

RAJYA SABHA

***SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE**

(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

Friday, July 21, 2017/ Ashadha 30, 1939 (Saka)

Observation by the Chair on a Question of Privilege

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have received notice from some Members raising a question of privilege against a TV Channel and some newspapers for making defamatory remarks against a Member of this House. The Secretariat has been asked to issue a show cause notice and further inquire into the matter.

GOVERNEMENT BILL

The North-Eastern Council (Amendment) Bill, 2013

The Bill was, by leave of the House, withdrawn

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS

The following Bills were introduced:

1. The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2017 (Insertion of New Article 21b)
2. The Privately Financed Infrastructure Projects (Regulation of Swiss Challenge Method of Procurement) Bill, 2017
3. The Prevention of Crimes in the Name of Honour and Tradition and Prohibition of Interference with the Freedom of Matrimonial Alliances Bill, 2017
4. The Tribal Children and Lactating Women in Maharashtra and Other States (Removal of Hunger, Malnutrition and Prevention of Starvation Deaths) Bill, 2017
5. The Water Scarce Regions of Marathwada, Vidharbha, Bundelkhand and in Eastern and Southern Parts (Prohibition of Growing Water Intensive Crops and Setting up of Thermal Power Plants and Other Large Scale Water Intensive Industries) Bill, 2017
6. The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2017 (Insertion of New Article 24a)
7. The Gymnasiums and Fitness Centres (Regulation) Bill, 2017

The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2016 (Amendment of the Eighth Schedule) – Contd.

SHRI SHIV PRATAP SHUKLA: According to Article 351 of the constitution, Hindi will be national language. B.G. Kher Committee and Pant Committees were constituted. Pant Committee emphasised to make Hindi official language. If the country was not divided on the basis of languages, it would have not involved in such lingual controversies. When the matter of other languages was raised, Sindhi, Punjabi, Dogri and Maithili languages were incorporated in the eighth schedule. More than 11 crore people speak Bhojpuri language but they were neglected. Government should think to add

this language in the eighth schedule. One more language is Tulu which is also required to be added in the schedule. Germany adopted Indian language Sanskrit. Countries like Mauritius and Trinidad gave Hindi a status of second official language. But there is not such situation with official language in our country. We can not make it a language of communication. If you include Tulu and Bhojpuri in the eighth schedule, this will be an honour of those people.

SHRI PRASANNA ACHARYA: Our country is a large country and there are many traditions followed by different people in different parts of the country. We love our motherland, we love our mother and we love our mother tongue. India is a country of multi-language people. Kodava and Tulu languages are widely spoken in Udupi and Karnataka. The hon. Member was mentioning about the language, Bhojpuri. More than 18 crore people speak Bhojpuri, and Bhojpuri is yet to be included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. 1.5 crore people in 11 districts of the Western Odisha speak Sambalpuri-Kosli language. Epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata have been written in this language. There have been demands to include this language in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution. I know that some years back the Government of India constituted a Committee to look into all such demands. I don't know what is the fate of the Committee and what had happened to the recommendations of the Committee. Government of India should constitute a fresh Committee keeping in view the demands from different regions and different States of the country. There are certain languages which have their own logic, own genuine demand and background to include in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution. While welcoming and supporting this Bill, I would like to request the Central Government to come out with a broader Bill, a Constitution (Amendment) Bill. I don't think that this Bill is going to be passed. Therefore, I would like to reiterate that the Government should come out with a Constitution (Amendment) Bill. Let the Government constitute a Committee. Let the Committee go deeper into the subject and make its recommendations. On the basis of those recommendations the Central Government may come out with a

broader Bill so that we can recognize those languages, which have so far been not recognized.

SHRI ANANDA BHASKAR RAPOLU: While supporting the proposal brought as Private Member's Bill by Hon'ble Member, I want to express respects towards him. We belong to such States where "Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha" was established by bringing all states together during the period of freedom struggle. I believe that if the voice of regional languages is suppressed or any kind of problem is created for these regional languages, there will be fear of emerging very tough situations in the entire country. Besides Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kodava and Tulu are having high importance in more than one thousand year-old Dravidian literature. But the recognition which is supposed to come from the Government quarters is meagre. More than 20 lakh people are speaking Kodava and around 20 lakh people are speaking Tulu. Kodava is having two dialects. Even those dialects are protected in those lands cautiously. But, we are not trying to emotionally integrate these things. These emotions and disrespect are hampering the expected level of usage of Hindi language. We have to take these things seriously. We have one thousand years-old literature on these languages. But, we have not valued them. I would urge the Union Government to once again take stock of the actual realities in order to harmonize, emotionally satisfy people and to consider the possibility of inclusion of such languages in the Eighth Schedule. They may add new clauses to the Eighth Schedule, if needed, so that dialects and lesser spoken languages like Kodava and Tulu could be protected. With this urge, I appreciate the initiative taken by our veteran colleague for highlighting the importance of the languages Kodava and Tulu.

