

The other side of Merit!
Read the Story of IIT Madras.

Many upper caste lobbyists are opposing reservation in IITs/IIMs. But there is a 'Brahmins only' quota system in centers of excellence. This upper caste's quota system is only based on caste, not merit.

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Dalits & BCs suffer under Brahminical dictatorship in IIT - Madras
RAJU THOMAS, OUR MADRAS REP., POST BOX - 2296, MADRAS - 600 023

Under the Institute of Technology Act 1961 ("Act 59 of 1961") passed by Parliament, six institutes were declared as "Institutes of National Importance". One such institute is the IIT Madras. Every year these institutes receive Rs. 1,000 crore from the Govt. of India (HRD).

The IIT Madras is situated on a 300-acre campus in the heart of Madras for which the credit goes to Chief Minister Kamaraj. Despite the IIT being located in Tamil Nadu, the representation of Tamils here is minimum.

BRHMIN MONOPOLY

It has become one of the foremost Brahmin bastions all over the world in the field of academics. In the past four decades of its existence the Brahmins who occupy all the decision-making positions have dominated it. In all these years of existence, the Institute has not had a single Dalit or Backward Caste director.

In the past decade, large-scale financial irregularities and mishandling of public funds have attracted the adverse notice of the public and the media. The arbitrary selections and appointments made to the post of faculty members have been challenged under several writ petitions. In fact, within this short period of 10 years over 200 cases have been filed against it.

Human rights violation:

Though the Constitution guarantees reservation (human rights) for the OBCs and Dalits in matters of education and employment, this policy is not followed here either at the level of student admission or faculty selection.

Faculty appointments:

Out of the total faculty strength of 450, only two are Dalits despite the constitutional mandate that 22.5% of all positions must be reserved for the Dalits. Hardly 50 faculty members are BCs.

The rest of the faculty are upper castes, most of them Brahmins.

Writ petitions on reservation in faculty pending before the court are:

(1) W.P.No. 5415/95 filed by IIT BC Employees Welfare Association; (2) W.P.No.16528/95 filed by the Vanniar Mahasangam; (3) W.P. No. 16863/95; (4) W.P.No. 17403/95; (5) W.P. No. 4242/97 filed by Dr. Muthuveerappan; (6) W.P. No. 4256/97 filed by Dr. W.B. Vasantha Kandasamy; (7) W.P. No. 4257/97 filed by Dr. W.B. Vasantha Kandasamy and (8) W.P.37020/2003.

To escape the constitutional mandate, it has cunningly followed the "contract" system hiring faculty members on "ad hoc" basis. Faculty members from the upper castes are eventually made permanent.

To escape legal problem advertisement is published. All the advertisements will not stand up to review. Because all material particulars will be clearly absent: number of vacancies, number of positions reserved etc.

Student admissions:

As in faculty positions reservation policy is not followed in student admissions. It was only in 1978 it first thought of reservation to Dalit students. But this 22.5% quota is not completely filled up. Instead the eye-wash of using lower cut-off marks is said to be followed. Besides, in a gross violation of the fundamental right to equality, Dalit students who gain admission to B.Tech are made to undergo a one-year preparatory course before being admitted to B.Tech.

No reservation exists in the IITs for Backward students. There is also no relaxation of criteria. In the name of merit, the legitimate rights of the deprived castes are denied. In September 2005, a writ petition was filed in the Madras high Court seeking 27% reservation in IITs for OBC students.

IRREGULARITIES DURING NVC SWAMY PERIOD

Occupying office illegally:

The Director of the Institute during the year 1995 was Dr. N.V.C. Swamy. He retired in April 1995 but continued in the post till June 30, 1996 under the pretext that his appointment had been extended. He had by then attained superannuation and was well over 60 years. The appointment of the Director of the IIT requires the prior approval of the President of India who is the Visitor of all IITs. Without the presidential approval, the then Education Secretary of the HRD Ministry, S.V. Giri, sent a DO Letter No.12-17/95 TSI (Oct.31, 1995) giving an extension to N.V.C. Swamy for three months. The Faculty Association of the IIT filed a writ before the Madras High Court (W.P. No. 15486 of 1995). This writ petition was admitted and subsequently Swamy resigned.

Recruiting 80 faculties:

During his illegal term as the Director, Dr.N.V.C. Swamy hurriedly advertised and filled up faculty positions. Within three months he appointed over 80 upper castes to faculty positions. Reservation policy was thrown to basket.

NVC Swamy went to the extent of reissuing advertisements to ensure that his favourite candidates were selected. For instance, the advt. (No. IITM/R/8/94) for the post of Associate Professor, Maths Dept., was clearly given "the candidate should have a basic degree in Maths". If this criteria had been strictly followed an upper caste man would not have been selected.

