

# LOK SABHA

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## SYNOPSIS OF DEBATES (Proceedings other than Questions & Answers)

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Friday, March 10, 2017 / Phalguna 19, 1938 (Saka)

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### SUBMISSION BY MEMBERS

*Re: Steep hike in prices of non-subsidized LPG and relentless increase in price of petrol and diesel in spite of fall in prices of crude oil in the international market.*

### THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI ANANTHKUMAR)

*responding to the issue raised by several hon. Members, said:* The hon. Member is a senior member. He should put only facts before the House. There are 19.17 crore LPG connections in the country. Out of these connections, 1.1 core people have voluntarily given up subsidy. I also want to tell our hon. Members that more than 19 crore people who are from the poorer sections are being given the full amount of subsidy. There is no cut in that subsidy. We are supplying 116 crore subsidized LPG cylinders every year. I want to bring to the knowledge of our friends that the international price of LPG was 471 US dollars per metric tonne which in the last one month has risen to 564 US dollars. To offset that increase,

there has been a marginal increase. We have started Ujjawala Yojana under which the Government is giving free LPG connections to the down-trodden people. For 2016-17, our target was of giving 1.5 crore such connections, but in the last one year two crore connections have been given to the down trodden people.

**THE ADMIRALTY (JURISDICTION AND SETTLEMENT OF MARITIME CLAIMS) BILL, 2016.**

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI MANSUKH L. MANDAVIYA)** *moving the motion for consideration of the Bill, said:* India has a coastline of 7500 kms. Our ports have been handling the cargo for the time immemorial. Today, we have 12 major ports and 205 minor ports, which handle 95 per cent of the cargo in terms of volume and 68 per cent in terms of value which is a statement on the importance of our ports in our EXIM trade. Today, the cargo and maritime trade has been increasing and our maritime laws are of British origin which are still extant. We have brought this Bill to amend the old laws and substitute them with the domestic laws. The laws enacted by the Britishers were enacted at a time when our country had only three major ports namely, Mumbai,

Madras and Kolkata ports. Even today any maritime dispute has to be settled by three High Courts only. As the coastal and maritime trade has expanded a lot accompanied by the construction of new ports in almost all the states, we have to take recourse to the judicial channels of the respective three High Courts in order to settle disputes falling under the administrative control of the other states as well. Therefore, the present Bill has been brought in order to expand the scope and jurisdiction of the High Courts and also with a view to correcting the definition of admiralty.

**SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY** *initiating said:* The objective of this Bill is to consolidate the existing laws on civil matters of admiralty jurisdiction of courts, admiralty proceedings on maritime claims, and arrest of ships. There are a number of archaic and obsolete laws which are still governing the maritime disputes, offences and problems. So, there is an imperative need to have a comprehensive legislation. There is ambiguity of jurisdiction. The existing admiralty statutes required a relook in order to incorporate contemporary maritime practices and international legal regime. There have been attempts to bring Bills on this subject earlier too. We are all aware of the long journey of this legislative document. In response to the needs of the modern economy and in compliance with the existing facilities available in other parts of the world, the Bill was necessary. That is why we are supporting the legislative document without any

reservation. One of the key features of this Bill is admiralty jurisdiction. The jurisdiction with respect of maritime claims under the Bill will vest with the respective high courts and will extend up to the territorial waters of their respective jurisdiction. India has territorial waters to the extent of 12 nautical miles. Thereafter starts the Exclusive Economic Zone up to 200 nautical miles. The Central Government, as per the Bill, may extend the jurisdiction of these high courts by notification up to the Exclusive Economic Zone. Here I would like to ask whether you have any mechanism to extend the ambit of the courts up to the Exclusive Economic Zone. The high courts may exercise jurisdiction of maritime claims arising out of several conditions. Now a days, the sea across the globe is under the threat of hazardous toxic elements. How much of the authority is being enjoyed under this Bill so that the maritime lien provision should be applicable? One of the objectives of this Bill is to dispose of the claims in an expeditious way. Therefore, the Bill is proposed to repeal four archaic admiralty laws on civil matters. The Bill will focus on wrongdoer. It covers every vessel irrespective of the place or residence or domicile of owner. However, warships and naval auxiliary or other vessels used for un-commercial purposes are beyond its purview. There is a very significant aspect so far as notification is concerned because by issuing notification the Bill can delegate more powers to the courts of the littoral states. The Supreme Court may, on application by any party, transfer an admiralty

proceeding at any stage from one High court to any other High Court. The latter High Court will proceed with the matter from the stage where it stood at the time of the transfer. Regarding Assessor, the Central Government will appoint a list of Assessors qualified and experienced in the admiralty and maritime matters. What are the criteria for selecting those Assessors? Do we have any regulation on ship breaking industry to compete with the global level? I am saying it because our ship breaking has been causing enormous pollution in our country.