SHRI LA. GANESAN: I wish to make it clear that I have no objection to the proposal to include Tulu and Kodava in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. Now, there are 22 languages and there is a demand for inclusion of more languages in the Eighth Schedule. Now, for the information of the hon. Member, the Central Government has already got with itself a list of languages that are being demanded for inclusion in the Eighth Schedule. There are 38

languages in that waiting list. In that list, Kodava, spoken in Coorg, is at the 19th place while Tulu is at the 38th. Inclusion of these two languages is already under the consideration of the Government. Very recently, in the last Session, the same subject was discussed. But I want to know whether the State Government has properly recognized these languages. The State Government should consider inclusion of those languages in their official languages. Then only they can demand the Central Government. What I want is that both the State Governments and the Central Government jointly plan to improve the languages that have already been included in the Eighth Schedule. We have to make more and more arrangements for learning Hindi and other languages. At the same time, not knowing Hindi or English should not become a handicap for anybody. What I mean is that including a language in the Eighth Schedule is all right, but that is not the only thing. After inclusion of a language, the languages should be developed. My suggestion is that this is mainly the responsibility of the State Governments, but the Central Government also has to intervene. The Central Government and State Governments, should jointly see to it that all the languages are encouraged. As far as the demand of the hon. Member is concerned, I have no problem in inclusion of these two languages in the Eighth Schedule.

SHRI PRADEEP TAMTA: I support the Constitution Amendment Bill brought by our colleague. Today, there are 38 languages with the Government of India waiting for inclusion in the Eighth Schedule which include Kodva and Tulu also. I hail from Uttarakhand and Kumauni and Garhwali these two languages from that region are also waiting for a long time to be included in the Eighth Schedule. It is not a big issue that many new languages are finding place in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution today. We have to remove the difference between urban language and dialects. There are several dialects in the country which doesn't have their own script. It were these languages which united the people during our struggle for freedom. It is need of the hour today to give recognition to these dialects. I demand to constitute a committee in this regard and include kumaoni and Garhwali also in the Eighth Schedule.

SHRI RAM VICHAR NETAM: The struggle to get recognition for chhattisgarhi language is going on since the formation of the State. This bill seeks to provide recognition to many languages being used in various states. This issue is related to the sentiments and faith of the people. The Government of Chhattisgarh had constituted a commission for Official Language and had given recognition to the chhattisgarhi language but it has not been included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. So, I appeal to all of you to pass this bill so that more languages be included in the Schedule. The tribal states have their own separate languages, therefore, keeping in mind their sentiments, languages of these societies like, kurukh, kurmali, etc. be included in the Eighth Schedule.

DR. VIKAS MAHATME: Many languages had been included in the past in the Eighth Schedule. A language is a medium to communicate one's sentiments and views to others. It is fact that we all think in ours mother tongue firstly and afterwards, we convert that to other language. It is not difficult to give all education in mother tongue and only then, thinking of the people of the country will enrich. It doesn't mean that we should not use and learn other languages. If every citizen learns two or three languages, the country will prosper and people will come close to one another. So far as language is concerned, mother tongue be given importance. Therefore, I think all the mother tongues be included in the Eighth Schedule. It is also equally important to develop the languages which are already there in the Schedule. Besides Kodava and Tulu, 38 languages are in the queue for inclusion in the Schedule. Hence, a committee be formed to review in this regard and use of mother tongue be encouraged.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI KIREN RIJJU), intervening in the debate, said: I would like to compliment hon. Member, Shri B. K. Hariprasad for bringing this Constitutional Amendment Bill under the Private Member's Bill for inclusion of Kodava and Tulu language under the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. The

Government also share those sentiments and view points which all the hon. Members have raised in this august House. Sir, this is a very sensitive issue as well as full of emotions. The sentiments reflect the identity, the culture, the heritage of various communities of this country. We have 22 languages under the Eighth Schedule of our Constitution of India and we have formally listed 38 languages which are pending for inclusion in Eighth Schedule. Besides these 38 languages, there are many more dialects which keep coming for their inclusion. It is very difficult to distinguish between dialect and language and many of the languages are using the same script, Devanagari. It is not easy to define the criteria to make provisions which will make a particular language or a dialect qualify to be included in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India. We are in the knowledge of all the demands, their background and cases being made out in respect of such demands in the Bill. With regard to the official language through which Hindi was recognized as the official language, recommendations made by the UPSC also kept in abeyance. Kodava language group has contributed to the growth and greatness of this country. We cannot ignore the importance of each language in the list of 38 pending cases before the Home Ministry. The Home Ministry has set up one internal Committee headed by an Additional Secretary rank officer to relook it again. The Committee has representatives from various Ministries. The Ministry of Home Affairs, is actively looking into the concerns raised by the hon. Members. There is no question of imposition of Hindi over any of the regional language. All regional languages are equally important. Hindi has been made Official Language, considering the spirit of all the Members of Parliament. Hindi has to be promoted. But, at the same time, all the other Indian languages are also to be promoted. All Indian languages are equally important, are included in the Eight Schedule. While justice is being done, we must also ensure that no complications arise in future because the subject matter is very sensitive. Some language have less number of speakers while others have a large number of speakers. Yet, we have talked to everybody. Neither we have a set criteria nor any set guidelines. We cannot make full guidelines for this. Out of 38 languages, some languages have their