So to select their favourite, Dr. S.G. Kamath, who had a B.Sc. degree in physics, to the post of Associate Professor, they changed the very selection criteria. For this, they issued a re-advertisement No. IITM/R/1/95 relaxing some of the previous criteria and taking out this necessity for basic degree in maths itself. Though the advt. invites applications only from those who hold first class degrees, a second-class degree holder, Dr. A. Rangan, was selected to the post of Associate Professor in Maths Dept. At the same time, though Dr. W.B. Vasantha was extremely meritorious she was not selected because she belonged to the OBC community.

Reservation policy not implemented:

According to the Board resolution no.11 of 1994 in the 145th meeting of the Board of Governors, it was resolved to implement the reservation policy as per the Ministry of Human Resources Letter (1/11/1993). Also, the Office Memorandum of the Dept. of Personnel & Training (13.01.1995) extends the reservation to BCs in civil posts and services to be filled by direct recruitment to bodies like the IIT.

In the faculty selections that were carried out during the five-year tenure of Dr. NVC Swamy the constitutional mandate of reservation was clearly missing because it was blatantly breached.

The IIT BC Employees Welfare Association headed by K.N. Jothi filed a writ (WP No. 5415/95) before the Madras High Court challenging the non-implementation of reservation. After the filing this writ petition, in all the appointment orders given to the posts of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor, it was mentioned:

Please note that the High Court of Madras by its order dated 17.4.1995 in W.M.P. No. 8893 in W.P.No. 5415 of 1995 has made the following order: the offer of appointment is subject to the result of the writ petition.

The Vanniyar Sangam filed a writ (16528 of 1995) challenging the non-implementation of the reservation policy for the OBCs. Similarly W.P. No. 17403 of 1995 was also filed for a similar purpose.

FERA violations:

He undertook frequent foreign trips in the name of signing Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with universities abroad. During these trips, he never took clearance from the Ministry and the Reserve Bank. He also collected donations in dollars for corpus fund from the alumni of IIT who were living abroad. But he never deposited the amount in the IIT account. IIT sources said the amount collected ran into a few crores of rupees.

Illegal lease of institute property:

Dr. Swamy leased the Institute's sports stadium to a private company, Chemplast Sanmar, violating the IIT Act that says: that no part of the Institute premises can be leased or rented to anybody. The premises of the Institute can be used solely for the purpose of research and student activities. (Act, Chapter II 6(j) and 7(2)).

Creating 197 categories of posts:

As the Director, he had created over 197 categories of workers which does not exist anywhere in the Act and statutes. The same sources said he gave illegal promotions to his favourite cadre.

R. NATARAJAN PERIOD (1996-2001)

1996 faculty recruitment drive:

As soon as Dr. R. Natarajan took over, he too issued an advt. for faculty positions. In these selections, those who were the favourites of the ex-Director, and those who protested in a signature campaign against the Faculty Association for filing a case were given promotions as if it was a reward.

The appointments and the advt. were unnecessary because only a year ago there had been an enormous selection process at the faculty level. This selection was also filled with all kinds of irregularities. No reservation was followed at all for the OBC/SC/ST.

Caste, not merit:

For the post of Professor, 98 were selected but some of them did not even have a single Ph.D. guidance, no PG project guidance and hardly half-a-dozen research papers. Merit and excellence were not taken into consideration, only caste played a prominent role. This selection was also challenged (W.P.No. 4257/97) by Dr. W.B. Vasantha Kandasamy as there was no reservation for BCs and it did not follow the Supreme Court order in the Indira Sawhney case (AIR 1993 SCC 477).

Dr. Muthuveerappan, an OBC faculty member of the Mechanical Engg. Dept., also challenged the faculty selection done in 1996 before the High Court (WP No. 4242/97).

Even in the list of those selected faculty, there was not a single Dalit. There would have been hardly half a dozen non-Brahmins.

Backdoor entry:

Ad hoc appointments are resorted to effectively deny entry of weaker sections into faculty positions. These ad hoc appointments are effected in the nature of selective reservation for persons who are connected to a coterie which is at the helm of affairs at the Institute.

During 1986-1997 it made over 180 ad hoc appointments to the faculty positions under 17 job titles. Nearly 80 of them have been made permanent subsequently.

After R. Natarajan took charge, between Nov.1995 till 1998, about 37 appointments had been made without recourse to the regular selection process. These appointments were made through the backdoor thereby shutting out open competition and genuine merit. The IIT Act does not allow such contract appointments.

In 1998, the Backward Class Employees Welfare Association represented by its Secretary, Prof. N.R. Neelakantan, filed a writ (W.P. No.3570 of 1998) challenging these ad hoc appointments.

Faculty recruitment drive:

In 1998, it issued an advt. (IITM/R/3/98 in the Hindu April 25, 1998) for the post of Asst. Prof. in the various departments flouting the constitutional provision of reservation for SC/ST/OBC.

This advt. was basically aimed at regularizing and making permanent those appointed illegally on the ad hoc basis. The BC Employees Welfare Assn. headed by Prof. N.R. Neelakantan filed a writ (W.P. No. 6313/98) before the High Court challenging this advt.