**ADV. NARENDRA KESHAV SAWAIKAR:** I thank the Government for having introduced this important piece of legislation. Till date, the maritime law in India is being governed by the old British laws. I have come across such matters and litigations wherein the even issues regarding the jurisdiction of cases takes years to get settled. The jurisdiction of the High Courts is also specified in Section 3 of the Act which says that the jurisdiction under this Act shall vest in the respective High Courts. The salient features of this law are the application of the Code of Civil Procedure where the law is silent and where the action is needed, in that case, the Code of Civil Procedure can be brought in. Secondly, there is action in *rem* and action in *personam*. Thirdly, Section 4 of the Act specifically provides for which are the claims that can be settled under this Act. These are some of the salient features of this Bill. The market size of the maritime trade is on rise. In 2016 it is expected the trade to reach about 1715 million metric tonnes. The

Government expects that there is a growth of around 18 per cent in the maritime trade. This growth in maritime trade is itself likely to lead to greater number of disputes. This Bill seeks to tackle this problem. This legislation, in my opinion, is another step towards making Indian as a business destination.

**SHRI KALYAN BANERJEE:** The Bill is not covering the environmental issue. This Act was necessary for long. The claim which is required to be decided by the High Court by reason of this enactment of the Act, itself has been codified under clause 4. There are certain vague provisions in the Bill as to which High Court is having the jurisdiction in the sea itself. Clarity is not there in this Section. There is a need to do away with some contradiction of draft in matters of jurisdiction. Now, I am coming to a very important point. Now you are giving the jurisdiction to the High Courts to decide. How can the High Courts take up the workload of all these things? Vacancies are not being filled up. Kindly fill up the vacancies first. Unless you fill up the vacancies, not only this but nothing will be done. The territorial water jurisdiction has to be identified. Now, it is not much difficult because new mechanisms like satellite etc. have come in and they may be used to do it.

**SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB:** I welcome this Bill with open arms. However, we have taken 25 years to take up this bill for consideration and passing. Even if there might be certain flaws in the Bill, the government deserves

appreciation for bringing this Bill. As regards, Clause 17, section 2, I would urge upon the Minister to make certain clarifications and also he can remedy it. This is the time when flaws can be removed. The repealing of this old British law should have been done much earlier, but I am glad that it is being done now by this Government. At the same time, I would also say that it would also reduce the burden on Kolkata, Mumbai and Madras High Court. I think that claim for life should get the top most priority. I hope the Minister understands the logic behind it and it should be corrected in the priority list. The territorial water is also required to be demarcated after a wider consultation. Given the fact that 95 per cent of our trade is carried out through port, it is necessary to expand our horizon. In the end, we support this Bill with little amendments which you want to make.

**SHRI THOTA NARASIMHAM:** Introduction of the Admiralty in Jurisdiction and Settlement of Maritime Claims Bill 2016 in the House is the timeliest for the fulfillment of India's aspirations of being the leader of the Indian Ocean. This Bill seeks to consolidate all the existing laws on civil matters of admiralty, jurisdiction of courts, admiralty proceedings of maritime claims and arrest of ships. In recent days, we have witnessed many naval accidents causing immense pollution in our coastal waters like that of the recent accident near Kamaraj Port, Chennai. As yet, there is immense delay in adjudicating such navigation issues due to lack of clarity in rules. I hope this Bill would sort out all

the issues pertaining to navigation and pave way for reaching our potential in high seas. I would like to emphasis on infrastructure development in Kakinada for better multimodal connectivity to the port. I also request the Government for the establishment of a Maritime Educational Institution in the State on the lines of Chennai for encouragement of the youth towards new areas of career as well as employment generation in the State. I further request the Government for the establishment of Oceanographic Museum in Kakinada to increase awareness of Oceanographic Studies, maritime assets and resources among the public. More so, it also increases the tourist potential of the State.

