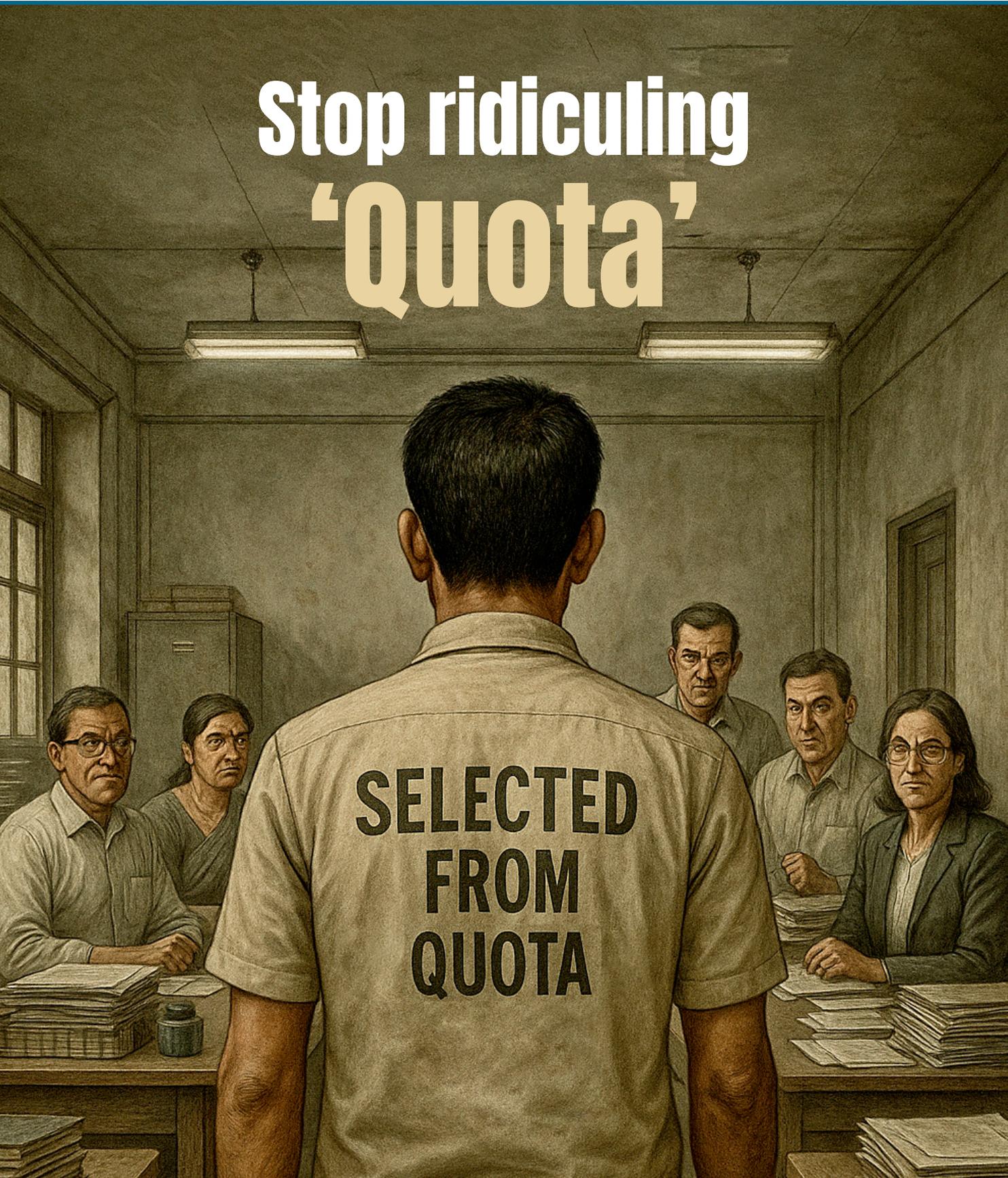


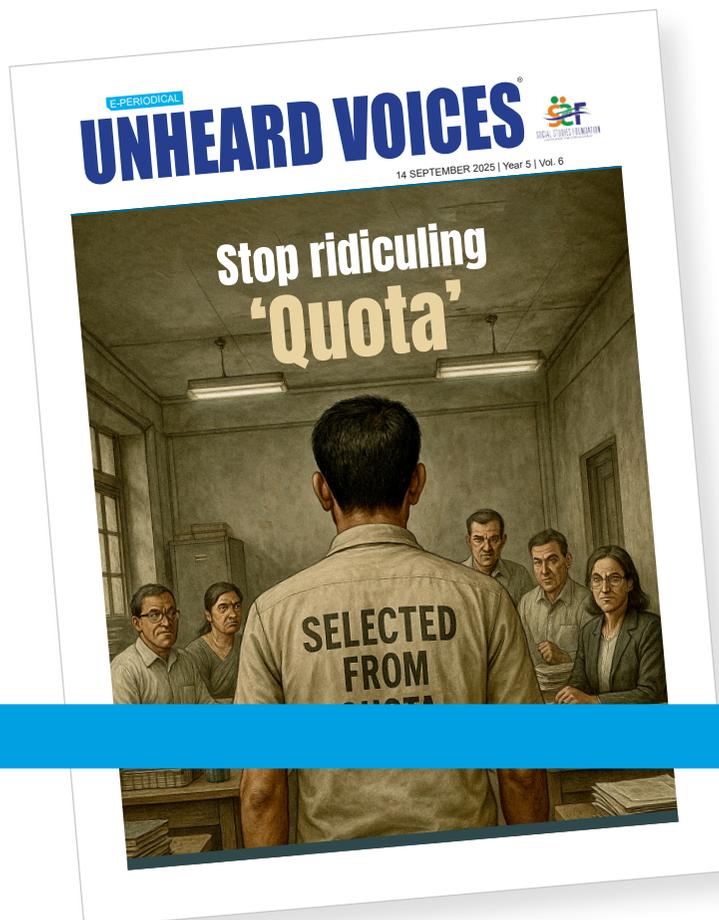
# UNHEARD VOICES®



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## Stop ridiculing 'Quota'





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## EDITORIAL

# RSS at 100: A Century of Silent Revolution

The first quarter of the twentieth century was a turbulent and transformative period in India's history. The country witnessed a series of momentous developments that continue to inspire the collective memory of the nation. Swami Vivekananda's electrifying Chicago speech in 1893 and his untimely demise in 1902, the passing of Lokmanya Tilak in 1920, the emergence of Mahatma Gandhi as a mass leader, and the formation of the Communist Party of India in 1924 were all events that shaped India's socio-political landscape. These milestones are naturally recalled and celebrated for the impact they left on the national consciousness. Yet, amidst this stream of historic occurrences, one significant event has often remained somewhat under-recognized—the founding of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in 1925 by Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar. Today, as the RSS celebrates its centenary year, its journey deserves renewed attention and appreciation.

Most organizations and leaders of that period were guided primarily by political ideas, as the overriding challenge was freedom from colonial rule. This was understandable. However, while political independence was a shared aspiration, leading figures of that era also gave serious thought to India's deeper social ills. They recognized that without addressing internal weaknesses, India's political independence would remain fragile. Problems such as the rigidities of caste and the oppression of women were widely acknowledged as obstacles to the nation's resurgence.

In this milieu, the RSS was born with a distinctive vision. Unlike many organizations that primarily focused on the political struggle, Dr. Hedgewar emphasized social strength

and character-building. He understood that a society divided by caste prejudices and weakened by internal fissures could not effectively resist external domination. The Sangh thus began its journey not as a political body but as a cultural and social organization dedicated to nurturing discipline, unity, and national pride.

It would be unfair to evaluate the contribution of organizations of that period solely on the basis of political success or failure. The true measure of their worth lies in the causes they championed and the extent to which those causes have endured. In the case of the RSS, its significance cannot be judged through the rise or fall of political entities like the Bhartiya Jana Sangh or the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP). The Sangh's existence, growth, and influence are independent of electoral politics.

A fair assessment of the RSS requires us to ask: How far has it advanced its core agenda of social cohesion, character development, and national service? What future directions is it envisioning for India? And equally important, why have many other ideological movements that once appeared powerful—such as communism in India—faded into irrelevance, while the RSS has not only survived but expanded manifold?

These questions gain relevance in light of the recent lectures delivered by RSS Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat in Delhi. The series drew attention not only because of his stature but also because it came at a time when ideology appears to be losing ground in public life, with short-term politics often overshadowing deeper debates.