Dismissal of Natarajan demand:

Ex-MP, Era Anbarasu filed a quo warranto writ (W.P. No. 12128/98) before the High Court seeking the dismissal of Director, R. Natarajan.

Natarajan had fabricated his date of birth. According to the record, he joined first standard at the age of 3. Besides, instead of a proper meeting of the IIT council comprising 33 members, only three people had met and selected him. He was also accused of having plagiarized research matter which is pending before the High Court of Madras (W.P. No. 7775/97).

Employees Union strike:

Employees of the IIT staged a series of protests against Natarajan in 1999. The strike lasted for 120 days and T.R. Balu, Union Minister for Shipping, had addressed the employees.

The Director was furious that T.R. Balu asked him to come down from the fifth floor to meet the employees. The IIT comes under the parliamentary constituency of Balu.

Natarajan later took revenge by sacking the office-bearers, dismissing them from service, conducting inquiries and serving them show-cause notices. All this resulted in a series of writ petitions being filed in the High Court and several of them are pending even today causing extreme distress to the employees.

1999-2000 faculty recruitment drive:

Towards the end of his tenure in a hurry he wanted to promote all his favourites and henchmen. Hence an advt. (No. IITM/R/5/999) was issued on Nov.3, 1999 inviting applications to the posts of Asst. Prof, Associate Prof. and Professor. The selection was kept in abeyance for around a year.

The interviews were hastily held from Sept.11 to Sept.25, 2000 and the results were announced at 8 p.m. on Sept.25. The selected candidates joined the very next day. He arbitrarily recruited over 99 people, a great majority of them from the upper castes to fill up these positions. Not even a single Dalit was selected. Against this a writ (No. 17835/2000) was filed.

MISCHIEF DURING M.S. ANANTH PERIOD

Arbitrary selection of 130 new faculties:

Immediately after M.S. Ananth took over office in 2002 he issued an advt. calling for applications to the post of Asst. Prof. Those selected were Brahmins. However, he soon changed his tactics.

In a stealthy yet massive recruitment drive over 130 faculty members have been hastily appointed since 2003 without open advertisement or a regular selection process.

In a recent interview to rediff.com (www.rediff.com/money/2005/may/23iit.htm), Dr. Ananth said:

I have hired 130 faculty members in the last three years, of who 36 have B.Techs from various IITs who've done Ph.D. abroad and come back. But I have lost 90 by retirement and so I am running very fast to stay where I am.

This large-scale appointments reveals the undue haste, lowering of eligibility criteria, favouritism of recruiting alumni and absolute lack of transparency. Moreover, with a

callous disregard to social justice and the constitutional mandate of reservation, not even half a dozen Dalits have been selected as a faculty member.

Shameful role:

To facilitate this hasty, biased selection process, the advt. on the Institute's website ([http://www.iitm.ac.in/Faculty%20 Openings](http://www.iitm.ac.in/Faculty%20Openings)) says:

This is a standing advertisement. There is no specific requirement on when a candidate can submit an application. Applications will be accepted throughout the year. Candidates who meet the prescribed qualifications need not wait for any formal announcement of recruitment to submit an application.

The ambiguity is apparent because even the number of vacancies is not announced. To broad-base this arbitrary activity, applications to the entry-level position of Asst. Prof. is invited for all the 15 departments in the institute.

Norms and guidelines for selection are wilfully abandoned and unbridled power to select less meritorious candidates is given to the respective departments. The standing advertisement states, "the departments have the right to set different as well as higher norms, while shortlisting, taking into account the requirements of the departments". This paves way for a pathetic dilution of standards.

Today, even the universities stipulate five years of research and teaching experience after receiving the doctoral degree as the basic eligibility criteria for the entry-level lecturer positions. Yet, in a shameful role-reversal, IIT Madras stands stripped of its halo of high quality, the standing advt. relaxes the eligibility criteria and invites applications for the Asst. Prof. position from "candidates who expect to receive their Ph.D. within the next six months" adding that "their appointment to the post, if found suitable, will be subject to their receiving the degree".

Hush hush appointments:

Worse in the rediff.com interview, M.S. Ananth accepted that the IIT Madras has "adjunct faculty who don't even need a master's degree".

Faculty appointments have been bestowed with an infamous history, having been consistently challenged in judicial avenues for the past decade. Since then, it has shied away from open advertisements and opted for using the internet-based standing advt. which makes the entire exercise shrouded in secrecy. The regular selection process has been subverted by resorting to the tested technique of bulk back-door entries.

This is taking place because the Brahmins here are extremely averse to recruiting people from Dalits and BCs. By using "standing advertisements" they can overlook reservation and deny equal opportunity.

Now a fresh advt. has been issued in the press on Sept.26, 2005. It calls for applications to the posts of Professor and Associate Professor. No mention is made of the number of vacancies. Like all the previous times, only Brahmins and upper castes will be selected. No reservation policy will be followed.

Unless this is prevented all the vacancies shall be filled up and for decades no non-Brahmin can enter the institute.

<http://www.dalitvoice.org/Templates/feb2006/articles.htm>