

unattractive in relation to comparable professions. However, the Ministry of Human Resource Development refused to implement the UGC recommendations, leading to countrywide protests. Thereafter, in September 1998, the Ministry entered into a written agreement with the striking teachers. Since then, the Ministry of Human Resource Development, once again, has gone back on its commitments one by one. It has refused to implement what it committed and withdrawn promotional avenues that had been officially notified. The plans to downgrade the teaching profession now envisage making all appointments contractual. These plans are clearly part of the policy to convert public-funded universities and colleges into commercial enterprises with hire-and-fire service conditions, and teachers who are forced to serve the interests of private profit rather than help the students to develop their abilities to think independently, critically and creatively.

I urge upon the Minister of Human Resource Development to initiate a dialogue with the Delhi University Teachers Association (DUTA) and other organizations of the teaching profession so that their genuine grievances are redressed. I also urge upon the Government to reverse its present policies to privatise and commercialise higher education. The State has indeed a pivotal responsibility to fund and expand higher education. The surrender of this responsibility to market forces will cause irreversible damage to the cause of education and to overall national progress and development.

श्रीमती चन्द्रकला पांडे (पश्चिमी बंगाल) : महोदया, मैं अपने को इस स्पेशल मेंशन से सम्बद्ध करती हूँ।

SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN (Kerala) : Madam, I associate myself with what Mr. Faleiro has stated.

SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA (West Bengal) : Madam, I also associate with this Special Mention.

Need for Extending Mid-Sea Bunkering Facility to Mechanised Fishing Boats in Visakhapatnam

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY (Andhra Pradesh) : Madam Deputy Chairperson, my Special Mention relates to the extension of the benefit of mid-sea bunkering facility to fishing boats run on HSD oil. There are about 200 mechanised fishing boats in operation in Visakhapatnam which exploit the valuable marine fishery resources. These boats venture into the sea with different capacities

of engines, driven by diesel oil, in order to reach the fishing grounds located at far off places from the shore and to operate the fishing gear. The mechanisation of fishing boats has facilitated the propulsion. The use of HSD oil, which constitutes 60 per cent of the operation cost in fishing, has become an essential commodity in marine fishing sector, though the catches are uncertain to make the fishing economical. The marine fishing sector is exposed to vulnerability whenever there is an increase in the cost of HSD oil.

The Andhra Pradesh Mechanised Fishing Boat Operators, Association has been demanding mid-sea bunkering facilities by saying that the operation of fishing boats has become uneconomical and difficult to sustain the commercial exploitation of deep-sea pelagic resources by encouraging the mechanisation of fishing boats due to the increase in the cost of diesel oil.

It is, therefore, requested to extend the facility of mid-sea bunkering to all the mechanised fishing boats operating in the vicinity at the same cost in order to reduce the operational cost on HSD consumption.

This issue is pending for the last three years. It is, therefore, requested that this may kindly be expedited.

Demand for Inclusion of Tamil as an Official Language and Declaration of Tamil as a Classical Language

SHRI P. G. NARAYANAN (Tamil Nadu): Madam Deputy Chairperson, my Special Mention pertains to the inclusion of Tamil as an official language and declaration of Tamil as a Classical Language. Tamil is one of the oldest languages in the world. It is noteworthy that the culture of Tamil language is invaluable and has got its universal status and recognition due to its impeccable cultural tradition.

My leader, the hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, has written several letters to the Government of India requesting to amend the Constitution of India and make Tamil and other national languages specified in the Eighth Schedule as official languages along with Hindi and English. The State Government has also requested the Government of India to declare Tamil as a Classical Language along with Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic.

My leader, the hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, has submitted several memoranda personally to the hon. Prime Minister of India on several occasions.

I therefore, strongly urge upon the Government of India to amend the Constitution of India immediately and make Tamil and other national languages