In his address, Bhagwat spoke on two vital themes: social equality and the role of women. While his views did not necessarily

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introduce radically new perspectives, they carried weight because of their clarity and consistency. He reiterated that social harmony is non-negotiable and underscored the principle of equality in everyday life. His call for “one temple, one water source, and one crematorium” was a symbolic yet powerful endorsement of breaking caste barriers in practice. Furthermore, he firmly supported all constitutional provisions of reservation, recognizing them as instruments of justice and social equity.

However, the real test for the RSS lies in responding to new and complex challenges. Society is not static. Women’s expectations, for instance, have changed dramatically in recent decades. They are not merely demanding respectful behaviour but equal opportunities, participation, and leadership in every field. How the RSS accommodates and channels these aspirations will determine the depth of its relevance in the future.

Similarly, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, once marginalized in traditional structures, now see themselves as integral stakeholders in a rapidly modernizing India. With the spread of digital technology and education, their aspirations are shifting from mere inclusion to empowerment and leadership. For the Sangh, the task is to engage constructively with these communities in a manner that matches their evolving outlook.

The centenary of the RSS is an occasion to reflect on its greatest strength: its ability to endure and adapt. Organizations that rigidly

clung to dogmas often faded into irrelevance. The RSS, by contrast, has consistently demonstrated a mature flexibility without diluting its core ideals. It has weathered opposition, criticism, and even bans, yet has emerged stronger each time.

This resilience stems from its focus on grassroots work, its vast network of shakhas, and its philosophy of silent service. The RSS does not measure its impact in terms of headlines but in the everyday contributions of its swayamsevaks—whether in relief work during natural calamities, running educational initiatives in tribal areas, or quietly fostering national pride among youth.

The future of the RSS is inseparably linked with the future of Hindu society and, by extension, India itself. Hindu society, with its inherent dynamism, is undergoing rapid change. Matching the pace of this transformation requires not rigidity but openness, dialogue, and creativity. The Sangh has shown signs that it understands this necessity. Its engagement with issues of social equality and women’s empowerment is a step in the right direction.

As India steps into an era of global prominence, the role of the RSS will be closely watched. With its century-old foundation, vast network, and unmatched organizational experience, the Sangh has the capacity to shape not just the destiny of Hindu society but of the nation as a whole. Its challenge is to balance tradition with modernity, cultural rootedness with global openness, and unity with diversity.

## Appeal for financial assistance

Social Studies Foundation (SSF) is working with the prime objective of conducting social studies and research of the society in a multi-disciplinary fashion. SSF focus, however, is on those people, who have been facing discrimination and are deprived of benefits of the development and democratic process. SSF logo, thus says, “Knowledge for Empowerment”.

“UNHEARD VOICES” is a small step in this direction. It provides a platform to all those

people, who have to be listened to by the Indian citizens to make this country united and integral. We will raise the voice of these people fearlessly. Social Studies Foundation has currently a small set-up to carry out its objectives. We, however, need financial support from our well-wishers, who agree with our objectives. We appeal to the readers and well-wishers to donate generously to the foundation.

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## Do not ridicule ‘Quota’

**Beyond philosophy, the facts themselves break the prejudice. Take Government Law College (GLC) Mumbai, one of the country’s top institutions. This year, the cutoff for SC candidates was an impressive 97.7 percentile, almost the same as the open category’s 99.6. This destroys the stereotype. These marks are not “minimum requirements” but the result of hard work, sleepless nights, and determination against the odds. They are true merit, not inherited privilege but earned through struggle. To still dismiss such students as “quota” is not just cruel; it is dishonest. It denies their achievement and strips them of dignity.**

**Chandrashekhar**



Few words in the vocabulary of Indian campuses carry as much quiet weight as the word “quota.” On the surface, it appears to be a neutral reference to affirmative action in admissions in various institutes. Yet, when spoken as a label, it often carries an undertone that diminishes rather than acknowledges. For students from historically marginalized backgrounds, being called a “quota student” is not simply a description, it becomes a shadow that questions their belonging. It overlooks their hard work, their resilience, and the marks

they have earned, reducing them instead to a category shaped by centuries of exclusion.

