

OBC VOICE



EWS: A RESERVATION FOR THE PRIVILEGED?

TIME TO REVISIT AND REPEAL AN UNJUST QUOTA



FROM CRORE-RUPEE
MEDICAL SEATS TO
IIT GRADUATES—
WHO IS REALLY
BENEFITING?

EQUALITY
CAN'T BE
BOUGHT.
JUSTICE CAN'T
BE MISUSED.

- Over 140 EWS candidates get PG medical seats in private colleges with fees up to ₹3 crore!
- Expensive coaching, private schools, family business, MNC jobs—EWS list exposes the privileged.
- Data proves: General category EBCs already have 28% representation in top institutions—3 times the 10% quota!

EXPRESS investigation

Private schools, pricey coaching, family business, MNC jobs: They also cracked EWS list in UPSC exam

Daughter of railway porter to son of security guard to IIT graduate, MNC employee: Rs 8-lakh income bar raises questions of fairness in eligibility

Shyamal Yadav
New Delhi, June 18

FOR EVERY candidate who cracked India's civil services this year under the Economically Weaker Section quota, the son of a security guard or the daughter of a railway porter, there are many others on the same quota list whose backgrounds tell a different story: sons and daughters of businessmen, IIT graduates, alumni of private schools in the city charging over a lakh a year in fees.

There were 104 candidates selected in the Civil Services Examination 2025 under the 10 per cent quota for the Economically Weaker Section (EWS). Those from general category families with an annual income of less than ₹8 lakh. An investigation by *The Indian Express* has found a gap between the section's stated purpose and the profiles of many it has come to benefit.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



The UPSC office on Delhi's Shahjahan Road. (AP Photo/Ankur)

• The Quota Data

- 104 EWS candidates selected in 2025 civil services exam.
- 67 attended well-known coaching institutes.
- 28 businesses—shops and trading to steel fabrication, cloth and confectionery.
- 10 candidates held private jobs, including in MNCs.
- 14 graduates or post-graduates from IITs, and at least three from NITs.

Why top court had questioned Rs 8-lakh limit

Who qualifies under EWS? The Economically Weaker Section (EWS) quota, notified in 2018, grants 10% reservation in government jobs and educational institutions to persons from the general category not covered under SC, ST or OBC reservations. It covers applicants and their families.

A 2019 office memorandum of the Centre's Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions clarifies, "The term 'Family' for this purpose will include the person who seeks benefit of reservation, his/her spouse and siblings below the age of 18 years as also his/her spouse and children below the age of 18 years."

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

REVIEW.
REJECT.
REPEAL.

SAVE RESERVATION.
SAVE SOCIAL JUSTICE.

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MAHARAJ

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OF SERVICE

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📅 **11th July 2026**, Saturday

🕒 **10.00 a.m.**

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🌸 **Introductory Address:** **S.Natarajan**, Gen Secretary UBICEWA-TN 🌸

Welcome Address: **M.Senthamil Selvan**, Reception Committee

Inaugural Address:

Thiru. ALOK KUMAR

General Manager & Zonal Head, Union Bank of India,
Chennai Zone

Valedictory Address:

Thiru. RAJKUMAR S.A.

General Manager & Zonal Head, Union Bank of India,
Coimbatore Zone

Guests of Honour

Thiru. C.Prabhu

Dy.ZH / Liaison Officer for OBC
Union Bank of India, Coimbatore Zone

Thiru. Santhosh Prabhu Gurpur

Dy.ZH / Liaison Officer for OBC
Union Bank of India, Chennai Zone

Thiru. R.Muthurathinam

DGM, ECO BANKING HUB, UBI
Chennai

Thiru. Rajeev Ranjan

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Chennai Zone

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Chennai North Region

Thiru. M.Chelladurai

Regional Head, UBI
Tiruppur Region

Tmt. S.S.Lavanya

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EWS: A Reservation for the Privileged? Time to Revisit and Repeal an Unjust Quota

The 10% reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS), introduced through the 103rd Constitutional Amendment in 2019, was justified on the claim that poor sections among the forward castes had remained excluded from higher education and public employment. Seven years later, growing evidence suggests that this claim was deeply flawed and that the EWS quota has largely become a vehicle for extending reservation benefits to socially dominant groups rather than addressing genuine deprivation.

Recent investigations by *The Indian Express* and *The Times of India* have exposed the contradictions inherent in the EWS framework. An *Indian Express* investigation into UPSC Civil Services Examination 2025 selections found that many EWS beneficiaries were graduates of IITs and NITs, alumni of expensive private schools, children of businessmen, and candidates who had undergone costly coaching programmes charging lakhs of rupees. A significant number came from educationally and economically privileged backgrounds, raising serious questions about the effectiveness and credibility of the EWS eligibility criteria.

The situation is even more alarming in medical education. Reports reveal that over 140 EWS candidates secured postgraduate medical seats through management and NRI quotas in private colleges where course fees range from ₹1 crore to nearly ₹3 crore. **How can candidates claiming to belong to an “economically weaker section” afford such exorbitant fees?** Such cases expose glaring loopholes and point to the misuse of EWS certificates by affluent sections.

The problem lies in the very design of the policy. Unlike reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs, which are based on historical discrimination, social exclusion and under-representation, EWS is based solely on an income criterion that is difficult to verify and easy to manipulate.

More importantly, the fundamental justification for EWS is questionable. Data published in *Economic and Political Weekly* showed that economically backward students from the general category already enjoyed around 28% representation in 445 premier higher educational institutions—almost three times the 10% quota later granted to them. The claim that they were systematically excluded from higher education was not supported by evidence.

Reservation in India was never intended as a poverty alleviation programme. It was conceived as a constitutional remedy for centuries of caste-based exclusion and denial of opportunities. Poverty can be addressed through scholarships, fee waivers and welfare schemes. Reservation, however, must remain tied to social justice and representation.

The evidence is becoming impossible to ignore. EWS has not corrected a historic injustice; it has created a new privilege. For the sake of constitutional morality, social justice and equitable representation, the 10% EWS quota deserves a comprehensive review—and ultimately, its repeal. ■

“1902 ஜூலை 26”: சமூக நீதிக்கான சாகு மகாராஜாவின் புரட்சிகர அறிவிப்பு”



"JULY 26, 1902: SHAHU MAHARAJ'S REVOLUTIONARY PROCLAMATION"



க.சரஸ்வதி

G.SARASWATHI

“ஒரு சமூகத்தின் பெரும்பான்மையினருக்கு வாய்ப்புகள் மறுக்கப்பட்டால், அந்த சமூகம் ஒருபோதும் முன்னேற முடியாது.”

இன்று சமூக நீதி, சமத்துவம், இடஒதுக்கீடு ஆகியவை இந்திய ஜனநாயகத்தின் முக்கிய அடையாளங்களாகப் பார்க்கப்படுகின்றன. ஆனால் இவற்றின் விதைகள் விதைக்கப்பட்ட காலம் நூற்றாண்டுக்கு முன்பே.

அக்காலத்தில் ஜாதி ஆதிக்கம் சமூகத்தின் அனைத்து துறைகளிலும் ஆழமாக வேருன்றி யிருந்தது. கல்வியும், அரசு வேலைகளும், அதிகாரப் பதவிகளும் சிலரின் ஏகபோக உரிமையாக இருந்தன.

அத்தகைய சூழலில், அந்த அநீதியான சமூக அமைப்பை நேரடியாக சவாலுக்கு உட்படுத்திய தொலைநோக்கு பார்வையுடைய மன்னர் ஒருவர் தோன்றினார். அவர் தான் கோலப்பூரின் மன்னர் சத்ரபதி சாகு மகாராஜா. இந்தியாவில் இடஒதுக்கீட்டு கொள்கையை முதன்முதலில் நடைமுறைப்படுத்திய சமூக நீதியின் முன்னோடியாக அவர் போற்றப்படுகிறார்.

1902 ஜூலை 26 அன்று, சாகு மகாராஜா ஒரு வரலாற்றுச் சிறப்புமிக்க ஆணையை வெளியிட்டார். அதன்படி, அரசுப் பணிகளில் 50 சதவீத இடங்கள் பிற்படுத்தப்பட்ட மக்களுக்காக ஒதுக்கப்பட்டன. இது இந்திய வரலாற்றில் மட்டுமல்ல, உலகளாவிய அளவிலும் மிகவும் முன்னோடியான சமூக நீதி நடவடிக்கைகளில் ஒன்றாகக் கருதப்படுகிறது.

"A society cannot progress if the majority of its people are denied opportunities."