**SHRI KONDA VISHWESHWAR REDDY:** The pre-berthing detention time in India used to be weeks and months a few decades ago. This Government has brought it down from about two days to less than a day but there are still cases where ships are lying outside for one, two and three weeks. So, this law is even more important. It is one more step in increasing our maritime trade. The Bill repeals the old, obsolete British statutes. It also consolidates the existing laws relating to admiralty jurisdiction of the Court, admiralty proceedings on maritime claim, arrest of vessels and related issues. As of today, the admiralty jurisdiction is with three High Courts of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. The Bill rightfully increases the number of courts which can examine this. By increasing the number of High Courts, does it reduce the time? That is a question that we need to

examine because the Courts are already over-loaded. Everything is fine. But, there is one anomaly. In the case of Hyderabad and Telangana, we do not have a port. It is land-locked. In the interest of boosting the maritime trade of India, we require a separate High Court. It is very easy to draw a line on the land. But how do you draw a line in the sea? We need to have GPS coordinates because ships are almost 500 metres wide. There is one more issue. The Central and State Governments do not have non-commercial vessels; there are very few. So, they generally depend on lease for the purposes of survey, exploration etc. these can be construed as non-commercial activities but the very act of the Government leasing a ship is a commercial operation. Therefore, the Bill is a little ambiguous in that area. The Bill provides clarity with respect to the jurisdiction and settlement of claim. It is only the boundary that has to be more precisely defined; otherwise, it will be another cause for delay. Lastly, I would really appreciate if the Ministry tells us how much benefit this Bill gives. So, I want a matrix. How many of those ships are lying in the outer harbour and how much of the pre-berthing detention time does it reduce? How many legal cases does it reduce? These are the main points.

**DR. A. SAMPATH:** Let the Admiralty (Jurisdiction and Settlement of Maritime Claims) Bill, 2016 of course be renamed as the Admiralty (Jurisdiction and Settlement of Maritime Claims )Bill, 2017. This concerns certain questions of

the federal character of this nation. There are still quite a lot of disputes between the States regarding the territorial waters. At least the Standing Committee on Law and Justice should have gone through the Bill and take evidence and submit a Report. On the basis of the Report of the concerned Standing Committee a fruitful discussion should take place. I agree that more than 95 per cent of the trade takes place through sea. What percentage of the trade India has in the global trade scenario? Nowadays, the merchant ships engage armed guards. Armed guards for the security of seafarers are boarded from various convenient ports well before the high risk areas are reached but they are not allowed to leave the ship from Indian ports. These guards are from different nations. So, the ships have to keep them till the next port outside India. It costs quite a lot of financial burden upon the merchant ships. This actually creates inconvenience for the merchant ships. I hope the Government will look into this matter. In this Bill there is a provision for the fine. The fine for pollution should match the international standards. There have been complaints against our customs officials from our own shipping companies as well as foreign shipping companies. This should be avoided. Corruption at the customs point and immigration point should be checked severely. The Anchuthengu fortress is protected by the Archaeological Department but so far our Government has not taken any initiative to put it under Sagar Mala project.

My humble request to the Minister is to put Anchuthengu under Sagar Mala project. It is a historical place situated in my Constituency.

**SHRI VINAYAK BHAURAO RAUT:** The laws which were enacted in the year 1840 are still in practice even after independence in our country. The ill-effects of such laws had to bear by fishermen living near coastal areas, vessel owners and people engaged in trading through sea routes. We cannot draw boundary line in seas and also cannot erect fencing so the fishermen used to cross beyond 12 nautical miles at places. The big vessels of foreign countries used to do huge harm to our fishermen and flee after harming them. Now this Bill will put a check on such acts in future. Earlier, our fishermen and traders had to face problems in submitting their claims as they were totally in a fix as to where to go for this. Now this Bill has sorted out all these problems. The Government needs to focus more on giving priority to maritime claims. Many such claims have been lying pending for years together. With the passage of this Bill, the Government needs to dispose of these maritime claims expeditiously by giving them first priority. Now the Government is also empowered to restrict the entry of vessels coming from other countries and provide protection to our fishermen by properly implementing the provisions provided in the Bill. Lastly, I would like to say that the Government has fulfilled the long pending demand of our fishermen through this Bill.

