

# janata

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## *Between The Lines*

### **Discrimination laces democracy**

**Kuldip Nayar**

However democratic we may be, discrimination on the basis of caste system has not diminished. Every day, in some part or the other of the country, there are instances of dalits being burnt alive. Only the other Dadri, near Delhi, was the scene of a dalit family being consigned to fire.

In the national capital itself, a JNU student hung himself because he could not stand the jibe of discrimination. The 28-year-old M.Phil student had dreamt of studying in JNU and was fortunate to get through on his fourth attempt. Hailing from the South, Muthukrishnan was reportedly a sober personality and generally kept to himself.

Surprisingly, there is very little impact on the society or, for that matter, in India. It was just an incident and forgotten. Instead, the country on the whole should have been shaken. Had this been the case of an upper caste student, there would have been many statements calling for attention notice in parliament. But there was not even a whisper in the

present case.

The media was equally guilty because it reported the incident only as a periphery to some other bigger stories. This only underlined that the media persons, generally belonging to the upper caste, have the same old mindset. The youth is supposed to be radical, but this was not the case.

Obviously, the deceased student's father and even some students believe that there was some foul play. The police was led to record FIR under relevant provisions because the police thought that it was a case of suicide. The parents have demanded a CBI inquiry. I don't know how it would make the difference because the CBI would itself depend on the Delhi Police which is in the dog.

A similar issue had cropped up when Rohith Verma, a dalit research scholar from Hyderabad University, committed suicide last year. However, unlike in the JNU student's death case, there was a big hue and cry and students took to streets and the agitation even led to

the change of guard at the university's department.

Incidentally, Muthkrishnan had recalled Rohith's death and condemned Hyderabad University's alleged role in the dalit scholar's suicide. The JNU student had a Facebook post in which he had criticized JNU's new admission policy, obviously recounting several instances where he had to face discrimination.

What do these incidents in varsities indicate? We need to apply our minds to address the problems that dalit students face in institutions of higher education. Not long ago, the Hyderabad University had to revoke the suspension of students after Rohith's death. Indeed, his suicide had caused great shock and resulted in outrage, but similar sentiments were expressed when Senthil Kumar from Salem, another student from the University of Hyderabad, killed himself in 2008. Muthkrishnan, too, is from Salem in Tamil Nadu.

There have been over dozen cases of suicide by students, mostly dalits, in various institutions in Hyderabad between 2007 and 2013. In the north, besides two cases of suicide by dalit students at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Delhi, 14 other cases of suicide by dalit students were reported between January 2007 and April 2011.

It is almost as if we have become immune to these frequent instances of suicide mainly by dalit students. The student population on campuses of higher education has become increasingly diverse. According to 2008 data, of the total number of students in higher education in the country, four percent of them are

Scheduled Tribes, 13.5 per cent Scheduled Castes and 35 per cent Other Backward Classes. Hindus alone accounted for about 85 per cent of students, followed by Muslims (8 per cent) and Christians (3 per cent). And yet, 23 out of 25 suicides were of dalits.

There are several researches which indicate that experiences of discrimination, exclusion and humiliation are the predominant reasons. After analyzing some cases of suicide, the conclusion seems to be that there seems to be more than enough evidence to believe that caste discrimination played a significant role in driving these extraordinary individuals into committing suicide, and that elite professional institutions are the places where caste prejudice is so firmly entrenched that it has become normal.

A study in 2010 by Professor Mary Thornton and others of five higher educational institutions in India and the United Kingdom observed that "separation of groups on the higher education campus is pervasive and ubiquitous. While some such separation may be for supportive reasons, at other times it is due to overt discrimination on the grounds of race, region, nationality, caste, class, religion, or gender".

In 2013, Samson Ovichegan, in a study on the experience of Dalits in an elite university in India, observed that "this university is yet another arena in which the practice of caste division continues to exist. The university environment reinforces and maintains a divide between dalit and non-dalit. Dalit students do, indeed, experience overt and covert discrimination based on caste at this premier university".

As much as we admit to the persistence of caste discrimination and stigmatization as a problem plaguing higher education campuses, there is also a constant denial or attributing the suicides to incident-specific situations with total disregard for links with the larger social milieu of exclusion. True, there are incident-specific reasons, but it cannot be a coincidence that out of 25 cases of suicide, 23 were of dalits. Thus, the first thing for policymakers is to come out of denial mode.

No doubt, the situation may have improved. But the shame of caste system continues in one form or the other. Relations between the dalit students or, for that matter, with other students and teachers and administrators, have always been questioned. In my view, we need to take steps to address the problems of dalit or other marginalized students. The only solution I can think of are the legal safeguards against discrimination, civic education, academic assistance to students who need support, and participation of dalits in all decision-making bodies of universities and colleges.

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# BJP government in UP doesn't bode well for poor and democracy

**Sandeep Pandey**

The shocking victory of Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh with over three fourths of the seats in the assembly elections appears too one sided to be true. Leader of the BJP Narendra Modi has given a slogan 'With everybody's support, Development for all.' However, in the last general elections for the Parliament and in the recently concluded state elections BJP did not put up a single Muslim candidate and neither does it expect the Muslims to vote for it. Muslims constitute 19.3% of UP population. BJP and its ideological parent Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) have sent out a clear message that they don't care for Muslims and can win elections without their support.

BJP doesn't represent one fifth of the state population and worse does not want to take any responsibility on their behalf. During India's partition between India and Pakistan communal violence engulfed the sub-continent and people were thoroughly communalized. The second phase of communalization started in 1992 from the Ram temple movement and has created mental gulf between the Hindu and Muslim communities. In India Muslims were insecure then and are insecure now. This doesn't portend well for the country. The demolition of Babri Mosque in 1992 has invited the problem of terrorism to India, the first series of bomb blasts taking place immediately after the demolition in early 1993 in Mumbai as a reaction to the incident.

This is precisely the Gujarat model. Segregate the Hindus and Muslims and then deny the Muslims of their basic rights. In today's Gujarat Hindus and Muslims can't live together. Sachar Committee report reveals that the social, economic and educational status of Muslims is only slightly better than dalits. If the national level of poverty is 22.7% then 31% Muslims and 35% SC-ST are poor. 40.7% Muslims fall in the Other Backward Classes category and constitute 15.7% of the OBC population. The condition of Arzals in Muslims is as bad as the Most Backwards Classes.