More than a century ago, when caste hierarchy dominated every sphere of life and education and government employment were the exclusive preserve of a privileged few, a visionary ruler from Kolhapur dared to challenge the social order. That ruler was **Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj**, often remembered as the **Father of Reservation in India**.

On **26 July 1902**, Shahu Maharaj issued a historic proclamation reserving **50 percent of government jobs for the backward classes** in the princely state of Kolhapur. This was the first known state-sponsored reservation policy in India and one of the earliest affirmative action measures anywhere in the world. Decades before the Constitution of India and long before reservation became national policy, Shahu Maharaj had already recognized a fundamental truth: **formal equality means little when large sections of society have been systematically excluded from opportunities**.

A Revolutionary Decision

At the dawn of the twentieth century, government offices and educational institutions were overwhelmingly dominated by a small elite. The vast majority of non-Brahmin communities, oppressed castes and other socially disadvantaged groups had little access to education, public employment or positions of influence.

அண்ணல் அம்பேத்கர் அரசியல் அரங்கில் தோன்றுவதற்கும், இந்திய அரசியலமைப்பு உருவாகுவதற்கும் பல ஆண்டுகளுக்கு முன்பே, சமூக சமத்துவம் வெறும் சட்டப்பூர்வ அறிவிப்புகளால் உருவாகாது; அதற்கு நடைமுறை வாய்ப்புகள் வழங்கப்பட வேண்டும் என்பதை சாகு மகாராஜா உணர்ந்திருந்தார்.

ஒரு புரட்சிகரமான முடிவு

இருபதாம் நூற்றாண்டின் தொடக்கத்தில் அரசு அலுவலகங்களும் கல்வி நிறுவனங்களும் மிகச் சில உயர்சாதியினரின் ஆதிக்கத்தில் இருந்தன. பெரும்பான்மையான உழைக்கும் சமூகங்கள், பிற்படுத்தப்பட்ட வகுப்பினர் மற்றும் ஒடுக்கப்பட்ட மக்கள் கல்வி, வேலைவாய்ப்பு மற்றும் நிர்வாக அதிகாரங்களில் இருந்து முற்றிலும் விலக்கப்பட்டிருந்தனர்.

இந்த நிலையை ஆழமாக ஆராய்ந்த சாகு மகாராஜா, கல்வி பெற்றாலும் வேலை வாய்ப்புகள் கிடைக்காத காரணத்தால் பிற்படுத்தப்பட்ட மக்கள் முன்னேற முடியாமல் இருப்பதை உணர்ந்தார். இதனை சரிசெய்யும் நோக்கில், அரசுப் பணிகளில் காலியாகும் இடங்களில் 50 சதவீதம் பிற்படுத்தப்பட்ட வகுப்பினரால் நிரப்பப்பட வேண்டும் என்று உத்தரவிட்டார்.

இது ஒரு சாதாரண நிர்வாக ஆணை அல்ல. சமூக நீதி என்பது அரசின் கடமை என்பதையும், அரசுப் பணிகளில் அனைத்து சமூகங்களுக்கும் பிரதிநிதித்துவம் கிடைக்க வேண்டும் என்பதையும் அறிவித்த வரலாற்றுப் பிரகடனமாக அது அமைந்தது.

அந்தக் கொள்கைக்குப் பின்னிருந்த பார்வை

சாகு மகாராஜாவின் சமூக சிந்தனையில் மகாத்மா ஜோதிராவ் பூலே மற்றும் சத்தியசோதக் இயக்கத்தின் தாக்கம் ஆழமாக இருந்தது. ஜாதி ஆதிக்கம் காரணமாக கோடிக்கணக்கான மக்கள் கல்வி, மரியாதை மற்றும் பொருளாதார முன்னேற்றத்திலிருந்து விலக்கப்பட்டிருப்பதை அவர் தெளிவாகக் கண்டார்.

பல ஆட்சியாளர்களைப் போல சமூக ஏற்றத்தாழ்வுகளை இயற்கையானதாக அவர் கருதவில்லை. மாறாக, அவை மனிதர்களால்



Shahu Maharaj carefully studied this imbalance. He observed that despite efforts to promote education, backward communities were unable to advance because they lacked opportunities after completing their studies. To correct this injustice, he issued an order directing that **50 percent of vacancies in state services be filled by members of the backward classes**. He further instructed that departments where representation was below this level should prioritize appointments from these communities.

This was not merely an administrative reform. It was a bold declaration that government had a responsibility to ensure fair representation and social justice.

The Vision Behind the Policy

Shahu Maharaj's commitment to social equality was shaped by the reformist ideas of **Jyotirao Phule** and the Satyashodhak movement. He firmly believed that caste-based privilege had denied millions of people access to education, dignity and economic advancement.

உருவாக்கப்பட்ட அநீதிகள் என்றும், அவற்றை சரிசெய்ய அரசாங்கம் நேரடி நடவடிக்கை எடுக்க வேண்டும் என்றும் நம்பினார்.

இடஒதுக்கீடு என்பது யாருக்கும் வழங்கப்படும் சலுகை அல்ல; மாறாக, உண்மையான சமவாய்ப்பை உருவாக்கும் சமூக நீதி கருவி என்று அவர் கருதினார்.

இந்த முடிவு அக்காலத்தின் பழமைவாத சக்திகளிடமிருந்து கடுமையான எதிர்ப்பை சந்தித்தது. இருப்பினும், சாகு மகாராஜா தன் கொள்கையில் உறுதியாக நின்றார். சிலரின் ஆதிக்கத்தில் இயங்கும் அமைப்பு ஒருபோதும் நீதியானதாக இருக்க முடியாது என்பதை அவர் புரிந்திருந்தார்.

இடஒதுக்கீட்டைத் தாண்டிய சமூகப் புரட்சியாளர்

1902 ஆம் ஆண்டின் இடஒதுக்கீட்டு ஆணை, சாகு மகாராஜாவின் சமூக மாற்றப் பயணத்தின் தொடக்கம் மட்டுமே.

அவர் இலவச மற்றும் கட்டாயக் கல்வியை அறிமுகப்படுத்தினார். பிற்படுத்தப்பட்ட மாணவர்களுக்காக விடுதிகளை நிறுவினார். பெண்களின் கல்வியை ஊக்குவித்தார். தீண்டாமைக்கு எதிராகப் போராடினார். ஜாதி மற்றும் மத வேறுபாடுகளைத் தாண்டிய திருமணங்களுக்கு சட்ட அங்கீகாரம் வழங்கினார். பெண்களுக்கு எதிரான கொடுமைகளைத் தடுக்க முன்னோடியான சட்டங்களை இயற்றினார்.

அவரது ஆட்சிக் காலத்தில் நூற்றுக்கணக்கான புதிய பள்ளிகள் உருவாக்கப்பட்டன. ஆயிரக்கணக்கான ஏழை மற்றும் ஒடுக்கப்பட்ட சமூக மாணவர்கள் முதன்முறையாக கல்வி கற்கும் வாய்ப்பைப் பெற்றனர்.

முக்கியமாக, இளம் வயதில் சமூகப் போராட்டத்தைத் தொடங்கிய டாக்டர் பி.ஆர். அம்பேத்கருக்கு அவர் நிதி மற்றும் தார்மீக ஆதரவை வழங்கினார். சமூக நீதி குறித்த இவர்களிருவரின் அர்ப்பணிப்பே பின்னர் இந்தியாவின் சமத்துவப் போராட்டத்திற்கு வலுவான அடித்தளமாக அமைந்தது.

இன்றும் வாழும் மரபு

இன்று இடஒதுக்கீடு என்பது வரலாற்று அநீதிகளைச் சரிசெய்து, சமுதாயத்தின்

Unlike many rulers of his time, he did not view social inequality as a natural condition. Instead, he regarded it as a human-made injustice that required corrective action. Reservation, in his view, was not a concession but a mechanism to create genuine equality of opportunity.

His decision faced fierce opposition from conservative sections of society. Influential voices of the period criticized the policy, arguing that it would weaken administrative efficiency. Yet Shahu Maharaj remained steadfast. He understood that a system monopolized by a privileged minority could never be truly just or democratic.

Beyond Reservation: A Comprehensive Social Reformer

The 1902 reservation order was only one part of Shahu Maharaj's larger mission of social transformation.

He introduced **free and compulsory primary education**, expanded schools across his state, promoted hostels for students from disadvantaged communities, encouraged women's education and fought against untouchability. He also enacted progressive measures supporting inter-caste marriages and protecting women from social discrimination.