To understand why this word, when used carelessly, can wound so deeply, we must return to the philosophy of Dr B.R. Ambedkar, a thinker who believed that education was not just about knowledge, but about dignity, equality, and the possibility of a more humane democracy. Dr Ambedkar’s faith in education was both intellectual and existential. Having himself fought against poverty, humiliation, and systemic barriers to become one of the



most educated Indians of his time. His life showed how learning could break chains. Deeply influenced by John Dewey at Columbia University, Dr Ambedkar absorbed the idea that education was not merely an instrument of personal advancement but the most powerful force for social transformation.

John Dewey had argued that democracy cannot survive unless the intelligence of the masses is educated to understand the social realities of their time. Dr Ambedkar extended this principle to Indian soil. For him, education was as essential as food, clothing, and shelter. He described it as the ladder of social mobility for the oppressed, but also as a door to modernization for the entire nation. His philosophy was a synthesis of Dewey's pragmatism and the ethical dharma of the Buddha. If Dewey saw education as a democratic necessity, Dr Ambedkar saw it as a form of liberation.

But Dr Ambedkar also knew that education in a deeply unequal society could not be pursued in isolation. Unless structural barriers were dismantled, education alone could not liberate the oppressed. That's why, he argued forcefully for "favoured treatment" for vulnerable groups. If society was composed of communities' unequal in status and progress, then to treat them "equally" in a mechanical sense was not justice but hypocrisy. "Equality of treatment to people who are unequal," Dr Ambedkar declared, "is simply another name for neglect." On the basis of this further Mandal in later times submitted his report for OBCs using this base and declared: THERE IS EQUALITY ONLY AMONG EQUALS. TO EQUATE UNEQUALS IS TO PERPETUATE INEQUALITY.

But even after seventy years of independence, his warning is still ignored. On Indian campuses today, students admitted through reserved categories are still mocked as "quota students." The insult is not about admission alone; it is about identity. It wounds by reducing a person to a policy, denying their individuality, their effort, and their achievement.

As Michel Foucault have shown, language is not a neutral medium. Words have power; they do not merely reflect reality but also create it. The word "quota," when uttered as an insult, reproduces caste hierarchies within the very institutions meant to dismantle them. It denies fraternity, takes away equality, and reduces the student to a symbol of undeserved privilege rather than a human being of infinite worth.

Kant said that every human being must be

treated as an end in themselves, never just as a means to something else. When a student is stigmatized for their admission category, they are reduced to a number in political calculations instead of being seen as a person with dignity and potential. Dr Ambedkar, deeply influenced by Kant during his study of Western philosophy, turned this idea into



what he called "constitutional morality." For him, liberty, equality, and fraternity were not distant ideals but the living core of democracy. To mock marginalized students is not only cruel, it is a betrayal of the Republic itself, because it weakens the principle of fraternity.

The insult of "quota" draws its strength from a deeper myth: the myth of "merit." Those who wield the word assume that merit



is a natural, neutral measure of excellence, and that reservations undermine it. But philosophers of education have long argued that merit is not a raw, independent quality, it is a social construct which means individual cannot achieve merit in isolation merit is built by interaction of individual and very society in which he/she grown up.

No student begins life at the same starting line. A child of privilege, educated in English-medium schools, raised in resource-rich households with access to books, tuition, and stability, competes with a first-generation learner from a historically oppressed caste, struggling under the burdens of poverty and stigma. To pretend they run the same race is to mask privilege as excellence. Nietzsche's warning becomes relevant here: societies often disguise inherited advantage (Famously known as cultural capital) under the rhetoric of "Excellence." If anything, true merit lies not in scores but in resilience. It lies in the ability to study under scarcity, and still perform well. A Dalit student, who manages to shine despite systemic barriers embodies a deeper, more profound kind of merit than one who coasts on privilege. To reduce such a student to "quota" is not only false; it is indecent and false. The impact of such stigma is not just theoretical; it strikes at a person's sense of self. As Axel Honneth's theory of recognition explains, dignity depends not only on rights and laws but also on social respect. Constantly being mocked as a "quota" student creates deep wounds, breaking self-confidence and making individuals doubt their own potential by internalizing those labels. Similarly, Charles Taylor has argued that identity is dialogical; We shape our identities through our interactions with others. If peers and professors keep labelling SC students as "quota students," that contempt seeps into their lived identity. It breaks their sense of self and turns into a quiet but deeply harmful form of injustice. This is why the insult of "quota" is not merely a private matter but a public one. It shapes the consciousness of students, determines their participation in democracy, and undermines the very values the Constitution seeks to protect.