**SHRI Y. V. SUBBA REDDY:** I support the Admiralty (Jurisdiction and Settlement) of Maritime Claims Bill 2016. The proposed legislation is likely to consolidate the existing laws relating to admiralty jurisdiction of courts, arrest of vessels and related issues. The legislative proposal is likely to fulfill long-standing demand of the maritime legal fraternity. This is a welcome decision of the Government to repeal the laws which are not in use. The admiralty law governs maritime questions and offences. The legislation now confers admiralty jurisdiction on High Courts located in all coastal States and this jurisdiction extends upto the territorial waters. The Government should give an impetus for enhancing mercantile trade through focus on accelerated development of the maritime infrastructure. Besides in order to ensure security against maritime claims, a vessel should be arrested in certain circumstances as lately there have been several instances when the neighbouring country encroaches Indian area. I support the Bill and lastly, I would request the Government of India to take up construction of Duggirajapatnam Port as mentioned in the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act and also Ramayapatnam Port in Prakasam District of Andhra Pradesh since the Government of India intends to develop a number of major and minor ports.

**DR. KAMBHAMPATI HARIBABU:** Admiralty jurisdiction till now is restricted to three High Courts and it is now extended to all the High Courts of the

maritime States. This Act is going to repeal about five obsolete statutes dated back to 1840, 1861, 1890, 1891 and 1865 and a consolidated law is being enacted for efficient governance. The Government of India is very much interested in encouraging the development of sea ports. I would request the Government of India to extend assistance for establishing ports at Ramayapatnam, Bhavanapadu, Kalingapatnam, etc. With these words, I support the Bill.

**SHRI KAUSHALENDRA KUMAR:** I support the Admiralty (Jurisdiction and Settlement of Maritime Claims) Bill, 2016. The Government is changing the law prevailing from the British times through this Bill. I would like to draw the attention of the Government on an important point pertaining to the smuggling through the maritime route, supply of weapons and assisting terrorist activities. This needs to be completely checked and most stringent punishment should be provided for every person, even foreigners, who is involved in this act. Recently a fisherman has been brazenly killed in the coastal area of Tamil Nadu. Such cases are reported on frequent basis and particularly along the maritime borders of Sri Lanka and Pakistan. The provision to tackle such cases should also kept in view.

**SHRI GOPAL SHETTY:** Through the amendments brought about in the laws of 1861, 1890, 1891 and 1865, cases could now be filed in all the High Courts of our country. Such a provision is being made through this Bill. This is a matter of pleasure. All the countries of the world admit that water transport is the

cheapest transport. Despite this, the government did not pay required attention to this sector. I would like to suggest that in the new Bill, Bombay High Court should be named as Mumbai High Court. I thank the government for introducing this revolutionary Bill.

**SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN:** I fully support the Admiralty (Jurisdiction and Settlement of Maritime Claims), 2016 as it repeals the outdated colonial legislation and brings in a sovereign legislation of our country in respect of maritime laws as well as admiralty jurisdiction. With regard to the Bill, I would like to suggest two-three points. When the Parliament passes a legislation, it should not be vague; it should be absolutely clear. But unfortunately clause 1 and clause 3 of the Bill are not clear. Clause 1 and clause 3 of the Bill deal with the admiralty jurisdiction. Clause 1 of the Bill says that the admiralty jurisdiction means that it shall apply to every vessel, irrespective of the place of residence or domicile of the owner. Subsequently, the proviso says that it shall not be applicable to an inland vessels under Inland Vessels Act, 1917 or a vessel under construction, naval warship, foreign vessels etc. It is applicable to all vessels, which is the first part of clause 1. Then, the proviso says that it is not applicable to these vessels. Subsequently, the same provision says that 'but it can be made applicable if there is a notification by the Government of India.' That is my question. If the Government wants to make it applicable to all the vessels,

including the foreign vessels and vessels under construction, inland vessels, why are they giving the authority to the Government through a notifications? I would like to describe it that this is a legislation by means of a notification. The entire legislative process should be done by the Parliament not by the Executive, by means of a notification. Which vessel is involved and what is the territorial jurisdiction, is not being determined by the Parliament, but it is being determined by the Executive. So, my point is that it is not a fair practice of legislative process. The Bill is absolutely in respect of civil liability, but in respect of fixing up the criminal liability in the crimes, which are being in the territorial waters and in the exclusive economic zones, some specific legislation is required.