His administration became a model of inclusive governance. Under his leadership, thousands of children from marginalized communities entered schools and many secured positions in public service for the first time.

Significantly, Shahu Maharaj extended moral and financial support to **Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** during the early stages of his public life. The shared commitment of these two giants helped shape India's later struggle for equality and social justice.

A Legacy That Lives On

Today, reservation remains one of the most important instruments for ensuring representation and correcting historical disadvantages. While debates about reservation continue, its

அனைத்து பிரிவினருக்கும் உரிய பிரதிநிதித்துவத்தை உறுதி செய்யும் முக்கிய கருவியாகத் திகழ்கிறது. அதன் தத்துவ அடித்தளத்தை அமைத்தவர்களில் முதன்மையானவர் சத்ரபதி சாகு மகாராஜா.

சமூக நீதி என்பது வெறும் நல்ல எண்ணங்களால் கிடைக்காது; அதற்கு திட்டமிட்ட அரசுக் கொள்கைகள் அவசியம் என்பதை அவரது 1902 ஆணை நிரூபித்தது. கல்வி மற்றும் வேலைவாய்ப்பின் கதவுகளை ஒடுக்கப்பட்ட மக்களுக்காகத் திறந்ததன் மூலம் அவர் நூற்றாண்டுகளாக நிலவிய ஜாதி ஆதிக்கத்திற்கு சவால் விடுத்தார்.

இன்று சமூக நீதி, இடஒதுக்கீடு, பிரதிநிதித்துவம் குறித்து நடைபெறும் ஒவ்வொரு விவாதத்திலும் சாகு மகாராஜாவின் தொலைநோக்கு சிந்தனையின் எதிரொலி ஒலித்துக்கொண்டே இருக்கிறது.

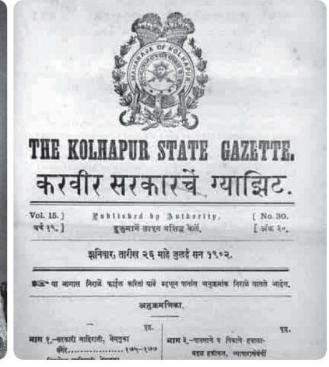
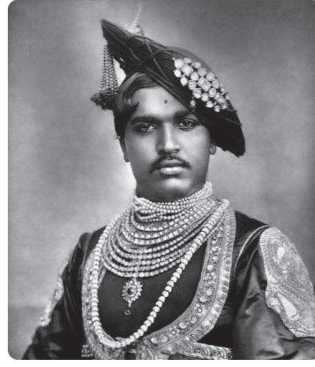
முடிவுரை

சத்ரபதி சாகு மகாராஜா ஒரு மன்னர் மட்டுமல்ல; சமூக நீதிக்காக ஆட்சியையே ஒரு கருவியாகப் பயன்படுத்திய புரட்சிகரமான சமூகச் சீர்திருத்தவாதி. 1902 ஜூலை 26 அன்று அவர் பிறப்பித்த இடஒதுக்கீட்டு ஆணை, இந்தியாவில் சமத்துவம் மற்றும் சமூக நீதிக்கான புதிய யுகத்தைத் தொடங்கி வைத்தது.

சலுகைகளைப் பாதுகாப்பதே தலைமை அல்ல; வாய்ப்புகள் மறுக்கப்பட்ட மக்களை முன்னேற்றுவதே உண்மையான தலைமை என்பதை அவர் தனது செயலால் நிரூபித்தார். கோலாப்பூரில் தொடங்கிய அவரது சமூக நீதி பயணம், இந்தியாவின் அரசியல் மற்றும் சமூக வரலாற்றையே மாற்றியமைத்தது.

இன்று நாம் அனுபவிக்கும் இடஒதுக்கீட்டு உரிமையின் முதல் விதையை விதைத்தவர் சத்ரபதி சாகு மகாராஜா. சமூக நீதியின் வரலாற்றில் அவரது பெயர் என்றும் அழியாத ஒளிக்கீற்றாகத் திகழும்.

(எழுத்தாளர் க. சரஸ்வதி, பொருளாளர், யூனியன் பாங்க் ஆப் இந்தியா பிற்படுத்தப்பட்ட பணியாளர்கள் நல சங்கம், தமிழ்நாடு)



philosophical roots can be traced directly to the pioneering efforts of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj.

His 1902 order demonstrated that social justice requires more than good intentions—it requires deliberate policy interventions. By opening the doors of education and public employment to the excluded, he challenged centuries of social inequality and laid the foundation for a more inclusive India.

More than 120 years later, the significance of his vision remains undiminished. Every discussion on representation, equality and social justice carries echoes of the path first charted by the ruler of Kolhapur.

Conclusion

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was not merely a king; he was a transformative social reformer who recognized that democracy and equality cannot flourish where opportunities are monopolized by a privileged few. His historic reservation order of **26 July 1902** marked the beginning of India's journey toward affirmative action and social justice.

As India continues to strive for a more equitable society, the legacy of Shahu Maharaj reminds us that true leadership lies not in preserving privilege but in empowering the marginalized. His vision transformed Kolhapur, influenced generations of reformers and continues to inspire the ongoing quest for equality, dignity and representation for all.

(The writer G.Saraswathi is Treasurer, Union Bank of India Backward Classes Employees Welfare Association, Tamil Nadu)

COMMEMORATING THE FOUNDATION DAY OF ARJAK SANGH

A HISTORIC GATHERING AT LUCKNOW - 31 MAY 2026

100 YEARS OF SELF-RESPECT MOVEMENT

Legacy, Lessons and Future Path



Speech Delivered by G. Karunanidhi

*Secretary (External Relations), Dravidar Kazhagam
General Secretary, All India OBC Employees Federation*

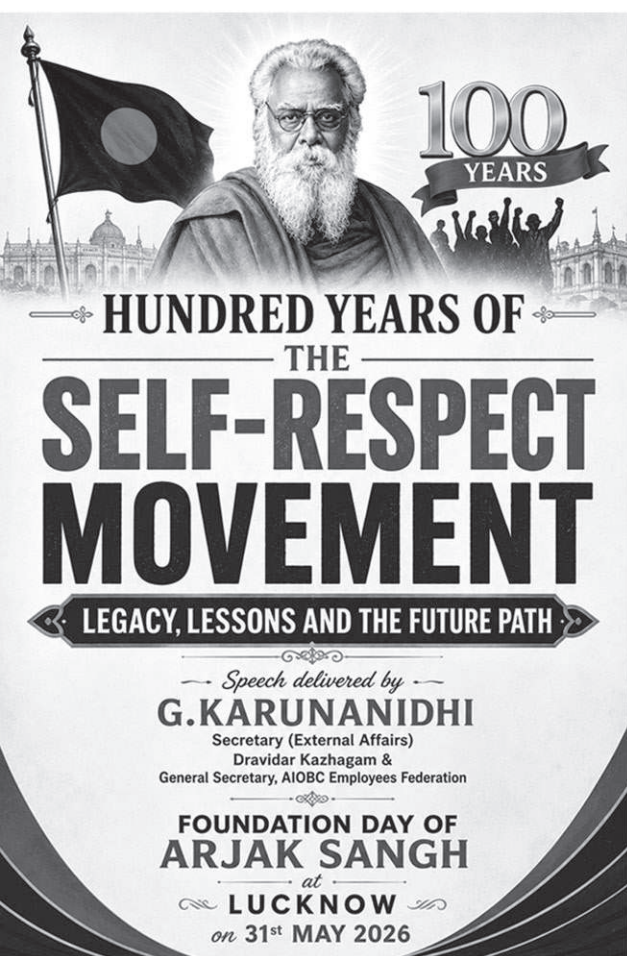
It is a great privilege to stand before you on this August occasion of the Foundation Day of Arjan Sangh, started by the great social reformer Ramswaroop Verma.

In fact, I have been directed by my leader, Dr. K. Veeramani, the ideological disciple of Thanthai Periyar, to attend this function of Arjan Sangh. Why he directed me was: Dravida Kazhagam, the Dravidian movement started by Thanthai Periyar, itself is a humanist organization. So, it is natural that another associate in North India by the name Arjan Sangh, which is itself a humanist association, we should have a connection and a bondage to exchange our ideologies—the ideals of Thanthai Periyar and the ideals of Ramswaroop Verma—so that national integration and humanism is created. I must thank my leader for giving me this opportunity.

