali and Manipuri languages and Manipuri has been declared as the State language in Manipur. Now, the people of Manipur and

[Sh. Jitendra Nath Das]

Sikkim who are speaking Nepali and Manipuri are agitating and their agitation is in a climax. This agitation will come to such a stage that at one time, it will be beyond the control of the Central Government. The West Bengal Government is trying to give due respect to the Nepali language and the Chief Minister of West Bengal has stressed that due respect must be given Nepali language and others. In spite of all these the Central Government is remaining silent. I am not talking of the Government in the past. I am talking of the present Government and I like to ask them as to why they are remaining silent this serious and important issue. Under the circumstances, I do urge upon all the hon. Members of this august House to support this Bill unanimously and have pressure on the Government so that, without any hesitation, this Bill for inclusion of Nepali and Manipuri languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution be accepted without any delay.

17.40 hrs.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Bomb blast in Delhi on 23 April 1992

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: May I request the hon. Minister, Shri M.M. Jacob to make his statement on the bomb blast that occurred in Delhi on 23rd April?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRIM. M. JACOB): Madam, today during the Zero Hour, Shri Madan Lal Khurana, Shri Khandelwal and Shri Advani raised the point regarding the bomb blast in Parahganj in Delhi on 23rd April. Shri Kumaramangalam has assured the House that we would get the facts and come to the House. Since the information is collected and is now available with me, I would like to share it with the House with your permission.

I wish to apprise the hon. Members of this august House about the unfortunate incident of an explosion that took place in Vivek Hotel near Khanna Cinema, Pahar Ganj on 23rd April, 1992.

On 23rd April, 1992, at about 8.47 P.M. information was received regarding the explosion. The local police of PS Pahar Ganj rushed to the scene. The Hon. Governor Delhi and senior officers including Commissioner of police also reached the scene immediately.

Enquiries showed that the restaurant at the time of explosion was entirely occupied by foreign tourists. An Indian aged about 25 years with trimmed hair and a short beard and height around 5' 7" had walked into the restaurant and occupied one of the vacant tables. He had ordered food to be served to him and during his means he had got up asking for directions to the toilet. The toilet is not situated within the restaurant but it is located in the hotel and its access is from outside. When he left, he pointed to the waiter that he was leaving his bag behind and would be coming back soon. Within five minutes of his exit, the bag exploded on the floor of the restaurant causing injuries to 14 persons.

The injured include one Indian, one Nepali, four Israeli nationals, two British nationals, three Dutch nationals, one Canadian and two German nationals. Seven of the injured were taken to RML Hospital, three were taken to JPN Hospital and four went to the East-West Medical Centre in Gulf Links. Five of the seven injured persons who were taken to the RML Hospital were foreigners and they all decided to shift to the East-West Medical Centre. They mainly sustained injuries on their lower limbs and three also suffered burn injuries. Four Israelis, who were in the East-West medical Centre, have been discharged after initial treatment. Five foreigners - two Germans and three Dutch, are still in the East-West Medical Centre. Two British nationals and one Canadian are still admitted in the LNJP Hospital. Out of the three patients in JPN Hospital, two have simple injuries and the