Beyond philosophy, the facts themselves break the prejudice. Take Government Law College (GLC) Mumbai, one of the country's top institutions. This year, the cutoff for SC candidates was an impressive 97.7 percentile, almost the same as the open category's 99.6. This destroys the stereotype. These marks are not "minimum requirements" but the

result of hard work, sleepless nights, and determination against the odds. They are true merit, not inherited privilege but earned through struggle. To still dismiss such students as "quota" is not just cruel; it is dishonest. It denies their achievement and strips them of dignity.

Dr Ambedkar was clear that liberty cannot survive without equality, and equality cannot endure without fraternity. The insult of "quota" is, above all, an assault on fraternity. It divides students into categories of the deserving and the undeserving, poisoning the very spirit of collective learning. And when fraternity is broken, liberty and equality both become fragile. To ridicule the oppressed is easy; to affirm their dignity is difficult. Yet this is the true test of a civilization. A society that mocks its most resilient children, those who rise against the weight of history, those who fight not only for themselves but for their community fails the test of humanity.

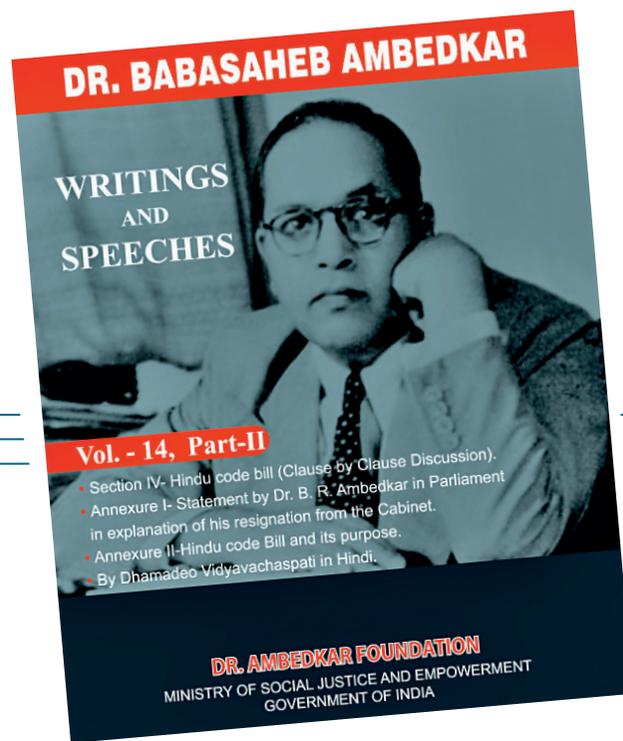
Dr Ambedkar's message still rings true: "Cultivation of mind should be the ultimate aim of human existence." When minds are nurtured in an environment of respect, dignity, and equality, they bloom with creativity, wisdom, and courage. A democracy that cherishes and

affirms the worth of all its people, especially the marginalized, grows stronger, more just, and more humane. In such a society, every individual has the opportunity to rise, contribute, and fulfil their true potential, and the nation as a whole thrives. The real debate, then, is not about reservation alone. It is about what kind of society India

aspires to be. Do we wish to cling to the illusion of "merit" that masks privilege, or do we wish to embrace a vision of education that uplifts, dignifies, and humanizes? Do we wish to use words as weapons of exclusion, or as bridges of fraternity? The answer will determine not only the fate of marginalized students but the fate of Indian democracy itself. For as Dr Ambedkar warned, political democracy cannot survive without social democracy. And social democracy rests upon the recognition that liberty, equality, and

Fraternities are not negotiable luxuries; they are the breath of justice. To affirm the dignity of every student, to see their humanity beyond labels, to measure their merit not by privilege but by resilience this is not charity. It is civilization itself.

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## Why did Dr Ambedkar resign from Nehru cabinet?

Seventy-four years ago – October 10, 1951 – Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar resigned from the Nehru cabinet citing some reasons. These reasons were not related to power politics but because of sharp ideological differences in addition to the style of functioning of Congress government and its general attitude. Dr Ambedkar's resignation letter, which he read out in the Parliament, throws light on several aspects of his resignation. While his entire letter is worth reading, here we publish the verbatim part of Hindu Code Bill for which Dr Ambedkar insisted.