And then, when I came here, I am equally happy to meet my good old friend Dr. Anoop, who was associated with me some 15 years back in JNU. Whenever and wherever I go there, to spread the message of social justice and the ideals of Periyar, I had interacted with Dr. Anoop. And I am very happy that he has initiated this program in Lucknow. So, I must also thank him for honoring me on this dais.

When I read the literature of Ramswaroop Verma, to be frank, in the southern part of the country, we are not very much aware of certain leaders who espoused the cause of social justice, who espoused the cause of humanism, like Ramswaroop Verma, Jagdev Prasad, and others. And when I read the literature of Verma, I could find an uncompromising social reformer, who dedicated his life to the liberation of Bahujans from caste oppression, superstition, and Brahminical domination. He believed that social revolution should precede political change. He strongly opposed Brahminism, Manusmriti, caste hierarchy, superstition, and ritualism. He campaigned for burning Manusmriti and Ramayana as a symbol of caste oppression.

I was able to go through a quote by Mr. Verma, which I – it is in Hindi, don't mistake me if my pronunciation is wrong – "Sow mein nabbey shoshit hain, nabbey bhag hamara hai." So the translation which I got was "out of 100, 90 are oppressed, 90 percent belongs





to us." When I read the quote, I was reminded of the quote by Periyar. He said, "97 percent is ours, only 3 percent is opposite." So in Tamil Nadu, Thanthai Periyar, throughout his life, campaigned—whatever Verma was doing in North India in '68 onwards, Periyar did start in from 1919 onwards—all this preachings against superstition, for social justice, for women liberation, and against caste hierarchy.

So, Periyar said that almost 97 percent of the people have been totally dominated in the name of casteism, with the religion in his head, denying their basic rights and denying education. So, I could see a parallel between Periyar and Ramswaroop Verma. But it is unfortunate that both of them have not met, I think, I guess, because otherwise we would have got some information about that.

And at least now, we have to integrate their preachings in North India as well as South India so that the nation is relieved of this superstition and religious dogmas. When I said about Periyar, you must be knowing some of his contributions. But when he entered the politics, he was the chairman of Erode Municipal Council. He was the board member of the various government positions. All those things he relinquished and joined politics. He joined Congress in 1919 with a single demand that Congress Party should pass a resolution in their conference, "50 percent reservation should be given to the backward classes." That was his only one demand.

But from 1919 onwards, every single conference, he brought the resolution, but it was defeated because of the dominance of the Brahminical groups and other upper caste. So continuously he was taking that until 1925. He thought that there is no point in continuing in Congress Party, so he quit Congress and started the Self-Respect Movement in 1925 with the whole objective of bringing social justice to this majority people of the country, particularly in Tamil Nadu, who have been deprived of status and education. It is not only they have been deprived of education, it is about the self-respect they have been denied.

So when he saw the people being discriminated on the basis of caste, he attacked casteism. The pro-caste groups told that "caste is created by the Vedic

principles and Vedas." Then Periyar said, "Then I will eradicate Vedas." Then they said, "No, no, this Vedas that are given by the God." Then Periyar said, "Then I must eradicate that God." Because his whole aim was, the people should not be deprived on any account, either on the basis of caste, either on the basis of religion, either on the basis of language and what not.

So that was his concept, which brought him from social justice into a bigger scale of including atheism also, because unless you remove this Hindu dogmas from the minds of the people, you cannot eradicate caste. That was his Periyar's ideal strictly. So he continuously preached for that.

I will tell you few examples also. In 1924, there was an agitation in Kerala, in Vaikom, where the so-called deprived sections, they were not allowed to walk in the streets around the temple. The Brahminical group, upper caste prevented them from walking. So there was agitation in Kerala and the leaders who started those agitation from Kerala, they were all arrested, they were all in jail. So they informed Periyar, who was heading the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee at that time.

Then Periyar went there. He started the agitation, he was jailed. Later on, after 15 days, he was released. Again, Periyar went on agitation, then he was imprisoned for almost 80 days. Rigorous imprisonment. He was chained. Finally, the Raja of Travancore—at that time, it was Travancore Province—the Raja of Travancore was there. The Brahmins conducted a Yagna. By that, Periyar can be killed. But what happened was, the Raja died and Periyar was released. And the Queen came. She understood the problem, and the streets were opened to all the sections of the people, including the deprived sections. The function was conducted in Kerala where Periyar was felicitated and was called "Hero of Vaikom," for caste oppression, he fought in this another state in Kerala, in 1924.

Thereafter he continued. In the meantime, the non-Brahmin leaders of Tamil Nadu started the Justice Party in 1916. They won the election in 1920, and brought progressive measures. It was Justice Party that implemented 100 percent reservation for all the communities, including the Brahmins.



From 1928 up to 1950, it was there in Tamil Nadu, 100 percent reservation. But when the India got independence and when the Constitution came into effect from 26 January 1950, the Brahminical group challenged the communal G.O. in Madras High Court. The court stayed the communal G.O. staying that it is against the Constitution. The then government went to Supreme Court. Supreme Court also upheld and quashed the communal G.O. But Periyar started the agitation because he was continuously, vigorously fighting for social justice. So he conducted the agitation for one year. Finally, the Union government headed by Pandit Nehru and Dr. Ambedkar as Law Minister, brought the first Constitutional Amendment amending the Constitutional part of 15 inserting 4, Article 15-4 was enacted, passed in the Parliament, that enabled the backward classes, Scheduled Castes and Tribes to have reservation in education throughout India because of Periyar's agitation. That happened in 1951.

When Rajagopalachari, was also called Rajaji, he was the Chief Minister in Tamil Nadu, twice. When he became the Chief Minister in 1952, he brought a scheme, that way, a vocational training will be given to the students. Only half a day the schools will be run. Rest of the day, the children has to learn the hereditary occupation of their parent. That means a barber's son has to learn that barber job. The carpenter's son has to learn that carpenter job. Periyar stated that this is totally injustice. We want to bring down the children from the clutches of their hereditary occupation. They have to go for higher education, whereas the government is planning to put them in the same hierarchy. So we are opposing, he started the agitation. Finally, what happened was, Rajaji resigned from the Chief Ministership, and that total vocational training program was totally cancelled. Because of that only Tamil Nadu today, all the communities were able to get education. Otherwise, everybody would have been compartmentalized.

Please remember, when we attacked that scheme in 1952-53, Tamil Nadu won the battle. But today in the Union Government, the present government has brought a Vishwakarma scheme, the same scheme, where 18 castes, they have been identified.

And the eligibility is 18 years. 18 years means plus two children. If they adopt their hereditary occupation, a loan of 1 lakh will be given. That means the government wants the children of these groups not to go for higher education. So you must identify that Tamil Nadu has opposed that scheme. North India, when you are conducting Arjan Sangh, Arjan Sangh should conduct demonstration against all this. That is the formula adopted by Periyar. It is of demonstration effect, by Periyar on every issue.

Friends, Periyar continuously opposed the caste oppression. He said caste should be totally annihilated. So in 1957, he started the agitation burning the Indian constitution certain portions, which protects caste. In 1957, the agitation was conducted. First time in India, in Indian history, the constitutional certain portions are burnt by the people. The government doesn't have an act how to prevent it. So they enacted an act that burning the Constitution is a crime. But despite that, 10,000 soldiers of the Dravidia Kazhagam, they entered into the field and burned. 3,000 people went for rigorous imprisonment 3 years. 18 people died in the prison. Even women, including pregnant women, there in the jail. 3,000 people conducted agitation against this caste removal. Periyar demanded the government, instead of Article 17, which says Untouchability is a crime, substitute the word with the caste. Practicing caste should be treated as a crime. And the government was not able to hear and understand that. So, the Arjan Sangh should demand like this. You should have a demonstration like that. Then only the people will have some awareness. This is what Periyar did in Tamil Nadu to awaken the people.

And because of his continuous demonstrations, continuous preachings before the people, common people, the political system in Tamil Nadu, had to absorb, had to accept the ideals of Periyar. Whichever party, whether Congress led by Kamaraj, or the DMK led by Anna and Karunanidhi, or Anna DMK led by MGR and Jayalalithaa, they have to follow the ideals of Periyar on social justice. Otherwise, the government will be thrown out from Tamil Nadu.

I will tell you one more example. 1979, MGR, a popular leader in Tamil Nadu who had never faced any defeat. In 1979, he brought in a G.O.

(Government Order) stating that if the income of backward class parents exceeded ₹9,000 per annum, they would not be eligible for reservation.