A politics which boycotts a section of population is inconsistent with spirit of democracy. Narendra Modi is the first Prime Minister of the country who is establishing himself as a leader of the Hindus. The kind of statements he made during the UP election campaign – of more electricity being given on Ramzan than on Diwali, money given for constructing boundary wall of Kabristan but not that of Shamshaan and blaming elements from across the border, implying Pakistan, being responsible for a train accident near Kanpur which had taken place a while back – have not been made by any PM in the past. When Modi became the PM, the now deceased President of Vishwa Hindu Parishad Ashok Singhal claimed that Hindu rule was back in India first time after the Mughal rule. Interestingly he didn't make this claim when Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the PM because Vajpayee didn't have a communal image. Narendra Modi is living up to

the pompous claim of Ashok Singhal. The idea of PM identifying himself with only one community is also incompatible with democracy.

Consolidation of Hindu votes by creating a false impression that other political parties have pampered Muslims is a cruel joke with Muslims. The reality is that Muslims are a deprived community in India, most of them self-employed but poor. Now it is becoming clear that youth from this community are made accused in many bomb-blast or terrorist incidents and then acquitted because of lack of evidence, after having spent a number of years in jail, completely devastating their lives. Such ploy strengthens the notion among majority community that Muslims are behind all such incidents as the news about their arrests are highlighted but not of their acquittal.

From Sharmila securing merely 90 votes in Manipur is as shocking as BJP's victory in UP. People in UP have voted Amanmani Tripathi, accused of his wife's murder and whose both parents are in jail on the murder charge of Madhumita Shukla, and dons Mukhtar Ansari and Raja Bhaiya with criminal backgrounds are MLAs.

Hence it is clear that people don't vote in a rational manner. To win an election it requires money – legal and illegal, organisation and even adopting unethical methods of exploiting the caste and religious sentiments of people even if it may mean creating more friction in society. People may

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# The verdict in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand

**Apoorvanand**

Indian parliamentary politics has moved away from the concerns of its minorities. This is the essence of the statement of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh intellectual Rakesh Sinha who, celebrating the massive mandate given to the Bharatiya Janata Party by the people in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, said: “A Muslim veto institutionalised as an extra-secular mechanism has been demolished. The Sangh’s meta-narrative on nationalism and Hindutva has emerged as a hegemonic ideology.”

BJP leaders use the phrase “end of caste politics” to explain the unprecedented vote percentage that the saffron party has gained in the state elections this time. Other observers see a new voter emerging in these elections, one who is weary of instability, is tired of coalition politics and wants to see decisive governance. This view looks at the mandate to the BJP as a continuation of the trend, over the last decade, in Uttar Pradesh that had put Mayawati and Akhilesh Yadav in power with an unambiguous majority in the past.

What is evident from the recent poll results is that the BJP has established its pan-Indian dominance decisively. Many see the BJP’s determination to capture India with admiration. Some others see it with fear. Four years ago, when the BJP announced that its focus was on the North East and East, including Bihar, West Bengal and Odisha, it was not taken very seriously. But the consistent work by the RSS, its

mother organisation, was to serve as the springboard for the BJP.

The time was ripe. The power it got at the Centre gave it the leverage it needed in these areas. Its expansion in Odisha, as is evident in the results of the panchayat elections in February, is just an example of how the party can rebound in a place from where it was effectively pushed out only a few years ago.

The emergence of the BJP in Odisha, where the Biju Janata Dal had unceremoniously showed it the door a few years ago, needs to be understood in the light of what has happened in Uttar Pradesh. The saffron party has been out of power in Uttar Pradesh for the last 14 years.

There were theoretical explanations for this. It was believed that the politics of social justice had made it impossible for the political language of Hindutva to define politics. However, the politics of social justice was reduced to, or remained limited to, giving representation to some sections of the erstwhile marginalised social groups. This meant that all one had to do was to give these marginalised social groups a sense of participation in the affairs of politics. If one could bring them around by only doing this much, what prevented the BJP from attempting this formula too?

Thus, the last 10 years have shown the BJP turning the politics of social justice on its head. While political scientists kept calling it the party of upper caste Hindu males, it

slowly co-opted the Other Backward Classes and Dalits into its Hindu fold.

This is also a moment for ideologues to ponder over the rhetoric of Ambedkarism, which failed to anticipate that it was not at all difficult for Dalits to accept a party that is run along Manuwadi (casteist) ideological lines. Is it difficult to see how the suicide of Dalit scholar Rohith Vemula in Hyderabad or the lynching of Dalits by the protectors of cows in Gujarat could not stir the Dalits of Uttar Pradesh to spurn the saffron party? What prevented democratic parties from talking about these issues and making them central in their campaign? The fear that they would be seen as practising a partisan political language?

There have been many reports of how the BJP worked on the non-Yadav castes to carry them along. It was done in many ways, by pulling caste groups like the Kurmis, Rajbhars, Nishads and Mauryas and non-Jatav Dalits into its fold. Cultural modes were used effectively. The BJP’s symbolic campaign in the name of Suheldev, a little-known 11th-century Pasi king, to dislodge the warrior saint Ghazi Miyan from the popular imagination as the hero of both Hindus and Muslims in eastern Uttar Pradesh, is only one example.

While the leaders of the social justice plank got complacent with the assurance of continued support from their sub-caste group, they failed to anticipate the aspirations that this

would generate in other sub-caste groups within the wider category of Dalits or Backwards.

That this would ultimately generate resentment among these groups against the dominant ruling caste group, which in the case of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh were Yadavs among the Backwards and Jatavs among Dalits. To think that with these dominant caste groups as the nuclei, other sub-caste groups would keep hovering around them was lazy politics. Also, as we can now see, the journey of the politics of social justice was devoid of democratic content. A politics that was only the language of negotiation with power could only lead to where it stands now. Bahujan Samaj Party leader Mayawati has been reduced to the status of a leader of Jatavs, and Akhilesh Yadav does not have appeal beyond Yadavs. Their failure to fashion a universal language that could compete with the Hindutva universal is stark.

No human being likes to remain confined within the identity assigned to them. We are programmed to be transcendental beings. What was the promise of the slogan of social justice in this regard? It asked Yadavs to remain Yadavs and Jatavs to remain Jatavs forever. Contrary to this brand of politics, the RSS at least promised them an opening in the wider Hindu fold, and more recently, pride in being part of a more universal national project. Thus, an ambitionless, narrow identity politics was defeated by a reverse identity politics, which just reprogrammed these groups, and assured them of being part of a larger Hindu nationalist solidarity project.

