

Lathicharge on students for demanding Reservations in Private sector

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- ROUND TABLE INDIA

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India being a very complex state, has witnessed the subjugation of the human in every form, discrimination and subjugation of people in the name of the caste has been in practice in India since ages. The caste based discrimination has denied the basic opportunities for the indigenous communities like SC/ST and OBC's and have made them socially, economically, politically and educationally backward which has driven them to lead the life of second class citizens. Though they form 85% of the population and are the majority, that is Bahujan, yet they struggle to get a square meal a day.



History of India has seen a social transformation movement which began from Bhagvan Buddha and was continued by Mahatma Phule, Shahu Maharaj, Periyar, Babasaheb Ambedkar and Dada Saheb Kanshiram. Chatrapati Shahuji Maharaj introduced reservations for the non-brahmins to the extent of 50% in public employment in the state of Kohlapur on 26th July 1902, and Shri Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar of Mysore Province also followed the footsteps of Shahuji and introduced the reservations to the extent of 75% in 1921, and this was extended to the whole nation through the constitution of India on 26th January 1950 by Babasaheb Ambedkar.

Article 15(4) and Article 16(4) of the constitution have given the reservation provisions in education and employment respectively and article 340 has enabled the state to

identify and look into the conditions of backward classes and to provide the reservations for them also. On this basis, the OBCs have been identified and 27% reservations has been given to them. Similarly, 22.5% reservations has been given for SC/STs in employment in the central government services. In the state of Karnataka, the OBCs have been given 32% and SC/STs with 18% reservation in state services. Reservations for OBC and SC/STs was introduced in education and services to give them representation and bring them to the mainstream, but this has just remained as a provision and it has not been effectively implemented. The statistics of the government is the evidence for it. In the last 65 years the implementation of reservation provisions is as follows:

Percentage of employment got by the Bahujan Samaj in various groups in public service since 65 years|

Group	SC Population 20%	ST Population 10%	OBC/RM's 55%	<u>Manuvadi's</u> 15%
Group A	11.5%	4.8%	6.9%	76.8%
Group B	14.9%	6%	7.3%	71.8%
Group C	16.4%	7.7%	15.3%	60.6%
Group D	23%	6.8%	1.7%	53.2%

The above table is a clear evidence of the state of reservations in this country. This being so, the governments should have taken effective measures to implement the same but instead they were successful in making the reservations in government sector irrelevant by introducing the new economic policy in 1992. With this the Private Sector was given prominence and it led to the growth of the Private sector. In 1994, the job creation in government sector was 1.53%, and by 2010 it dropped to -0.65%, whereas in private sector the job growth in 1994 was 0.44% and it grew to 1.75% in 2010. The constitutional provisions enabled the bahujan samaj to create an educated class amongst them and was able to make them to compete with the upper castes efficiently, but the manuvadi governments created such a situation where reservations are given in the government sector where there are no jobs, and there are no reservations in the private sector where the jobs are created. This has led to the unemployment problem amongst the youth especially amongst the bahujan samaj. As the McKinsey report says, only 20% graduates are employable in India and the remaining are unemployable. On the other side, the private sector which has been monopolised by the Brahmins and Baniyas has been practising casteism very subtly and keeping away the bahujan samaj from employment in their companies, by claiming that they are private companies. Though they are not private as they are getting huge benefits from the government in the form of cheap land, tax exemptions, infrastructure etc. In the last 11 years, the corporate sector was able to get 36 lakh crores of rupees of subsidies , which was given from the tax payers' money that is our money. Private sector does not mean only corporates or industries, private sector includes everything apart from the 2% of government sector that is land, industries, services etc.

Constitution of India declares India as a socialist state but after 65 years of inception of constitution, India has no more remained a socialist state, it has transformed from socialist to capitalist state, and today into a corporate state. Under this scenario, the bahujan samaj has to demand the reservation in the private sector in the interest of the nation generally and the bahujan samaj particularly.

Bahujan Vidhyarthi Sangha –BVS is one of the prominent student organisation in Karnataka, which was founded on 26th January 2001 in Mysore, Karnataka. BVS was formed with the purpose of taking Babasaheb Ambedkar's mission to its logical end. In the process the sangha was able to educate lakhs of students on the mission of Babasaheb Ambedkar and Dadasaheb Kanshiram. Today thousands of students belonging to Bahujan Samaj are able to excel in their respective fields with the guidance of BVS. Hundreds of writers, artists, and bureaucrats have been created by the BVS. And it has also taken up the issues of bahujan students like the Hostel issues, where we pressurised the government to transform the hostels which had just become feeding centres into learning centres, by providing them the required skills for the present job market - like providing them English classes, computer training, soft Skills etc, BVS also demanded the government to impart Employment based education.