Immediately, there was agitation in Tamil Nadu. Even though Periyar was not there, the movement was there. The president of the Dravidar Kazhagam, Ayya K.Veeramani, conducted an agitation. All the parties joined together. Immediately, the General Election for the Union Government came for the Lok Sabha. M.G.R.'s party, the A.D.M.K. (All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam), was defeated in that election in Tamil Nadu. After that, M.G.R., as the Chief Minister, conducted an all-party meeting, withdrew that order, and increased the reservation for the backward classes from 31% to 50%.

After that, because of the Mandal Commission judgment (Indra Sawhney case), the Supreme Court said that reservation should not exceed 50%. But Tamil Nadu already had 69%. There was a challenge in the Supreme Court against that petition. What happened was that again, the Periyar movement, the Dravidia Kazhagam, came into the streets, met the people, and announced to them that it must be protected. There was continuous pressure across Tamil Nadu. At that time, the government was headed by Jayalalithaa, a Brahmin lady from A.I.A.D.M.K. But despite that, because the soil of Tamil Nadu is social justice, she enacted an Act, the Reservation Act, to protect the 69% reservation, and that was included in the 9th Schedule of the Constitution.

In India, among all the states, only Tamil Nadu has a reservation Act protected under the 9th Schedule of the Constitution, done by a Brahmin lady as the Chief Minister in Tamil Nadu because Tamil Nadu cannot violate social justice.

So, the Periyar movement has made inroads in all the parties. At this point in time, you will be wondering, "There is a change of government in Tamil Nadu." Of course, an actor, Joseph Vijay, has become the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. But remember what he said: "Periyar is our ideological leader." That was his slogan. So, he has to implement social justice; he cannot violate that. If he violates, then his power, the government, cannot be prolonged. So, that is the position.

So, the Arjak Sangh should conduct themselves in such a way that every program, whether it affects the backward classes or other, underprivileged sections or not, they have to analyze. If the government's instruction or G.O. is affecting them, they must protest immediately. People are ready to come; youngsters are ready. The only thing, awakening, is required. We should have that awakening method; otherwise, merely writing will not satisfy. Otherwise, we will not be able to win the battle.

Periyar did that continuously throughout his life. Periyar never sat on a single day in his home. Always on tour, meeting the people. Till his death—prior to his death, just three days back—he was active for three hours. He died on December 24, 1973. On December 19, he spoke in Chennai for three hours. After that, because of the illness, he was admitted to the hospital.

So, why I am telling is, our policy, our principle is hitting the minds of the people because casteism is a mind, it is a state of mind, as Ambedkar said. So, unless you hit in the mind, it cannot be erased. So, we have to hit them individually. So, it will take a long time, but we cannot keep just quiet; we cannot take a rest.

So, that is the position; that is why when we are spreading a principle, we have to work in a very scientific way which Periyar did in his lifetime. He started a newspaper in 1925 itself. He started the weekly, thereafter started a daily, "Viduthalai," which means in English "Liberator." Today, the 92nd year of that daily is going on today, which is the only rationalist daily in the world. Daily matters are coming on that, where the views of the party on various social issues.

So, that is the thing. So, when I come here, when I read about Ramaswaroop Varma, so I thought that integration of these two idolots must happen, for which we should integrate the younger minds. Lessons for the future, just I will give some five points:

- * Social justice that must remain the central point of our discussion.
- * Rationalism, that is very much essential.
- * Gender equality is non-negotiable.
- * Education is liberation.
- * Representation matters, means diversity should be there in all the programs.

So, before concluding, I must say that a hundred years back, a torch was lit by Thanthai Periyar in Tamil Nadu in the name of the Self-Respect Movement. And let this gathering declare today that we will not bow before the caste. We will not surrender to inequality. We will not remain silent before injustice. We will think, we will question, we will resist oppression, and above all, we will live with self-respect.

Because the dream of the Self-Respect Movement will be fulfilled only on the day when no human being is considered inferior, no woman is treated as subordinate, no child is denied education, no citizen is humiliated because of birth. Until that day arrives, the voice of Periyar and Ramaswaroop Varma will continue to echo across generations.

Stand upright, think rationally, live with self-respect. Thank you all... ■

**AIR1993SC477, [1992] Supp2SCR454
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA**

Civil Appeals Nos. 2684-90; 4043 of 1982,

Decided On: 16.11.1992

Appellants: **Indra Sawhney etc. etc**

Vs.

Respondent: **Union of India and others, etc. etc.**

Hon'ble Judges:

M.H. Kania, C.J., M.N. Venkatachaliah, S. Ranavel Pandian, Dr. T.K Thommen, A.M. Ahmadi, Kuldeep Singh, P.B. Sawant, R.M. Sahai and B.P. Jeevan Reddy, JJ.

**INDRA SAWHNEY JUDGMENT (1992): A HISTORIC VICTORY
WITH ENDURING CONTRADICTIONS FOR OBCS
Mandal Upheld, But Social Justice Restricted**

The Supreme Court's judgment in *Indra Sawhney vs. Union of India* (1992), popularly known as the Mandal Judgment, is rightly celebrated for upholding 27% reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in Central Government employment. The verdict represented a historic victory for millions of socially and educationally backward communities who had remained excluded from positions of power and influence despite constitutional guarantees.

Yet, while the judgment opened one door for OBC empowerment, it simultaneously erected two significant barriers that continue to affect the advancement of backward classes even today: the introduction of the **Creamy Layer doctrine** and the imposition of a **50 per cent ceiling on reservations**.

More than three decades later, these judicially created limitations remain among the most debated aspects of India's reservation policy.

The Constitutional Vision and the Mandal Promise

The Constitution-makers recognized that equality cannot be achieved merely by treating everyone alike. Communities subjected to centuries of social exclusion required special measures to

ensure meaningful participation in education, administration, and public life.

Articles 15(4), 16(4), and 46 were intended to facilitate this process of social transformation.

The Mandal Commission, after extensive research, found that OBCs constituted a majority of India's population and suffered severe under-representation in public employment. It recommended 27% reservation as a minimum corrective measure.

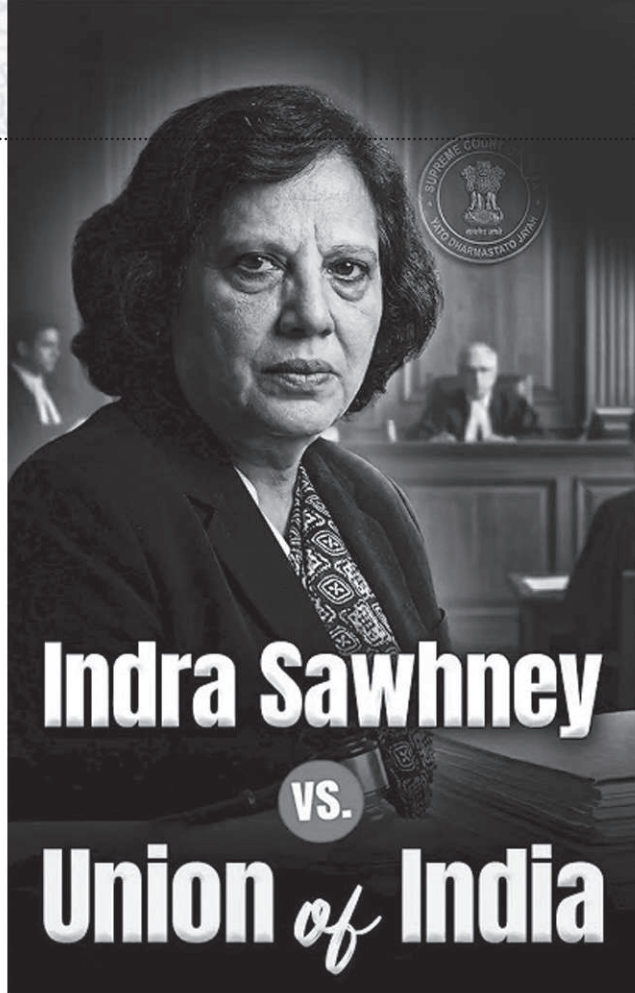
When the Supreme Court upheld the Mandal recommendations, it affirmed the constitutional principle that representation of backward classes is essential to achieving substantive equality.

However, the Court went beyond the issues directly raised before it and introduced doctrines that continue to shape reservation policy.

The Creamy Layer Doctrine: Judicial Innovation or Constitutional Distortion?

Perhaps the most controversial aspect of the judgment was the creation of the "Creamy Layer" doctrine.

The Constitution nowhere uses the term "Creamy Layer." Nor did the Mandal Commission recommend exclusion of advanced sections within



OBC communities. Nevertheless, the Court held that socially advanced members among backward classes should be excluded from reservation benefits.