It is also interesting that the only party that spoke in a cultural language during the election campaign was the BJP. Neither the Congress-Samajwadi Party alliance nor the Bahujan Samaj Party moved an inch away from their economic rhetoric. Their attempt to appeal to the economic insecurities of people did not cut ice as people knew that both camps barely differ with regard to their economic policies. So, the only thing to make a difference was culture. However, the hesitation of the so-called secular parties in talking about their cultural platform meant that they had utter disdain for the people's striving to find their definition of what a good life would be. A good life is one that goes beyond economic compulsions. To not talk about it is having a dim view of people.

Analysts have started talking about the 2017 election results the way they did with the 2014 results of the general election. They call it inclusive and a mandate beyond caste. They seem embarrassed by the BJP's campaign, which was brazenly anti-Muslim, casteist and divisive.

The references to the Ram Mandir, anti-Romeo squads, displacement of Hindus, appeasement of Muslims at the cost of Dalits and backward castes were raised at the beginning of the campaign and remained till the end. There was hardly a BJP leader who did not use this language. It was most certainly not inclusive.

The verdict in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand is definitely a decisive victory of the ideology of the BJP. The party's opponents must first accept this fact if they are to think about ways to deal with it.

*(Continued from Page 3)*

not vote for a candidate like Irom Sharmila who symbolizes simplicity, commitment to high ideals like truth and non-violence and sacrifice but may prefer to vote for the criminals who symbolize everything wrong in society.

Some people harbour the illusion that a BJP government will offer clean governance or will usher in an era of merit.<sup>137</sup> candidates of the BJP in UP elections had criminal background. Every one in four BJP candidate was accused of serious criminal charges. Every three in four BJP candidates were crorepatris. Can anybody claim that the BJP candidates spent within the prescribed limit set by the Election Commission on election campaigning? Where did the amount spent over and above the prescribed limit, obviously in form of black money, come from, especially in new currency notes? Are these candidates representatives of common citizen, who is neither criminal nor rich nor corrupt? It is a party of the rich and capitalists and will work for them. Like other parties BJP too manipulated the caste arithmetic by focussing on non-Yadav OBC and non-Chamar-Jatav dalit votes. Alliances with Apna Dal and Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party were caste based alliances. Keshav Prasad Maurya is BJP President in UP because of his caste. To dispel any doubts that caste and not merit will continue to guide Indian politics we need to go back to Bihar elections. Narendra Modi had to claim in a most melodramatic manner that he will lay down his life but not dismantle the caste based quota system after the RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat made an adverse comment against the system of reservations.

# Should Muslims keep away from electoral politics?

**Ajaz Ashraf**

Four months before the Uttar Pradesh election results sent Muslims in India reeling in shock, former Rajya Sabha MP Mohammed Adeb delivered a speech in Lucknow, which, in hindsight, might be called prescient.

“If Muslims don’t wish to have the status of slaves, if they don’t want India to become a Hindu rashtra, they will have to keep away from electoral politics for a while and, instead, concentrate on education,” Adeb told an audience comprising mostly members of the Aligarh Muslim University’s Old Boys Association.

It isn’t that Adeb wanted Muslims to keep away from voting. His aim was to have Muslim intellectuals rethink the idea of contesting elections, of disabusing them of the notion that it is they who decide which party comes to power in Uttar Pradesh.

Adeb’s suggestion, that is contrary to popular wisdom, had his audience gasping. This prompted him to explain his suggestion in greater detail.

“We Muslims chose in 1947 not to live in the Muslim rashtra of Pakistan,” he said. “It is now the turn of Hindus to decide whether they want India to become a Hindu rashtra or remain secular. Muslims should understand that their very presence in the electoral fray leads to a communal polarisation. Why?”

Not one to mince words, Adeb answered his question himself.

“A segment of Hindus hates the very sight of Muslims,” he said. “Their icon is Narendra Modi. But 75% of Hindus are secular. Let them fight out over the kind of India they want. Muslim candidates have become a red rag to even secular Hindus who rally behind the Bharatiya Janata Party, turning every election into a Hindu-Muslim one.”

Later in the day, Adeb met Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad, who was in Lucknow. To Adeb, Azad asked, “Why did you deliver such a speech?”

It was now Azad’s turn to get a mouthful from Adeb. He recalled asking Azad: “What kind of secularism is that which relies on 20% of Muslim votes? The Bahujan Samaj Party gets a percentage of it, as do the Samajwadi Party and the Congress.”

At this, Azad invited Adeb, who was elected to the Rajya Sabha from Uttar Pradesh, to join the Congress. Adeb rebuffed the offer saying, “First get the secular Hindus together before asking me to join.”

## **Spectre of a Hindu rashtra**

A day after the Uttar Pradesh election results sent a shockwave through the Muslim community, Adeb was brimming with anger. He said, “Syed Ahmed Bukhari [the so-called Shahi Imam of Delhi’s Jama Masjid] came to me with a question: ‘Why aren’t political parties courting me for Muslim votes?’ I advised him to

remain quiet, to not interfere in politics.” Nevertheless, Bukhari went on to announce that Muslims should vote the Bahujan Samaj Party.

“Look at the results,” Adeb said angrily. “But for Jatavs, Yadavs, and a segment of Jats, most Hindus voted [for] the Bharatiya Janata Party.” His anger soon segued into grief and he began to sob, “I am an old man. I don’t want to die in a Hindu rashtra.”

Though Adeb has been nudging Muslims to rethink their political role through articles in Urdu newspapers, the churn among them has only just begun. It is undeniably in response to the anxiety and fear gripping them at the BJP’s thumping victory in this politically crucial state.

After all, Uttar Pradesh is the site where the Hindutva pet projects of cow-vigilantism, love jihad, and ghar wapsi have been executed with utmost ferocity. All these come in the backdrop of the grisly 2013 riots of Muzaffarnagar, which further widened the Hindu-Muslim divide inherited from the Ram Janmabhoomi movement of the 1990s and even earlier, from Partition. Between these two cataclysmic events, separated by 45 years, Uttar Pradesh witnessed manifold riots, each shackling the future to the blood-soaked past.

I spoke to around 15 Muslims, not all quoted here, each of whom introspected deeply. So forbidding does the future appear to them that

none even alluded to the steep decline in the number of Muslim MLAs, down from the high of 69 elected in 2012 to just 24 in the new Uttar Pradesh Assembly.

They, in their own ways, echoed Adeb, saying that the decline in representation of Muslims was preferable to having the Sangh Parivar rule over them with the spectre of Hindutva looming.

“Muslims need to become like the Parsis or, better still, behave the way the Chinese Indians do in Kolkata,” said poet Munawwar Rana. “They focus on dentistry or [their] shoe business, go out to vote on polling day and return to work.”