For the past 4 years, BVS has also taken up the issue of reservations in Private Sector. In February 2014, a huge Conference of 40,000 students was held at Freedom Park, Bangalore where Sukhadeo Thorat was the main speaker and eminent scholars like Vivek kumar and Dwarakanath were also present.

Again in the month of February 2015, another massive rally of 50,000 students was held at the same place demanding reservations in private sector. The Chief Minister of Karnataka Mr Siddaramaiah invited the BVS delegation to his office and we were assured of implementing the same, and we also gave him one year time, but there was no sign of implementing the promised policy. We had also warned the government that if it is not implemented, one lakh students would reach Bangalore and gherao him, and BVS systematically planned the programme in six stages after the meet with the CM.

- 1) Visiting Hostels and creating awareness on the need of reservation in Private sector
- 2) Poster Campaign
- 3) Handbill campaign and wall writing
- 4) One day seminar in all the Districts of Karnataka
- 5) One day protest in all the districts on 21st January
- 6) Massive rally on 3,4,5 of feb 2016

The government of Karnataka declared a Global Investors Meet (GIM), Invest Karnataka 2016, between 3 and 5 of February 2016. Then BVS decided to boycott the GIM, if reservations in private sector is not implemented by February 2nd. BVS cadres and leaders were able to educate lakhs of Bahujan students on the issue and minimum one lakh students decided to reach Bangalore on 3rd February to boycott GIM. But the government of Karnataka surprisingly banned the entry of Private and KSRTC buses into the city between 1st and 5th February. Their plan was to stop us from entering into the city. Initially the police denied the permission to conduct the rally, but later on they gave the permission upto Freedom park.

Only mode of transport left to us was trains. Our committed cadres, facing all the odds, were able to still bring a huge gathering of 25 to 30 thousand students to the rally. The rally began from Bangalore Railway Station and was peacefully moving towards the designated place, that is Freedom park. We reached the place by 2 pm shouting slogans and singing the movement songs. After reaching the place, eminent speakers and the leaders of BVS spoke for a while and we requested the police to bring the chief minister to the spot or take us to him. But the police denied our request saying that he is in the GIM, and it being an international event he cannot come. But we demanded them to bring him as he claims that he represents the AHINDA (means minorities, backward classes and dalits) community and he is committed to their cause, as the students who had gathered are also from AHINDA communities so he should come.

But the police did not yield to us and suddenly without any provocation, they started to lathi charge, without a warning, and chasing and hitting the girl students also as they were in a big number. They lathi charged for 30 minutes and were chasing the students like dogs and they were pouncing on the students like beasts. Later they took students in 5 Buses, and students of 4 buses were set free. 28 students who were taken in the 5th bus were detained and taken to police station and charged with serious offences and an FIR was filed against them. The leaders of BVS were busy in taking the students who were hurt to the hospital, as hundreds of students were hurt including girls. Hands and legs were fractured and were profusely bleeding. By evening we came to know that the cases had been booked against the 28 boys and they told us that they will be produced before the court in the next morning. We were busy with our advocates in discussing about the next procedure, but our boys were produced before the magistrate at 2 am and were sent to Bangalore Central Jail.

Next morning, 4th February, we were struggling hard to get the boys out of the jail. Though the sections filed against the boys were bailable, the judge did not grant bail, he adjourned the hearing to the next day, that is 5th February. There was protests held at every district by the BVS units against the atrocity of police on students. Even on the next day, the magistrate did not grant bail. Probably there was pressure from the state government not to grant bail. The tragedy is that the home minister Mr. Parameshwar himself is a Dalit but he was least bothered about the issues of his community. At last with the effort of our advocates Sunil, Rahul Samrat, Mahesh Das and Sridhar Prabhu, who were also the products of BVS, we were successful in getting bail on 6th Feb, and with a high drama we were able to release our boys at 9.30 pm. Next day, the Chief Minister was gheraoed by BVS cadres in Mysore. There he promised our cadres that the government would take back the cases filed against the boys after the local body elections.

Such a serious incident had taken place in the capital of Karnataka but none of the English and national media, with the exception of some Kannada print media and news channels, bothered about the issue. An issue of national importance was given just a local coverage and they wanted the issue to die. Even the human rights organisations, women's organisations, Dalit organisations and students' organisations were least bothered about it. The intelligentsia were also mute spectators to the event, nobody

dared to condemn the incident and as usual the seedless political representatives were busy with their usual business. Later on, some Dalit organisations supported us. BVS will carry ahead this movement until it reaches a logical end but there is a need for all the educated bahujans to form a united front for the cause. There is a need to build a national movement on the issue and take a political stand like the ABVP and other right wing organisations - they are separate when it comes to the social organisations but they all get united politically during the elections, their political stand will be uniform unlike us. So it's time to rethink and act. As Babasaheb Ambedkar says "What makes one interest dominant over another is power. That being so. Power is needed to destroy power".

Jai Bheem, Jai Bharat

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