The rationale offered by the Court was that reservation should reach the most disadvantaged sections and should not be monopolized by a relatively advanced minority.

At first glance, this appears reasonable. However, several questions arise.

Reservation is About Representation, Not Poverty

The Court effectively shifted the focus from representation to economic advancement.

Reservation was conceived as a remedy for inadequate representation caused by historical social discrimination. The constitutional test under Article 16(4) is not poverty but under-representation.

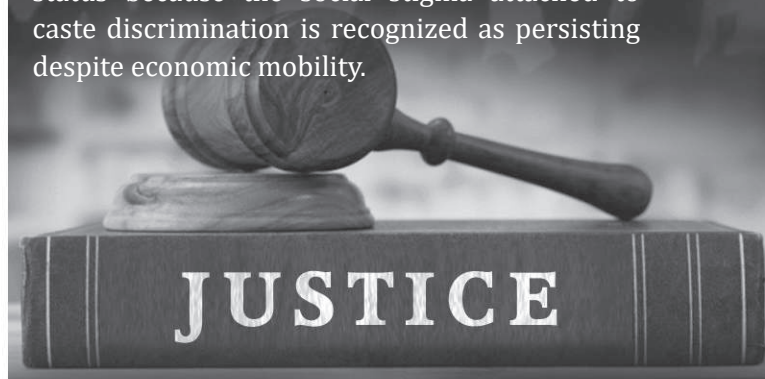
A wealthy Brahmin remains socially accepted within dominant social structures, whereas an economically successful OBC individual may continue to encounter caste-based prejudice and exclusion.

By linking reservation eligibility to economic and occupational advancement, the Court diluted the central constitutional principle that backwardness is primarily social rather than economic.

The Burden Falls Exclusively on OBCs

Another criticism is that the Creamy Layer principle applies only to OBCs.

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes continue to enjoy reservation irrespective of economic status because the social stigma attached to caste discrimination is recognized as persisting despite economic mobility.



Many OBC organizations argue that similar logic should apply to OBC communities because caste hierarchy affects them as well.

The result is an apparent inconsistency: social backwardness is treated as enduring for some communities but considered removable through economic advancement for others.

The Data Deficit Problem

The determination of Creamy Layer limits has often been based on administrative criteria rather than comprehensive sociological studies.

Consequently, exclusion frequently occurs without clear evidence that the excluded families have achieved adequate representation in higher services, academia, judiciary, or decision-making institutions.

This has led many OBC scholars to argue that the doctrine lacks a strong empirical foundation.

The 50 Per Cent Ceiling: A Judge-Made Restriction

The second major limitation imposed by the judgment was the 50 per cent ceiling on reservations.

The Court declared that reservations should ordinarily not exceed 50%, except under extraordinary circumstances.

This principle has become one of the most contentious aspects of reservation jurisprudence.

No Explicit Constitutional Basis

A fundamental criticism is that the Constitution itself contains no provision imposing a 50% limit.

Articles 15(4) and 16(4) authorize affirmative action but do not prescribe any numerical ceiling.

The 50% rule emerged from judicial interpretation rather than constitutional text.

Many constitutional scholars therefore regard the ceiling as a judicially created restriction on legislative and executive powers.

Demography Versus Ceiling

The contradiction becomes apparent when demographic realities are examined.

OBCs constitute a substantial proportion of India's population. Along with Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, socially disadvantaged communities form a clear majority in many states.

Yet the 50% ceiling limits the extent to which public institutions can reflect this demographic reality.

Critics argue that if representation is the objective, reservation policy should be guided by the actual extent of under-representation rather than an arbitrary numerical cap.

Impact on States Seeking Greater Social Justice

Several states have sought reservation policies exceeding 50% based on their unique social composition.

The judicial ceiling has frequently become an obstacle to such efforts.

As a result, state governments attempting to expand opportunities for backward communities often face constitutional challenges rooted in a limitation that is not explicitly found in the Constitution itself.

A Contradiction Within the Judgment

The most striking contradiction in the Mandal judgment is that the Court accepted the Mandal Commission's finding that OBCs suffer systemic under-representation, yet simultaneously imposed restrictions that limit the ability of governments to remedy that under-representation fully.

The Court recognized structural inequality but constrained the tools available to address it.

Thus, while the judgment advanced social justice in one direction, it restricted it in another.

The Continuing Relevance of the Debate

Recent debates on caste census, representation in higher education, judicial diversity, and public employment have revived questions surrounding both the Creamy Layer doctrine and the 50% ceiling.

Many OBC organizations contend that:

- Reservation should be linked primarily to representation rather than income.
- Creamy Layer criteria require fundamental reconsideration.
- The 50% ceiling should be reviewed in light of contemporary demographic realities.
- Policies affecting backward classes should be based on comprehensive caste-based data.
- Social justice cannot be achieved through numerical limitations unsupported by constitutional text.

Conclusion

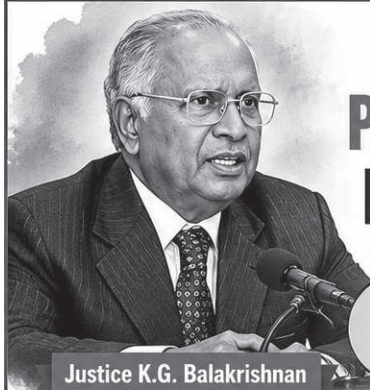
The Indra Sawhney judgment remains a landmark in India's constitutional history because it secured legal recognition for OBC reservation and reaffirmed the principle that equality requires affirmative action.

Yet the same judgment also introduced two constraints—the Creamy Layer doctrine and the 50% ceiling—that continue to generate debate among constitutional scholars, policymakers, and social justice movements.

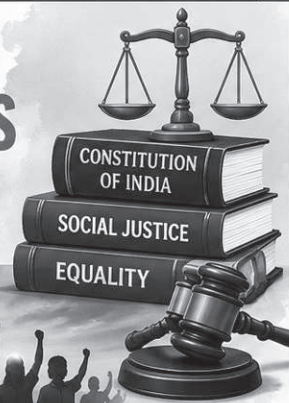
For many in the OBC movement, the judgment represents both a victory and a cautionary lesson: while the Supreme Court validated the constitutional right of backward classes to representation, it also imposed limitations that continue to restrict the full realization of that right.

The struggle for social justice therefore did not end with Mandal. It entered a new phase—one focused on ensuring that constitutional promises are not diluted by judicial doctrines that lack explicit constitutional sanction and that may hinder the goal of genuine representation for all backward communities. ■

(The writer is G. Karunanidhi, Gen Secretary, AIOBC Employees Federation)



AFTER MANY EXTENSIONS, PANEL'S REPORT ON SC STATUS FOR DALIT CONVERTS READY



Justice K.G. Balakrishnan



The Justice K.G. Balakrishnan Commission, constituted by the Union Government in October 2022, has completed its study and prepared its report on the long-pending issue of granting SC status to Dalit converts.



ABOUT THE COMMISSION



Constituted by the Union Government in October 2022.



Three-member Commission headed by Justice K.G. Balakrishnan (Retd).



Mandate: To examine whether SC status can be extended to Dalits who have converted to other faiths.



After multiple extensions, the report is now ready (Final deadline: 10 June 2026).

WHAT THE COMMISSION EXAMINED



Constitutional, social and legal implications of extending SC status to Dalit converts.



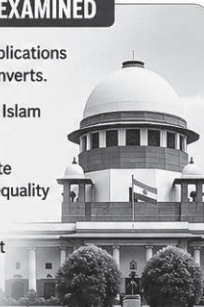
Focus on Dalits who converted to Islam and Christianity.



Impact on existing Scheduled Caste communities and the principle of equality and non-discrimination.



Issues raised in the Supreme Court over the past 20 years.



SIGNIFICANCE OF THE REPORT



Addresses a long-standing demand of Dalit Muslims and Christians.



Crucial for the ongoing Supreme Court proceedings.



Will guide future government policy decisions.



A milestone towards social justice, equality and constitutional fairness.



KEY TAKEAWAY

“The completion of the Balakrishnan Commission Report marks an important milestone in addressing the long-standing demand for extending SC status to Dalit converts – a matter with significant social, constitutional, and political implications.”



(THE HINDU 12.06.2026)

Anbumani meets CM, calls for announcement on caste-based survey in Governor's address



KEY MESSAGE

PMK leader Dr. Anbumani Ramadoss urges the Tamil Nadu Government to announce a State-level caste-based survey in the Governor's Address to the Legislative Assembly.