He continued: “And Muslims?” They hold meetings at night, cook deghs (huge vessels) of biryani, and work themselves into a frenzy. “They think the burden of secularism rests on their shoulders,” said Rana. “Educate your people and make them self-reliant.”

Readers would think Adeb, Rana and others are poor losers, not generous enough to credit the BJP’s overwhelming victory in Uttar Pradesh to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s development programme. In that case readers should listen to Sudhir Panwar, the Samajwadi Party candidate from Thana Bhawan in West Uttar Pradesh, who wrote for *Scroll.in* last week on the communal polarisation he experienced during his campaign.

In Thana Bhawan, there were four principal candidates – Suresh Rana, accused in the Muzaffarnagar riots, stood on the BJP ticket; Javed Rao on the Rashtriya Lok Dal’s; Abdul Rao Waris on the Bahujan

Samaj Party’s, and Panwar on the Samajwadi Party’s. It was thought that the anger of Jats against the BJP would prevent voting on religious lines in an area where the Muslim-Hindu divide runs deep.

This perhaps prompted Rana to play the Hindu card, and the Muslims who were more inclined to the Rashtriya Lok Dal switched their votes to the Bahujan Samaj Party, believing that its Dalit votes would enhance the party’s heft to snatch Thana Bhawan.

### **Communal polarisation**

Sample how different villages voted along communal lines.

In the Rajput-dominated Hiranwada, the Bahujan Samaj Party bagged 14 votes, the Rashtriya Lok Dal not a single vote, the Samajwadi Party seven, and the Bharatiya Janata Party a whopping 790.

In Bhandoda, a village where the Brahmins are landowners and also dominate its demography, followed by Dalits, the Bahujan Samaj Party secured 156 votes, the Rashtriya Lok Dal zero, the Samajwadi Party nine, and the Bharatiya Janata Party 570.

In the Muslim-dominated Jalalabad, the Bahujan Samaj Party received 453 votes, the Rashtriya Lok Dal 15, the Samajwadi Party 6 and the Bharatiya Janata Party 23.

In Pindora, where Jats are 35% and Muslims around 30% of the population, the Bahujan Samaj Party polled 33 votes, the Rashtriya Lok Dal 482, the Samajwadi Party 33, and the Bharatiya Janata Party 278,

most of which is said to have come from the lower economically backward castes.

In Devipura, where the Kashyaps are numerous, the Bahujan Samaj Party got 86 votes, the Rashtriya Lok Dal 42, the Samajwadi Party 1 and the Bharatiya Janata Party 433.

In Oudri village, where the Jatavs are in the majority, the Bahujan Samaj Party bagged 343 votes, the Rashtriya Lok Dal 15, the Samajwadi Party 12, and the Bharatiya Janata Party 22.

This voting pattern was replicated in village after village. Broadly, the Jat votes split between the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Rashtriya Lok Dal, the Muslim votes consolidated behind the Bahujan Samaj Party, with the Samajwadi Party getting a slim share in it, the Jatavs stood solidly behind the Bahujan Samaj Party, and all others simply crossed over to the Bharatiya Janata Party. The BJP’s Suresh Rana won the election from Thana Bhawan.

Can you call this election?” asked Panwar rhetorically. “It is Hindu-Muslim war through the EVM [Electronic Voting Machine].” Panwar went on to echo Adeb: “I feel extremely sad when I say that Muslims will have to keep away from contesting elections. This seems to be the only way of ensuring that elections don’t turn into a Hindu-Muslim one.”

The Bahujan Samaj Party’s Waris differed. “Is it even practical?” he asked. “But yes, Muslims should keep a low profile.”

# A forgotten gender injustice

**Rajindar Sachar**

Sushma Swaraj, usually a calm politician, was so upset that she spontaneously blurted out “I will shave my head if a foreigner Sonia Gandhi becomes Prime Minister of India”. Luckily, Sonia Gandhi saved this embarrassment to Swaraj by intelligently and strategically thrusting Manmohan Singh (though a loyalist to the core of the Gandhi family, but on merit of his own), as Prime Minister in 2004, notwithstanding the protest from scores of Gandhi family loyalists.

Switch to March 2010 and you see a happy embrace by Sonia Gandhi and Sushma Swaraj in the precincts of Parliament. What happened in the interim for such close bonhomie?

Though introduced by Deve Gowda for the first time on 12 September 1996 in the Lok Sabha, no concrete action was taken by various governments to effectuate the legislation on Women’s Reservation Bill in Parliament and the state legislatures. Everyone expected the legislation to be passed immediately. In fact, Prime Minister I.K. Gujral promised his earliest priority in passing this Bill but nothing concrete happened.

When the UPA government came to power in 2004, it announced that the Act would be its first priority. But instead one had total silence on the Bill in the President’s speech on the opening day of the Parliamentary session. This was an open and clear notice to the women activists that the Bill, which had been so proudly projected as a commitment to gender equality, has been quietly buried, and

is not likely to be revived in conceivable future.

But then circumstances of steep price rise, political compulsions of polls in Karnataka and other impending polls made the then government to be a little wise and decide to refer the Bill to the Parliamentary Standing Committee. Though the innocent amongst the women groups were hoping that the Bill would become an Act of Legislature, nothing happened until 2010.

The Women’s Reservation Bill or The Constitution (108th Amendment) Bill, 2008, is a lapsed Bill in Parliament of India, which proposed to amend the Constitution of India to reserve 33% of all seats in the Lower House of Parliament of India, the Lok Sabha, and in all state Legislative Assemblies for women.

The Rajya Sabha passed the bill on 9 March 2010. It was this event that made Sushma Swaraj and Sonia Gandhi embrace so emotionally. However, the Lok Sabha never voted on the Bill. The Bill lapsed after the dissolution of the 15th Lok Sabha in 2014.

Every time from 1998 to 2014, whenever Parliament met, women representatives were assured in all solemnity by each major political party that it hoped to pass the Bill in that very session. In reality, this was a tongue-in-cheek operation.

That is why one feels that women should support the alternative of double-member constituencies which

will meet both the requirement of ensuring one-third quota for women and, at the same time, will not disturb the present male seats.

Thus, Lok Sabha membership can be easily increased to 750, with a provision that one woman candidate will mandatorily be elected from those double-member constituencies, and, depending upon the votes received, it may be that even both elected candidate could be women. This law was laid down by the Supreme Court decades ago in former President V.V. Giri’s case. The same principle will apply in the case of elections to the state legislatures.

Space in Parliament is not a problem. Shivraj Patil, once Union Home Minister, is on record admitting that space is not a problem if Parliament decides to increase the number of seats.

The alternative of double member constituencies can be done by amending Article 81(2) of the Constitution by increasing the present strength, which can be easily done if political parties are genuine in their commitment to the Bill.

