

Parties seek immediate passage of law on quota

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New Delhi: Stepping up their campaign, pro-reservation political parties on Sunday asked the Government to bring the enabling legislation to implement 27 per cent OBC quota in elite educational institutions in the coming Monsoon session of Parliament.

In a resolution adopted at a National Seminar on Social Justice for OBCs, organised by Pattali Makkal Katchi of Tamil Nadu here, the parties asked the government to bring the legislation with "greater alacrity and urgency" as the first government sponsored legislation of the session.

"The legislation for implementing this policy should be brought before the Parliament in the ensuing Monsoon session itself without any further discussion or debate or soliciting opinions from outsiders and without subjecting to the influence of any vested interests," the resolution said.

Recalling that the previous governments have not implemented the recommendations of Kaka Kalekar Commission and Mandal Commission, the parties lamented that this closed the "doors of opportunities" of education and employment to OBCs and thus "banned their entry into the temples of learning and livelihood".

Enlarging the scope of their stand on quota, the parties also raised their voice for reservation in private sector, judiciary and media and demanded immediate legislation in this regard.

While they demanded the legislation for quota in private sector in the Monsoon session, the resolution did not specify a timeframe for implementing reservation in media and judiciary.

Pitching for reservations in the private sector, the resolution reminded the government that in the context of liberalised economy the job sector in the public sphere was shrinking while the same was booming in the private sector.

"The canon of social justice demands that the private sector which benefits a great deal from societal resources should discharge its responsibilities to the society by providing jobs to the numerically dominant population through a policy of reservation in private sector," it said.

Noting that countries like the United States, South Africa and Malaysia have quota in the private sector, the resolution reminded the ruling coalition that with a clear mandate of

the Common Minimum Programme in hand "there was no need for any further dialogue either with industry or anybody".

The media came in for sharp criticism as the resolution lamented the role played by it in the recent anti-reservation agitation and said the protests were "media hyped".

It said quota in media was a constitutional "imperative" and that as majority of the media was in private sector, it viewed reservation as a "compulsory need" to implement in this sector.

In judiciary, the resolution argued that justice can be ensured only if judges belonging to different sections of the society were appropriately represented.

Emphasising that the OBCs who have entered the government services in the absence of reservation policy were at a disadvantage at the stage of promotion, the parties requested the government to pass necessary orders providing reservation in promotion to OBC employees.

While brethren hailing from SC and ST communities have been extended this facility for a long time, their counterparts are denied this privilege which becomes another source of injustice to OBCs," the resolution said.

It complained that the OBC Employees Welfare Associations were not recognised and respective ministries were hampering their legitimate functioning.

The document thanked all UPA allies and Left parties for joining together to bring the legislation as a "historic decision" rendering justice to 60 per cent of the Indian population and praised Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi for taking the "lead initiative".

Singing paens for V P Singh for accepting the Mandal Commission recommendations during his premiership, the parties named him "darling of the backward classes" for breaking the "traditional ban and making entry of OBCs feasible into government jobs. the former Prime Minister lit the "torch of hope" to the OBCs.

Earlier addressing the seminar, V P Singh favoured a country-wide referendum on quota.

Arguing against the implementation of the quotas in phases, Singh said, "it has to be done in one stroke. There should be no instalments. Even if there is a need of increasing the number of seats, it should be done from the next year itself."

"Talking of increasing seats and infrastructure in the educational institutions is only a ploy to postpone the implementation of reservation. The legislation should be brought in the monsoon session of Parliament itself," PMK Founder President S Ramadoss said.

Claiming that globalisation has benefited only five per cent of the country's population, JD(U) President Sharad Yadav said, "The private organisations take all benefits and subsidies from the government, so they should also implement the government policy."

"The private sector is getting everything at concessional rates. So we will have to demand action from them also," CPI General Secretary D Raja said.

Seeking reservation in all educational institutes, he said, "The draft bill talks about quota only in higher educational institutions. The Union Government can bring in a model law for reservation in primary schools and other institutions also."

Observing that the Constitutional Amendment Bill was passed in Parliament unanimously, Yadav said only a "microscopic minority" had supported the 19-day anti-reservation agitation.

"Only a handful of people with access to the electronic media carried out the so-called agitation by doctors," he said.

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