WHY IT MATTERS

- Accurate and updated caste data is essential to protect and strengthen the State's 69% reservation policy.
- Existing data, based on colonial-era records collected nearly 95 years ago, is outdated and inadequate.
- A State-conducted survey will provide micro-level details crucial for evidence-based policymaking and equitable distribution of welfare and opportunities.



WIDESPREAD SUPPORT

A resolution passed in a multi-party meeting chaired by Dr. Anbumani, with representatives of 42 political parties and organisations, unanimously called for a caste-based survey.



PMK leader Anbumani Ramadoss with Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay at the Secretariat on Tuesday.



“These old data are no longer relevant. Both the Supreme Court and the High Courts have not accepted these outdated figures. We need modern and accurate data.”

– Dr. Anbumani Ramadoss
PMK Leader



STATE SURVEY, STATE BENEFIT

While the Centre's caste census will give overall headcount and macro-level data, a State-level survey is vital to generate detailed micro-level information needed for effective policies and social justice.

(THE HINDU 10.06.2026)



THOUGHTS OF PERIYAR: THINK, QUESTION AND LIBERATE YOURSELF PERIYAR'S MESSAGE TO YOUTH

पेरियार के विचार:
सोचो, प्रश्न करो और
स्वयं को मुक्त करो

आने वाली पीढ़ियों के लिए पेरियार का संदेश

I am happy to have obtained this opportunity to inaugurate the Rationalists' Association in this town today.

The ideas I express and the opinions I hold — you are obliged only to listen to them. You are not obliged to believe them just as they are. If everything that is heard must be believed, there have been far more ideas expressed in this country than mine! Therefore, I request you not to believe anything blindly, but to listen and think with reason.

Only Humans Possess Rationality

If we call it a Rationalists' Association, it simply means an Association of Human Beings.

Among all the crores of living beings in the world, only humans possess rational thinking. No other living being has this sixth sense called reason. If that is so, why should we start a Rationalists' Association?

Are all those who did not attend this meeting devoid of reason? Are all those who do not join the Rationalists' Association irrational? We must think about this.

Once, I invited Minister Kumarasamy Reddiar to a Self-Respect Conference. He attended and spoke. He asked, "If this is called a Self-Respect Conference, does that mean others have no self-respect?"

Later, when I spoke, I asked him, "What is your caste?" He said, "Reddiar." I asked him: "Where do you stand when you go to a temple? Where do you sit when you go to a hotel? What is the reason for that? Is it not because you are considered a Shudra?"

He laughed awkwardly. The audience applauded loudly.

Why Propagate Rationalism and Self- Respect?

I am not saying this for amusement. Even today, what is our condition? Not only according to religious scriptures, but even according to the present Indian Constitution, we are Shudras. Whoever is not a Christian or a Muslim — except the Brahmin — is considered a Shudra, including rationalists and atheists.

To remedy this situation, I have been intensely working for 50 years in this country, propagating rationalism and self-respect.

Our slogan is:

"There is no God — no God at all! He who invented God is a fool; he who propagates God is a rogue; he who worships God is a barbarian."

आज इस तर्कवादी (रैशनलिस्ट) संघ का उद्घाटन करते हुए मुझे खुशी हो रही है। लेकिन मैं आप सभी से अनुरोध करता हूँ कि मेरे विचारों को आँख बंद करके स्वीकार न करें। मेरी बात ध्यान से सुनें, तर्क के आधार पर सोचें, और केवल वही स्वीकार करें जो आपकी समझ और बुद्धि को सही लगे।

मात्र मनुष्यों में तर्क करने की क्षमता होती है

एक तर्कवादी संघ वास्तव में मनुष्यों का ही संघ है। सभी जीवित प्राणियों में केवल मनुष्य के पास सोचने, तर्क करने और विश्लेषण करने की विशेष क्षमता होती है। यदि तर्कशीलता मनुष्य की स्वाभाविक विशेषता है, तो फिर अलग से तर्कवादी संघ की आवश्यकता क्यों है?

यह प्रश्न मुझे एक घटना की याद दिलाता है

एक आत्म-सम्मान सम्मेलन में मंत्री कुमारस्वामी रेड्डीयार उपस्थित थे। उन्होंने पूछा कि क्या आत्म-सम्मान सम्मेलन का नाम रखने का अर्थ यह है कि बाकी लोगों में आत्म-सम्मान नहीं है। इसके उत्तर में मैंने उनसे उनकी जाति के बारे में पूछा और यह भी पूछा कि समाज मंदिरों और सार्वजनिक स्थानों पर उनके साथ कैसा व्यवहार करता है। सच्चाई यह है कि सामाजिक प्रतिष्ठा और शिक्षा होने के बावजूद लोगों का मूल्यांकन आज भी उनकी जाति के आधार पर किया जाता है। यही कारण है कि आत्म-सम्मान और तर्कवाद के आंदोलनों की आज भी आवश्यकता है।

तर्कवाद और आत्म-सम्मान की आवश्यकता क्यों है?

आज भी धार्मिक परंपराओं और सामाजिक प्रथाओं के कारण हमारे समाज के बड़े हिस्से को निम्न और हीन समझा जाता है। इस अपमान को समाप्त करने के लिए मैंने लगभग पचास वर्षों तक तर्कवाद और आत्म-सम्मान का प्रचार किया है।

हमारा आंदोलन साहसपूर्वक घोषणा करता है:

"कोई भगवान नहीं है। जिसने भगवान की कल्पना की वह मूर्ख है; जो भगवान का प्रचार करता है वह धोखेबाज है; और जो भगवान की पूजा करता है वह असभ्य है।"

Rationalists in other countries have discovered new inventions and technologies. Even means for reproduction without physical union have been created. Medicines have been discovered for severe diseases. All these are achievements made through the use of rational thinking.

In 1952, our average life expectancy was 29 years. Today (in 1973) it is 52. If not for our country's traditional physicians, it would even reach 75. Whatever merit our native doctors claim, it was mostly killing us. Only after Western medicine developed here did our lifespan increase. Is there anything more disgraceful than this?

Remember what I say today: by the year 2000, the average lifespan of Indians will be 75, and that of Westerners 110. I may not be there then, but you will experience it.

Many years ago, I had cancer on my tongue. The scar still remains. Doctors Rathina Velu Subramaniam and Dr. Roy treated me. Dr. Roy gave electric treatment and saved my life. Such is the growth of human rationality in science.

But as far as our country is concerned, my worry is that our rationality must be used to protect our dignity. People in other countries may build houses even on the moon. Food habits may change. But here, our people must first develop the feeling of being rational human beings. Is it not shameful that even today a small minority calls themselves the "higher people" and labels the rest as inferior?

"In a country ruled by people of another religion, could one strike at their god and win votes? Yet here, we symbolically struck Rama and won votes. Is that a small matter? People have developed the consciousness to question even gods"

Fear of Losing Votes

Is this suffering mine alone? Since 1925 I have struggled for this cause. Which politician has come forward to struggle for it? Politicians fear associating with me because they fear losing votes! Despite all my efforts, I have not fully enjoyed the fruits. Through our movement, we have shattered Brahmin domination in many fields — in education and employment. We achieved this through peaceful revolution.

We did not kill a Brahmin; we did not burn their houses; we committed no violence. We established a ministry in Tamil Nadu without a single Brahmin minister. Is that not victory enough? And what kind of rule was it? A rule that even symbolically struck at Lord Rama and won!

In a country ruled by people of another religion, could one strike at their god and win votes? Yet here, we symbolically struck Rama and won votes. Is that a small matter? People have developed the consciousness to question even gods.

Why Has This Not Been Applied?

Human beings have progressed in every field. But why has the humiliation of being labeled Shudras not disappeared? Have we no self-respect? No feeling? No intelligence?

No — humans possess these naturally. Then why have we not used them?

In every other matter, humans use rational thinking. But in matters of God and religion, they are told not to use reason. If they do, they may be killed. What more proof is needed?

In the Ramayana, it is said that if someone argues about God or religion using reason, he should be killed. That mentality continues even today.

Why Was Gandhi Assassinated?