I know the Delimitation Commission has already marked the constituencies on the basis of single member seats. But I do not think it is necessary to redraw the constituencies to make it double.

By a rule of thumb the top one third of the constituencies having the maximum voters in each state could

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# Lohia's immanent critique of caste

Arun Kumar Patnaik

It may be argued that Lohia's immanent criticism is outlined by his principle of immediacy. Recent commentators misunderstand Lohia's principle of immediacy. Yogendra Yadav's lengthy essay on Lohia's intellectual journey underestimates Lohia's method. Where he should notice Lohia's methodological protocols in his principle of immediacy, he argues that Lohia's principle is morally relevant against 'vulgar presentism' (excessively concerned with the present and indifferent to the future) but does not have any analytical significance. Commenting on Lohia's principle of immediacy, Yadav (*Economic and Political Weekly*, October 2, 2010) argues, "Lohia did not formulate the analytical part of this insight (the principle of immediacy – *my addition*) as clearly as the normative principle". Anand Kumar (*Ibid*) tries to argue for an intersectional understanding of caste but does not notice that Lohia offers an internal critique of caste and implies that Lohia transcends caste in order to offer his criticism of caste. Let us discuss this issue at length. While responding to Yadav's position, Sasheej Hegde (*Economic and Political Weekly*, September 3, 2011) however suggests that it is possible to argue that in Lohia's principle of immediacy, 'some aspects of this analytical part' may be 'inflecting at once Lohia's ethics and politics'. What are these analytical aspects present in Lohia's principle of immediacy? Though Hedge does not explore methodological protocols present in

Lohia's principle, he hints their presence in his elaborate response to Yadav's thesis. Hegde suggests that Lohia's principle of immediacy is about "the world imagined (and lived) from the perspective of will (as separate from reason).....One of the profound weaknesses of this politics on immediacy is that it has no account of the cognitive status of its own history, even though its basic superiority consists in its unique compatibility with prevailing and current historical conditions." (2011: 71). Hegde views Lohia's principle as expression of a perspective of will (non-reason) rather than a perspective of reason. In my view, he thus reduces analytical import of an immanent criticism of history which is informed of a perspective of reason combined with a perspective of will (non-reason). Do we find a union of reason and will (non-reason) in Lohia's principle of immediacy? Is Lohia's principle of immediacy posited in the unitary sense (a claim made by Hedge, 2011: 70) and is thus devoid of multiplicity of meanings? Let us now answer these questions.

What is Lohia's principle of immediacy? What is it opposed to or different from? How Lohia does discuss it? Lohia is critical of our obsession with 'vulgar presentism' (obsession with the present) on the one hand and 'vulgar futurism' (an excessive concern with a remote future) on the other and posits the principle of immediacy. In the modernist circles there are two forms of reaction against vulgar

presentism. Lohia distinguishes two forms of test followed by modern intellectuals to promote their ideals of progress: the remote test (what may be called 'transcendental' principle) and the principle of immediacy (what may be called 'immanent principle').

## Remote test

Thinkers following a remote test or transcendental principle argue that the modern civilisation is about constant 'progress' in production, democracy and even class struggle. A golden age is expected to come. The right wing intellectuals may focus on technological progress whereas the left wing intellectuals may offer a remote justification of class struggle. Both may portray a golden age in future. Both have an over-riding faith in remote tests. Thus, Lohia (2011, Vol. 2: 183) argues that the modern world has given rise to dichotomies "between spirit and matter, individual and social, bread and culture and the like". As the future appears by suppressing the present, a dichotomy between the present and the future is posited in this remote method. The right wing intellectuals represent one side of the dichotomy (spirit/individual/culture/technology) and the left-wing intellectuals represent the exact opposite of it (matter/social/bread/humanity). Lohia argues that this is an unreal opposition. Lohia (*ibid*: 184) suggests, "These dichotomies have arisen, because immediacy is flouted, because history denies fable and fable denies history". True, Lohia here criticises a rationalist

account of history popular in the Left and the Right that suppresses fables/fictions/myths. He seems to be giving up reason. But Lohia does not celebrate fables/myths. He subjects myths to a rational scrutiny and suggests that fables too have moral doctrines that impact history in a linear form or a cyclic form. By suppressing fables, a rationalist history presents partial truth. A typical rationalist account of history is binary and is full of dichotomies. He is not giving up history for fables. He is interested in exploring a fruitful dialogue between history and fables, without sliding for one-sided analytical protocols popular with the philosophers of history (with moment of flux in history) or moralists (with the moment of eternity in fables). If the moment of flux can be analysed by a perspective of non-reason or will, the moment of eternity can be analysed by a perspective of reason. Though reason and will are necessary to analyse both the moments of eternity (fables) and flux (history). That is how Lohia breaks free from binary of reason and will by combining a critical perspective of history and fables. He is critical of their dichotomy, critical of their gaze over humanity and proposes a new synthesis. For fables are stories that never take place but moralists assume they are internally real. Historians denounce fables and rightly look for moments of flux/change and thus ignore what is “externally real” in fables. (Lohia, 2011, Vol.2: 185) Lohia concludes, “If man must learn to live in history, he has equal need to live outside it”. (ibid)

### **The immediacy test**

Lohia proposes, “We may in fact be heading for a golden age if we try to achieve that golden age in the

immediate”. (Lohia, Vol 2: 186) The principle of immediacy connects the moment of flux (history) with the moment of eternity (fables), the moment of material force with moment of subjective will, the moment of social with the moment of individual. The principle of immediacy claims that for each single act, we need not look for transcendental criteria to justify its course of doing. It can be justified with immanent criteria or by a ‘here and now’ approach to production, governance, culture and class struggle. Lohia argues, “Compassion and revolution have to interweave and any preferential loyalty to one or the other would heap disaster on the spiritual as well as the material”. (Lohia, Vol 2: 186) Lohia clearly is unprepared to give up reason for will or vice versa. He discards the golden age of distant future and argues that such an ideal is harmful for left wing movements. For they may do many ignoble acts to fulfil high ideals and think that their acts can be justified by the outcome of a remote future. If I may rephrase him, he implicitly suggests that a perspective of will focuses on compassion or spiritual realm whereas a perspective of reason concentrates on material changes in human life. A socialist ideal of progress must concentrate on a combined perspective of will and reason.