**SHRI MANSUKH L. MANDAVIYA** *replying said:* I feel happy that all the members have supported the Admiralty (Jurisdiction and Settlement of Maritime Claims) Bill, 2016. While formulating the manual with regard to the Bill, the views and suggestions of the hon. Members will be included. The purpose of introducing this Bill is to ensure that the claims, compensation under the admiralty jurisdiction do not remain uncovered. Besides, the objective is to ensure that the confusion and the constraint in taking action under the old law is removed and stakeholders get justice in terms of the maritime claims. This has been mention here that these claims were filed hitherto only in three High Courts and people were compelled to approach these courts only. As such, these three High

Courts had a lot of work pressure. Now, to reduce the load with respect to the pending claims in these three High Courts, cases could be shifted to the respective High Court of the concerned coastal states. The law has been comprehensively amended to suit the changed circumstances. This will ensure the right to justice to the people and those working in the shipping sector. The number of claims is likely to come down with the passage of claim Bill. There are 12 major sea ports in the country as of now under the Sagar Mala Yojana. However, the government is going to construct six more ports besides them. Alongwith it, the government is working to upgrade all the ports that we have now and ensure their proper utilization. Besides, work is going to be undertaken in terms of port development across the country with an expenditure of Rs. 8 lakh crore under the Sagar Mala Yojana meant for enhancing port connectivity, railway connectivity and National Highway connectivity. The word 'Hindustan' has been used as a synonym as India has been called 'Hindustan' for centuries. Proper attention has been paid to ensure that the sweepers working on wages basis do get their wages urgently. The case of any personal loss has been given second priority. We have accorded third priority to the Government liability so that people may get proper justice. With reference to Maritime University, there is a training institute at Kankinara in Andhra Pradesh but this is not the subject matter of this Bill. All the suggestions given by hon. Members will be incorporated in the rules to be made under this Bill. I hope that

the Admiralty (Jurisdiction and Settlement of Maritime Claims), 2016 will be passed unanimously.

*The Bill, as amended, was passed.*

### **PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL**

*Sixth Schedule to the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2015 - contd.*

**SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY:** The amendments were sought after with regard to the increasing number of members in the District council from 30 to 40 as was originally envisaged in the Constitution and secondly also to bring traditional occupation of tribals into mines and minerals under the legislative competence of the District Council and protect customary practices and interests of tribals. In relation to the tribal areas where provisions of Sixth Schedule are applicable, Autonomous District Council each having not more than 30 members have been set up. Now, we also need to do introspection and relook into the functions and performance of the autonomous district councils because it has failed to meet the aspirations of the common people. The district councils don't have the adequate financial resources which they need for the development of those respective councils. Naturally they are to depend on their own resources and the magnanimity of the respective states. Sometime it is alleged that the power of

nomination in the ADCs have been misused on several occasions. Also, Governor of States do not always comply with the aspiration or the opinion of the ADC. Even misuse of Government funds are alleged to have been committed by the ADC. Again, under the Sixth Scheduled of the Constitution of India, ADCs are empowered to make laws relating to allotment or use of land. But hardly any significant steps have been taken to initiate land reforms. Forest is also another main source ADC's income. But now the income from forest has got a severe jolt. Such factors contribute to the decline in revenue collected by the ADCs. Now, the ADCs should come forward with more innovative approaches. The ADCs have framed certain regulations for the collection of taxes in their areas. But collection of taxes was not done regularly and properly since the ADCs neither enforced the regulation strictly nor realized the amount efficiently. Another issue is the appointment and succession of Tribal Chiefs. It is an important item of legislation for the ADCs. Moreover, the Village Courts or Village Councils as provided in paragraph 4 of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India had not yet been constituted by some of the ADCs. My submission is that more powers should be given to the ADCs. While authorizing more powers to them, the DCs should also be equipped to translate their powers or their privileges into reality and to that end of developing the areas as well as their future generations. The relation between the ADC and the State Government should more cordial and cooperative. Decades

after decades have passed. Yet we are experiencing the progress, the flaws and the inefficiencies of running ADC. ADCs areas remain poor and backward. Thus, unless the existing problems are rectified, tribal development will always be a distant dream in spite of the existence of ADCs in North Eastern Region. I would suggest that more royalty should be provided to the coffers of ADC from the sale of the minerals so that the entire North Eastern region develops in health, education and other necessary aspects of life.

**SHRI RAM PRASAD SARMAH:** Sir, the Member has mainly sought three amendment to the Sixth Schedule, designed to protect the rights of the tribals particularly in the hill regions of the North East. One is to raise the Members of Autonomous District Council from 30 to 40. There should be no discrimination among the three major tribes of the State of Meghalaya. Secondly, the District Council should have power to lease, licence and make provision, make rules and regulations for leasing out or mining the mines and minerals in Meghalaya. Thirdly, the customary laws and practices of the Tribals in Meghalaya should be protected. The Sixth Schedule areas should have similar rights, similar provisions. Even this concept can be introduced in the hills of Darjeeling. There is also a demand by the Tiwa, Rabha and Mising in Assam. They want to be protected from the onslaught of Bangladeshis. I support this Bill.