Gandhi was killed for this very reason. Untouchability is in the scriptures. When Gandhi tried to interfere with it, he was eliminated according to that scriptural mentality. Even the Constitution says that certain "basic features" cannot be amended. Though it says untouchability should

कोई व्यक्ति इससे सहमत हो या असहमत, इसका उद्देश्य लोगों को स्वतंत्र रूप से सोचने के लिए प्रेरित करना है, न कि विरासत में मिले विश्वासों को बिना सोचे-समझे स्वीकार करना।

आधुनिक विज्ञान की प्रगति तर्कपूर्ण सोच की शक्ति को दिखाती है। वैज्ञानिक खोजों ने स्वास्थ्य में सुधार किया है, जीवन की अवधि बढ़ाई है, रोगों का इलाज किया है और मानव जीवन को बदल दिया है। जो उपलब्धियाँ कभी असंभव लगती थीं, वे आज वास्तविकता बन चुकी हैं क्योंकि लोगों ने प्रश्न पूछने, जाँच करने और तर्क करने का साहस किया।

मैं स्वयं आधुनिक चिकित्सा विज्ञान से लाभान्वित हुआ हूँ, जब डॉक्टरों ने मेरी बीमारी का सफलतापूर्वक इलाज किया। ऐसी प्रगति मानव बुद्धि और तर्कपूर्ण खोज का परिणाम है।

तर्कशीलता को मानव सम्मान की रक्षा करनी चाहिए

दूसरे देश तर्कशीलता का उपयोग वैज्ञानिक प्रगति के लिए करते हैं। लेकिन हमारी सबसे बड़ी आवश्यकता यह है कि हम तर्क का उपयोग मानव सम्मान की रक्षा के लिए करें। इससे बड़ी शर्म की बात क्या हो सकती है कि एक समाज में एक छोटा-सा समूह स्वयं को श्रेष्ठ घोषित करे और बहुसंख्यक लोगों को हीन बताया जाए?

आत्म-सम्मान आंदोलन और द्रविड़ आंदोलन के माध्यम से हमने लंबे समय से चली आ रही सामाजिक प्रभुता को चुनौती दी। हमने प्रगति हिंसा के माध्यम से प्राप्त नहीं की। हमने किसी व्यक्ति पर हमला नहीं किया और न ही किसी संपत्ति को नुकसान पहुँचाया। इसके बजाय हमने एक शांतिपूर्ण सामाजिक क्रांति चलाई, जिसने पहले वंचित रहे लोगों के लिए शिक्षा, रोजगार और सार्वजनिक जीवन में अवसर खोले।

हमारी महत्वपूर्ण उपलब्धियों में से एक यह थी कि हमने लोगों में इतनी सामाजिक जागरूकता पैदा की कि वे लंबे समय से चली आ रही धार्मिक और सामाजिक मान्यताओं पर भी प्रश्न उठा सकें। आलोचनात्मक सोच का यह जागरण स्वयं में एक बड़ी जीत है।

अपमान आज भी क्यों बना हुआ है?

मनुष्य जीवन के लगभग हर क्षेत्र में तर्क का उपयोग करता है। लेकिन जब धर्म और भगवान की बात आती है, तो लोगों से अक्सर कहा जाता है कि प्रश्न मत पूछो, मत सोचो और तर्क मत करो।

इसी विरोधाभास के कारण जातीय भेदभाव और सामाजिक अपमान सदियों से बने हुए हैं। यदि मनुष्यों में स्वाभाविक रूप से बुद्धि, आत्म-सम्मान और तर्कशीलता है, तो फिर इन गुणों का उपयोग अन्याय समाप्त करने के लिए क्यों नहीं किया जाता?

धार्मिक परंपराओं ने कई बार आलोचनात्मक सोच को हतोत्साहित किया है। परिणामस्वरूप, बहुत से लोग असमानता को प्राकृतिक या ईश्वर द्वारा निर्धारित मानते रहते हैं। तर्कवाद इस सोच को चुनौती देता है और लोगों को स्वतंत्र रूप से सोचने के लिए प्रेरित करता है।

be abolished, the word is placed within inverted commas, giving it a specific legal meaning.

On December 8 and 9, I am going to convene a great conference in Chennai. I will propose resolutions to change our degraded status under the law. If change does not happen, we must struggle. If we struggle, we will be severely punished — up to seven years' imprisonment. We must be prepared. You must be ready to go to jail.

They may try everything to suppress us. We must be ready. If someone declares he is not a Hindu, he must be liberated from that imposed humiliation. Let us see what this government does then.

If this government falls, the next day we can arrange to abolish our humiliation. We must be prepared.

The Chennai Conference

The upcoming Chennai Conference is preparatory for this. Men and women must attend in greater numbers than ever before. Support must come in every possible way. Those with financial means should contribute generously. Those ready for imprisonment must come forward.

First, I propose we boycott North Indian shops and ask: what business do they have here? If they can drive our people away in Bombay, why can't we do the same here?

Those seeking office may leave. Others must strive to end our humiliation. It is not enough that we obtain positions or become millionaires. What we need today is the restoration of our dignity and the end of our degradation.

What is Your Future?

How long will I be here? One day I will be gone. Then what is your fate? Who will sit in my place? Even if someone wishes to, will you respect him the same way?

Earning the respect of the people is no small matter. It requires immense effort. Therefore, comrades! If something happens to me, our condition may become shameful again. So you must boldly engage in the task of removing our humiliation.

Give me your names in a list. I will use each of you in whatever way possible. Do not struggle for me or for my sake. Struggle for yourselves — for your children and for future generations.

(Speech delivered by Thanthai Periyar on 10.11.1973 at Jeyankondam. Published in "Viduthalai" on 12.11.1973.)

सामाजिक संघर्ष की आवश्यकता

सामाजिक परिवर्तन अपने आप नहीं आता। मानव सम्मान की दिशा में हुई हर प्रगति के लिए प्रयास, त्याग और सामूहिक कार्रवाई की आवश्यकता पड़ी है। इसलिए लोगों को संगठित होना चाहिए और उन परिस्थितियों को समाप्त करने के लिए काम करना चाहिए जो उन्हें अपमानित करती हैं।

उद्देश्य केवल पद, धन या राजनीतिक शक्ति प्राप्त करना नहीं है। वास्तविक लक्ष्य मानव सम्मान को पुनः स्थापित करना और समाज के बड़े वर्गों पर लगाए गए कलंक को समाप्त करना है।

पुरुष और महिलाएँ दोनों इस संघर्ष में समान रूप से भाग लें। जो लोग आर्थिक सहायता दे सकते हैं, उन्हें देनी चाहिए। जो अपना समय और मेहनत देने के लिए तैयार हैं, उन्हें आगे आना चाहिए। आने वाली पीढ़ियाँ ऐसे समाज की हकदार हैं जो अपमान और असमानता से मुक्त हो।

आपकी जिम्मेदारी

कोई भी व्यक्ति हमेशा जीवित नहीं रह सकता।

किसी भी आंदोलन का भविष्य उन लोगों पर निर्भर करता है जो उसके आदर्शों को आगे बढ़ाते हैं। सामाजिक सम्मान किसी एक नेता पर निर्भर नहीं रह सकता। इसके लिए सामान्य पुरुषों और महिलाओं की सक्रिय भागीदारी आवश्यक है, जो न्याय, समानता और तर्कपूर्ण सोच के प्रति समर्पित हों।

इसलिए मेरे लिए संघर्ष मत करो। अपने लिए संघर्ष करो। अपने बच्चों के लिए संघर्ष करो। और आने वाली पीढ़ियों के लिए संघर्ष करो।

अपनी बुद्धि, आत्म-सम्मान और तर्कशीलता का उपयोग करके ऐसा समाज बनाओ जहाँ किसी भी मनुष्य को दूसरे से हीन न माना जाए।

(यह अनुवाद 10 नवम्बर 1973 को जयंकंडम में दिए गए पेरियार के भाषण और 12 नवम्बर 1973 को 'विदुथलाई' में प्रकाशित लेख पर आधारित है।
- हिंदी में अनुवाद: रवींद्र राम, पटना)

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59TH FOUNDATION DAY CELEBRATION OF "ARJAK SANGH" – LUCKNOW – 31.5.2026

Arjak Sangh, founded in 1968 by the late Mahamana Ramswaroop Verma as a social and cultural reform movement, organized a commemorative function at Lucknow on 31st May 2026 under the chairmanship of its National President, Shivkumar Bharti. The programme was introduced by Dr. Anup Patel, Co-editor of *Current Agenda*.



Delivering the keynote address, G. Karunanidhi, General Secretary of the All India OBC Employees Association, Chennai, highlighted the centenary significance of E.V. Ramasamy "Periyar"'s Self-Respect Movement. The event was also addressed by renowned artist Dr. Lal Ratnakar, international author and Ambedkarite activist Vidyabhushan Rawat, Professor Rita Chaudhary of Lucknow University, and Alok Yadav, Research Scholar, Lucknow University.

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