scripts but certain languages do not have their scripts. It is difficult to judge that what is a dialogue and what is a language. We all have to consider it together. We have formed a Committee for internal mechanism. We are trying to find a solution to this. If we pass this Bill in isolation, then we would not be able to respect the sentiments of the House. We all are associated with the sentiments. The Government needs time for all these things. I hope that Shri B.K. Hariprasad would understand the difficulties of the Government. I appeal to Hariprasad ji to kindly withdraw this Private Member's Bill. The promotion of language is not solely dependent on the Government and during all these years, the dialects and languages survived on their own. It is believed there will be larger recognition to the language, if a language is included in the Constitution. Thereby it will get bigger importance in terms of spreading its language. The issue of languages is very sensitive. It is not a question of trying to impose Hindi on the regional languages. It is very clear that there is no one language which is the national language. Every Indian language is national language. As per the Official Languages Act, Hindi is an official language for the purpose of performing work in the system. There is no question of any discrimination. It is wrong to say that Hindi is being imposed over other languages. The promotion of the languages is not dependent only on the Central Government. There is every right and freedom on the part of the State Governments to promote the regional languages or various dialects which are spoken in that particular State or region. No restriction is there about it. There are provisions for all the Indian languages. We must be very careful in this regard. But we become very sensitive when we talk about learning the language of our neighbouring States. As per the Official Language Act, Hindi is the Official Language. Promotion of a language is a voluntary act, and we must support each other. We must show respect for all Indian languages. Three language formula is already in existence. Besides, Hindi, English there is no bar on any State to conduct its official business in its own language. The promotion of the language is not the job of the Official Language Department. There is no question of imposing of one language over other language. The Cabinet Note was ready, in the year 2006 and we have taken it up. It is informed to this

august House that after 2014, we have taken a positive step in this direction. And we are trying to bring concrete solution to it. Two Committees were formed and those two Committees failed to give the objective criteria as to which are the languages to be included under the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India. I am making appeal to the hon. Member, Shri B. K. Hariprasad to withdraw it keeping in mind that I have spoken very clearly about the position of the Government.

SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD, replying to the debate, said:

With almost eight major religions in this land, with 22 languages and with hundreds of dialects and different regions, it is one of the most beautiful and wonderful countries we are living in. Mahatma Gandhi thought it was the diverse culture which he was uniting in the name of freedom struggle. In Southern part of the country, there are about 25 Dravidian languages, as I said, and five major languages are Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Tulu and Kodava. Tulu is not being recognized. We have already established the Tulu Academy in Karnataka to promote and protect that language and the culture. Denial of due recognition to the Tulu or Kodava languages is a violation of minority rights. According to the norms, since Hindi is a widely spoken language in the country, it is accepted as the official language, but not a national language. When the responsible people, make a statement that Hindi is a national language, definitely the other 22 languages would also feel about it. In Karnataka, I have to learn 4-5 languages. Instead of imposing Hindi, they should have brought Tulu, Kodava and Konkani. Nobody is imposing English anywhere in the country. Don't say that just because we speak Dravidian languages, we cannot develop. Hardly about four per cent of the population in Karnataka speaks Hindi. We have no problem if you just make Hindi compulsory language in the southern part of India. Make one of the Southern languages compulsory in the entire Hindi-speaking belt. These are very sensitive issues. It is a unique country with a vast diversity. Hence, issues were raised by the responsible people and they have again erupted here. We have to protect our language, our culture. Gondis are the real tribals. That language

doesn't have the script. Gondi and Kondamama are the masters of Ayurveda. But they don't have any recognition. We should develop a list of criteria for inclusion of the languages in the Eighth Schedule to make the process transparent and devoid of politics. The statistics about endangered languages are available. According to 2001 Census, there are 1,635 mother tongues in India. The 96.56 per cent of people speak in 22 languages scheduled in Indian Constitution. Just 3.4 per cent of our countrymen speak all remaining 1,613 mother tongues. In the last 50 years, 20 languages have become extinct in Andhra Pradesh. If these languages are not conserved, our linguistic diversity will vanish. The languages, the cultures which are there in this country, they have kept us united. We cannot be united by a single language. I appeal that an assurance be given to the country that no languages will be imposed on anybody. The reason for my insistence for this is not that it will be included in the Eighth Schedule, it will be protected. In the South India, all kind of forms etc. are available in two languages i.e. in English and Hindi, and local languages are missing. It is agreed that no law or provision in the Constitution can protect or improve the language. It is we, who have to improve it on our own, but there should be no discrimination against any language. We believe in the three language policy and no one is having any right to impose the Hindi on our languages. While promoting Hindi, other 22 languages should also be promoted. Like Hindi, other south Indian Languages must also be made compulsory. The Home Minister has said that he will take all steps to ensure that all the languages get due recognition. I withdraw my Bill.

The Bill was, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

SHUMSHER K. SHERIFF,
Secretary-General.

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