Lohia’s principle acquires an added analytical significance in socialist movement to establish classless and casteless society by a here-and-now approach rather than a remote approach. The orthodox notion of progress in socialist circles upholds a rosy future and forgets that subalterns want to gain ‘autonomy’ here and now rather than in distant future. Unless socialists identify with

the subaltern search for autonomy/solidarity here and now and would want to identify their struggle with subaltern search for autonomy, they will lose relevance here and now. Unless socialists identify with the principle of immediacy in production (the will to control production/profits in factory or agriculture), in class struggle (democratic participation in pedagogy/action rather than dependence on leadership), in culture (intellectual formation among subalterns, approximation to other cultures of subalterns and so on), socialist movement cannot create the golden age it promises to the subaltern strata.

Lohia’s thesis is anticipated by Gramsci’s immanent criticism of socialist orthodoxies in Europe. Culturally, his thesis approximates that of Gramsci’s immanent critique. As in Gramsci, Lohia’s analytical protocols broaden the field of socialist politics. It is not merely concerned with the material transformation through the state power, it is equally concerned with spiritual change or intellectual transformation so that subaltern caste/classes cease to remain subalterns. It is not merely focused on capturing the state power but also transformation of social power in caste/gender/class/ethnicity/language. Thus, analytically speaking, it is indeed a historic task of socialist movement to explore forms of immediacy in factory/land, class/caste struggle, governance and culture. It is possible for a new socialist movement to begin by identifying with these multiple forms of immediacy. Thus Lohia’s new analytical protocols are laid bare in his principle of immediacy required to renew a new socialist movement. His analysis is simultaneously political. His new methodology is at

once a new political project. Far from positing a unitary notion of immediacy as claimed by Hegde, Lohia observes a plural notion of immediacy so that socialism could be constructed with multiple trajectories.

Does Lohia apply his own method to understand caste relation? Lohia does it very acutely. He offers a plural notion of immediacy to examine caste system and identifies caste in relation to gender, language, class and region. He locates its internal strength in providing forms of solidarity and security to members of a particular caste, though in a framework of segregation and argues that socialism must articulate similar forms of security and solidarity in non-discriminatory mode. Socialism must adopt and universalise solidarity currents practised by caste society, instead of pointing towards a distant future of progress. His application of the immanent principle to examine caste system is very clear. While this could be seen as part of his analysis of 'history', it may be useful to hint at this stage how he analyses fables of Ram-Vashistha-Sambhuka story on the one hand and Vashistha-Vamliki traditions on the other hand. He also pays attention to legends of fishermen or dalit communities that reinforce their subordination and points to their inner contradictions in these beliefs. In a sense, he offers a subtle criticism of caste-based legends believed by lower castes and points towards a new socialist narrative of fables, myths, and popular legends prevalent among the caste communities. He deftly uses these stories to expose caste contradictions and points out a

way-out. Let us examine these issues below.

### **Caste as domination or legitimation?**

Since caste is a power structure, it needs to be related to a theory of power. A theory of power is usually caught with a tension between two notions of power: power as a hierarchy of domination on the one hand and power as a system of legitimation on the other hand. The former focuses on a hierarchy of elites and subalterns, structural inequalities arising between them and strategies to dominate subaltern strata and so on. The latter focuses on why subalterns give consent to the domination of elites and its moral and legal paraphernalia.

These notions of power represent two different sides of power, sometimes pushing theorists to take sectarian positions. That is to say, theorists of power may merely echo the one or the other side of power, failing to notice that there are actually two sides of power in live tension or contradiction between each other. A comprehensive theory of power will have to engage with these two different tendencies of power structure. Thus, a broad view of caste power may have to take into account the hierarchy of domination and structures of legitimation. It must break with a binary view that treats caste as domination or as legitimation process.

This paper primarily focuses on Lohia's accounts which deal with the moral order of caste. He focuses on the legitimizing process of caste system and enquires into why caste has survived as a social system. He throws some light on the resilient strength of caste system, while

pleading for the destruction of caste's exclusionary practices. But it would be a terrible mistake to examine Lohia's account of caste in isolation from that of Gandhi and Ambedkar. Moreover, in terms of genealogy, he should be evaluated as a succeeding thinker. If Lohia needs to be examined in relation to his immediate intellectual context, the antecedent tradition of criticism of caste must be placed beforehand so that we can assess his own contributions fruitfully. It may not be inaccurate to claim that the earlier thinkers such as Gandhi and Ambedkar describe caste as a hierarchy of domination (untouchability for Gandhi and graded inequalities for Ambedkar). Lohia on the other hand focuses on caste as a legitimising system: how does it draw support of people and gain acceptability as a system? A non sectarian view of caste may thus have to combine these two important views of caste system as these views represent two different sides of caste system.

### **Ambedkar and Lohia on Gandhi's view of Caste**

There is one thing common to both Ambedkar and Lohia. Both are dissatisfied with Gandhi's doctrine of least resistance to caste order. Both argue for the rediscovery of Satyagrah against caste system. If you recall, Gandhi was wary of Satyagrah against caste inequalities, notwithstanding his opposition to the British Raj on the grounds of Satyagrah. Gandhi does not think it would be prudent to place Satyagrah against caste order during the British Raj or even after India's Independence. Rather, on the caste issues, he proposes the doctrine of least resistance as a matter of principle rather than a time dependent strategy. Gandhi thinks that caste is

an unequal structure between the touchable castes and the untouchable castes.

He argues for changing the upper caste mentalities by an appeal to their change of hearts. He argues that if the upper castes could be convinced with an appeal to the principle of ancestral calling, it would be possible for them to believe in the redundancy of untouchability. According to this principle, we are doing different functions as our duties to a village community as ordained by our ancestors. Through an alternative education of upper castes, it would be possible to convince them that different castes do mere duties to their ancestors. So, there is no low or polluted duty and high or pure duty. All caste functions are duties as per the ancestral calling. Once upper castes are convinced with a notion of duty in every manual labour, it would be possible for them to remove from their minds that some groups do menial labour or polluted functions. All functions would be seen as necessary duties to ancestors. Once upper castes are convinced with this doctrine, they would also undertake street sweeping and so on as Gandhi himself did. That would bring an end to untouchability. So, Satyagraha against untouchability is not necessary. Ambedkar calls Gandhi's doctrine as the one of least resistance.<sup>1</sup>

Both Ambedkar and Lohia remain dissatisfied with Gandhi's doctrine of least resistance. Both argue that Gandhi, as a matter of principle, denies the relevance of Satyagrah against caste inequalities. If you look around India's history, it is full of such Satyagraha resistance movements against caste system, so argues Ambedkar. By denying Satyagraha

against caste, Gandhi denies the relevance of this history to contemporary egalitarians. Ambedkar argues that Gandhi's call for abolition of untouchability amounts to a case of limited egalitarianism. Lohia too argues that Gandhi's Satyagraha may be extended against caste system and socialism, unlike Gandhism, may explore the possibility of policy action against caste inequalities, a theme in which Ambedkar is equally concerned. Thus, we find some common threads in their assessment of Gandhism vis à vis caste order. Both agree the Gandhism reduces caste into existence of untouchables and nullifies any concerted policy or political action against caste system. Both agree that it would be necessary to view caste order as power structure and offer an all rounded critique of caste so that it would be entirely abolished.