**PROF. SAUGATA ROY:** I rise to support this Bill. There are three district councils in Meghalaya; four district councils in Assam; one district council in Tripura and three in Mizoram. A different type of district council is also there in Assam, which is called the Bodoland Territorial Council. The main problem is that in these States, except Tripura, the majority of the people are Christians and they have a distinct identity and culture in all these places. It is proposed that there shall be District Council for each autonomous district consisting of not more than 40 members who shall be elected on the basis of adult franchise. It is 30 so far. The Government has now formulated MMDR Act which says that all minerals have to be sold by auction. The tradition is that if you have a tribal land, and if there is coal inside that land, then the coal will belong to you, not to the Government. The main thing that is still needed in the North East is development. The North East has a potential of becoming Switzerland not only for natural beauty, but also for a lot of hydro power that is available. I would like the Home Minister to visit all the North Eastern States. We are having a lot of Maoist militancy in the Chhattisgarh - Odisha tribal areas. Now, Vth Schedule says that no tribal land can be sold or acquired without the permission of the village council. Now, the big multinationals like Vedanta and others want to get huge chunks of land because it has got bauxite and other minerals and that is what is basically leading to Maoist militancy. Unless we deal with the issue of tribals with

sensitivity and with care, with guns only we cannot sort out the problem. I would request the whole House to accept this Bill. The other thing the Member is that there should be parity, especially in Meghalaya, between the three regions i.e., Khasi Hills, Jaintia Hills and Garo Hills.

**SHRI GAURAV GOGOI:** I rise to support this Bill. All the Members of Parliament cutting across party lines are sensitive regarding the North East and want to see its development. That is the most important thing which we must understand that the people of North East are extremely sentimental, emotional. In the North East, there are insurgency issues, developmental issues and connectivity issues. All of these problems can be solved, but first there has to be a bridge of dialogue and communication. Why are District Council constituted? It is because the tribal communities want some form of autonomy in order to strategise and plan the development on their communities. If we continue to lose the various languages of the North East we are losing the diversity. We must look at education and look at the concept of instruction in local languages. Primarily, the languages of North East are based on oral tradition. There is no written script. We should make sanskrit as a compulsory language. When we talk about progress, we always talk about economic progress or social backwardness. Literature is something by which we can give respect to various tribal communities. If we do not create a spirit of entrepreneurship, we will not be able to solve the employment question.

Creativity and entrepreneurship is there in our DNA. There are many things there in the North East and Sixth Schedule Areas where an ordinary person can set up an enterprise. We must look at not only as owners of natural resources but also how to extract, add value, market and distribution.

**SHRI RAMESHWAR TELI:** North East is called *astha lakshmi* as it is full of resources. North East has not developed as much as it should have been developed. Our Prime Minister is focusing on the North East and has also directed all Ministers to visit the North East, interact with people and resolve their problems. Four states are being governed under the Sixth Schedule. Six tribes of Assam have been agitating for a long seeking Scheduled Tribe status. These tribes are residing in Assam, Orissa, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Bengaluru. *Chai* tribe is there in Assam. Other five tribes are *Tayahom, Kush, Rajvanshi, Sutiya* and *Matak Moran*. I would demand that the Government should give these tribes the status of Scheduled Tribes.

**SHRI NISHIKANT DUBEY:** I have risen in the support of this Private Member's Bill. There appears to be three small amendments. First amendment seeks to increase the numbers of members from 30 to 40 in the district council. Second intends to bring the traditional subsidiary source of income relating to mines and minerals under the legislative competence of district council. Third proposes an amendment to safeguard the traditions and interest of tribals. These

amendments on the face of them seem to be a small one but in real terms they are huge amendments. There is an undercurrent resentment against district council in the North East as the district councils have become an elite club and have lost the connect with the masses. There is also a movement against the *panchayati raj* institutions 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment in Nagaland. We need to sit together and solve these problems. (*Speech unfinished.*)

*The Discussion was not concluded.*

**ANOOP MISHRA**  
*Secretary General*

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NOTE: It is the verbatim Debates of the Lok Sabha and not the Synopsis that should be considered authoritative.

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