For both of them, the abolition of caste order is more important than the abolition of untouchability of the Dalits as Gandhism envisages. Both agree that Gandhism is an egalitarian ideology on the caste question but it has limited utilities in a democratic nation determined to abolish caste inequalities. In fact, Ambedkar, unlike his followers, clearly demarcates three egalitarian ideologies against caste: Gandhism, Marxism and Buddhism. For him as also for Lohia, it would be possible to learn from Gandhism and Marxism while trying to establish an egalitarian ideology, even though lessons from them may have limited applicability in relation to caste order in India. So, I submit, Ambedkar was not anti Gandhi as made out by his followers today. In a dialectical thinking, there are no pro or anti Gandhi positions.<sup>2</sup>

Both give credit to Gandhi for

discovering Satyagraha as a means of people's struggle against injustice and for popularizing Satyagraha at a pan Indian level. Lohia assumes that due to Gandhi, it would be now possible to place Satyagraha against caste system, even though Gandhi might have placed "the change of heart" doctrine in relation to caste or property disputes.<sup>3</sup> For, due to Gandhism, Satyagraha is now etched on to people's memory at a national level. People would never forget its relevance in their own social and political struggles. There is no blind anti Gandhism in Ambedkar as made out by his followers today, even though he is sharply critical of Gandhism.

### **A system of graded inequalities**

Let us focus on Ambedkar's programme of annihilation of caste as a prelude to our discussion of Lohia's plea for the destruction of caste order. Ambedkar argues clearly: Gandhism has a weak understanding of caste inequalities and moreover has a weaker understanding of solutions to caste order. We have seen the latter aspect and now shall examine the former aspect. Gandhi identifies untouchability of the Dalits as a major problem in the caste order. He is for the abolition of untouchability, even though he prescribes no political action. But, he forgets that untouchability is not simply limited to the Dalit's social experience. Untouchability is also experience of the so called touchable castes and all women across caste order. By simply ignoring this simple point, Gandhi misses the essence of caste system which consists of grades of untouchability against several human beings, not simply Dalits. Caste is defined by untouchability practiced within "touchable" castes

and against untouchable castes rather than by the position of untouchables as Gandhi imagines. One of the broadest definitions of caste system as a system of graded inequalities is thus found in Ambedkar. In comparison, the Gandhian conception of caste pales into romantic narrow mindedness. Let us elaborate this feature of caste as captured by Ambedkar briefly.<sup>4</sup>

Caste is simply not a system of inequalities between castes of purity and castes of pollution. Such a neat division of labour is not there in the caste system. There are grades of pollution, followed by rules of precedence in matters of education, religion, commensality, marriage, economy and so on. Such rules of precedence exclude not merely Dalits from various sectors of human life. They also exclude Sudras, Vaisyas, non Vedic Brahmins as well as all women across caste divisions. Caste is thus a hierarchy of grades/ranks of people subdivided by the different rules of precedence in matters governing human life, where the Vedic Brahmin male occupies the top of hierarchy with Dalits occupying its bottom. Let us see how rules of precedence occur in education under the caste order. Vedas and Puranas were seen as two different sources of knowledge. Vedic Brahmins occupied superior status over Puranic Brahmins as the Vedic knowledge preceded Puranic knowledge. Brahmin male occupied superior status over Brahmin women in matters of knowledge. Women of any caste and all non Brahmin males were excluded from education system by caste practices.

Violation of such rules by any

group invited proportionate physical punishment. Such punishment rules varied from region to region. If you recall, Ambedkar's submission against Gandhi is that the latter ignores the prevalence of untouchability among "touchable" castes. Even non Vedic Brahmins and all Brahmin women are not supposed to know the Vedas. The Vedas must be kept away from all these groups. Forms of untouchability are practiced across all "touchable" castes. Even, untouchables are divided by rules of precedence. Malas think that they are superior to Madigas in Andhra Pradesh and assume that the latter are untouchables. Not merely in education but also in all other spheres of life, such rules of precedence prevail, thus creating a variety of untouchability strata across caste order. That is why Gandhi's call for abolition of untouchability of untouchable castes or Dalits is a weak solution, further weakened by his plea for change of hearts of the upper castes. Thus, Ambedkar pleads that all round Satyagraha must be conducted to destroy the essence of caste which lies in varieties of untouchability created by the social system. We shall leave Ambedkar here. It should be enough to indicate how Ambedkar examines caste as a hierarchy of power.

### **Caste and its moral order**

As I said before, Lohia does not explore how caste is organized as a graded hierarchy. I am not aware if Lohia knew Ambedkar's richer analysis. Most probably, unwittingly, he examines what is left out by Ambedkar. Why the caste order manages to survive in the midst of resistance against caste and foreign conquests? This is most important

question for Lohia, "Castes have endured over thousands of years".<sup>5</sup>R M Lohia,

He goes on to explore how caste creates legitimization processes so that lower castes feel that they are indeed lower, and so on. He goes on to explore how caste creates insurance or social security for which people do not have to pay a premium. How castes produce a split personality in average Hindus without a stable and sincere voice on anything? How castes disunite and divide masses who witnessed several foreign conquests by tiny armies whereas vast masses remained passive? No foreign conquests propelled them for mass action due to caste divisions. For, he continuously looks for mobilization of people for socialist action in the midst of passivity of masses imposed by caste or in the midst of social security given by caste? Can socialists learn from some positive features by destroying the negative features of caste system? What strategy they ought to have to do so? What policy actions are possible under socialism?

### **Provision for social security**

To cite Lohia: "Caste is presumably the world's largest insurance for which one does not pay a formal or regular premium. Solidarity is always there, when everything else fails".<sup>6</sup> Caste provides for social solidarity in matters of child bearing, marriage, funeral obsequies, feasts and other rituals. Men belonging to the same caste assist each other at these decisive hours of needs. But Lohia does not fail to notice that caste based security for which we may not have to pay any premium for insurance protection does also practice "excluding men of other castes" who are reduced to be

peripheral of such social security system. This system of insurance without any cost or premium makes the system more resilient and durable in the eyes of its members only. But it practices segregation in providing social security to needy people from other castes.

I remember one incident from Aska, a small town in Orissa. One Komati (trader) family was not able to arrange their daughter's wedding due to financial difficulties. The Komati Pentha arranged money for her marriage and finally arranged a boy for her too. She was "happily" married off after sometime. Such solidarity is found in the caste associations throughout India. Brahmin Associations give fellowship to the poor Brahmin students in the schools. Kamma Sangams do similar things. Do we ever come across beggars among Komatis or Jat Sikhs? The Langar houses or Penthas take care of such people. Such activities provide legitimacy and strength to caste order. Caste continues to survive despite many crisis points posed by modernization. This partly explains why caste has survived even the foreign conquests led by Muslims and Christians who came to India with egalitarian ideologies but got adjusted with caste order. And in fact, due to a modernization drive, caste has managed to survive in urban areas by getting organized as associations offering many kinds of assistance at times of financial crisis. The more a caste group has money, the more it is organized with association offices and schemes of assistance for needy members of its own. To use a more fashionable term, I would say that caste provides for social capital networks. But such social capital networks are restricted within a particular caste stratum.<sup>7</sup>

Can socialism learn from this community network to weaken caste order instead of relying on the state power to do so as at present? I assume Lohia is interested in inferring such a question from his investigation into caste system, though I must confess I have not been able to see such an explicit query asked by him. Otherwise, why should be a socialist leader interested in telling us about this networking aspect of caste? Lohia does not ask such a sharp question, as I am afraid, he purely relies on the state/party model of socialism to overcome barriers of caste system while offering social security. His model of solution converges with that of Nehruvian liberals and communist parties, even though the way he examines caste system frontally, his analysis differs from them. Lohia does not share what he calls their "wordy opposition" to caste.

### **System of moral subordination**

Another aspect of caste system is the way it survives with the support from lower castes. The upper castes do not have to dominate them with the rule of gun. Lower castes justify their subordination by discovering folklore of their own and offer justification of their own subordination through a moral discourse innovated by themselves rather than by upper castes. Lower castes have legends and myths that justify their lowly situation and transform it into a symbol of sacrifice and luster. Lohia gives an illustration from fisher folk's life. The Kaivarts (fisher folk caste) who presumably number more than one crore population tell stories about their mythical ancestors, who were simple, ungreedy, brave and generous and who lost everything to other ancestors of Kshatriyas and

other high castes because of their greater greed and deceit. The current lot of misery is attributed to the unending succession of sacrificial acts for the sake of high principles. This sacrifice is seen not as an active principle that seeks change but as a passive submission to the caste order. This sort of mythical sacrifices is wide spread among the lower castes. They secure their subordination.<sup>8</sup>

### **Weakens nation**

Lohia argues that a great misreading of Indian history is that foreigners could invade and conquer India due to our internal quarrels and intrigues. This is plain nonsense. The single most cause is caste system which produced imbecility and passivity among masses who were hardly interested in nation's tragedies. Caste is the single most reason why national feeling, national solidarity and action in preventing national tragedies could not develop and still do not develop. Unless caste is destroyed new India could not revive. India would remain weak, not due to intrigues but due to caste inequalities. If political parties play with caste cards in electoral democracy, nation would remain dormant and docile. India would not be seen as a developed nation. So in Lohia's estimate caste and nation do have negative correlation. If one remains strong, the other remains weak. If caste remains strong, people's languages, their housing and general styles of living will remain undeveloped and their mind will have imbecility due to inferiority complexes instilled in them over thousand years.<sup>9</sup> A vibrant India cannot be born in such situations. So the destruction of caste is more important for nation building.

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**NOTES**

<sup>1</sup>B R Ambedkar, “An Anti-Untouchability Agenda”, in V Rodrigues (ed.), *The Essentials Writings of B R Ambedkar*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2002.

<sup>2</sup>Ambedkar would have agreed with Lohia that he is not anti- or pro-Gandhi. See R M Lohia, *Marx, Gandhi and Socialism*, Rammanohar Lohia Samata Vidyalaya Nyasa, Hyderabad, Second Edition, 1978, p. 364.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, pp. 157-158.

<sup>4</sup>B R Ambedkar, “Annihilation of Caste”, and “Reply to the Mahatma”, in V Rodrigues (ed.), *Op. Cit.*, 2002, pp. 263-320.

<sup>5</sup>R M Lohia, **The Caste System**, Rammanohar Lohia Samata Vidyalaya Nyasa, Hyderabad, 1964, p. 81.

<sup>6</sup>R M Lohia, *op. cit.*, n.5, p. 80.

<sup>7</sup>Hans Blomkvist, “Traditional communities, Caste and Democracy: The Indian Mystery”, Paul Dekker and Eric M Uslaner (eds.), *Social Capital and Participation in Everyday Life*, Routledge, London, 2001.

<sup>8</sup>R M Lohia, *op. cit.*, n.5, p. 84.

<sup>9</sup>R M Lohia, *op. cit.*, n.5, pp. 83-84.

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*(To be concluded)*

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*(Continued from Page 8)*

be declared double-member. If the legislators are sincerely genuine they could even submit an agreed list.

At present, of course, a fresh process has again to be initiated in Parliament, because the previous Reservation Bill lapsed with the dissolution of the previous Lok Sabha in 2014.

In the just finished election propaganda in Uttar Pradesh, not one party, including the so-called seculars, with the exception of the Socialist Party (India), included the item of reservation for women in their election manifestoes. Can such male chauvinism be allowed to exist in our country?

With the 2019 Parliamentary elections coming, is it not time for the women leadership in both the Congress and BJP, through Sonia Gandhi and Sushma Swaraj to jointly clench their fists and warn all the parties that they will no longer tolerate injustice and neglect to continue? They may legitimately continue their differences on other subjects in the light of their own respective programmes.

But let them give a rallying cry against the male chauvinists, like the one given by Spanish freedom fighters in the 1936 Civil War—“*no pasaran*, you shall not pass”, i.e. continuing this injustice by not passing the Women’s Reservation

Bill, otherwise the joint fight will continue and openly. They should request Mamata Banerjee and Mayawati to join hands with them on the issue of Women’s Reservation Bill.

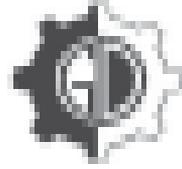
Let me recall that Dr Rammanohar Lohia had opined that reservation for women was an instrument of social engineering—he could never have suggested splitting the strength of women’s quota by further splitting them in sub quotas.

Time is short. Only an effort by these four women political leaders will see through the Women’s Reservation Bill.

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