I will now deal with a matter which has led me finally to come to the decision that I should resign. It is the treatment which was accorded to the Hindu Code. The Bill was introduced in this House on the 11th April 1947. After a life of four years, it was killed and died unwept and unsung, after 4 clauses of it were passed. While it was before the House, it lived by fits and starts. For one full year the Government did not feel it necessary to refer it to a Select Committee. It was referred to the Select Committee on 9th April 1948. The Report was presented to the House on 12th August 1948. The motion for the consideration of the Report was made by me on 31st August 1948.

It was merely for making the motion that the Bill was kept on the agenda. The discussion of the motion was not allowed to take place until the February Session of the year 1949. Even then it was not allowed to have a continuous discussion. It was distributed over 10 months, 4 days in February, 1 day in March and 2 days in April 1949. After this, one day was given to the Bill in December 1949, namely the 19th December on which day the House adopted my motion that the Bill as reported by the Select Committee be taken into consideration. No time was given to the Bill in the year 1950. Next time the Bill came before the House was on 5th February 1951 when the clause-by-



clause consideration of the Bill was taken. Only three days 5th, 6th and 7th of February were given to the Bill and left there to rot.

This being the last Session of the present Parliament, the Cabinet had to consider whether the Hindu Code Bill should be got through before this Parliament ended or whether it should be left over to the new Parliament. The Cabinet unanimously decided that it should be put through in this Parliament. So, the Bill was put on the Agenda and was taken up on the 17th September 1951 for further clause by clause consideration. As the discussion was going on the Prime Minister put forth a new proposal, namely, that the Bill as a whole may not be got through within the time available and that it was desirable to get a part of it enacted into law rather than allow the whole of it to go to waste. It was a great wrench to me.

But I agreed, for, as the proverb says “it is better to save a part when the whole is likely to be lost”. The Prime Minister suggested that we should select the Marriage and Divorce part. The Bill in its truncated Form went on. After two or three days of discussion of the Bill the Prime Minister came up with another proposal. This time his proposal was to drop the whole Bill even the Marriage and Divorce portion. This came to me as a great shock—a bolt from the blue. I was stunned and could not say anything. I am not prepared to accept that the dropping of this truncated Bill was due to want of time. I am sure that the truncated Bill was dropped because other and more powerful members of the Cabinet wanted precedence for their Bills. I am unable to understand how the Binara’s and Aligarh University Bills, how the Press Bill could have been given precedence over the Hindu Code even in its attenuated form? It is not that there was no law on the Statute Book to govern the Aligarh University or the Banaras University. It is not that these Universities would have gone to wreck and ruins if the Bills had not been passed in this session. It is not that the Press Bill was urgent. There is already a law on the Statute Book and the Bill could have waited. I got the impression that the Prime Minister, although sincere, had not the earnestness and determination required to get the Hindu Code Bill through.

In regard to this Bill, I have been made to go through the greatest mental torture. The aid of Party Machinery was denied to me. The Prime Minister gave freedom of Vote, an unusual thing in the history of the Party. I did not mind it. But I expected two things. I expected a party whip as to time limit on speeches and

instruction to the Chief Whip to move closure when sufficient debate had taken place. A whip on time limit on speeches would have got the Bill through. When freedom of voting was given, there could have been no objection to have given a whip for time limit on speeches. But such a whip was never issued. The conduct of the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, who is also the Chief Whip of the Party in connection with the Hindu Code, to say the least, has been most extraordinary. He has been the deadliest opponent of the Code and has never been present to aid me by moving a closure motion. For days and hours filibustering has gone on a single clause. But the Chief Whip, whose duty it is to economise Government time and push on Government Business, has been systematically absent when the Hindu Code has been under consideration in the House. I have never seen a case of a Chief Whip so disloyal to the Prime Minister and a Prime Minister so loyal to a disloyal Whip.

Notwithstanding this unconstitutional behaviour, the Chief Whip is really a darling of the Prime Minister. For notwithstanding his disloyalty, he got a promotion in the Party organization. It is impossible to carry on in such circumstances. It has been said that the Bill had to be dropped because the opposition was strong. How strong was the opposition? This Bill has been discussed several times in the Party and was carried to division by the opponents. Every time the opponents were routed. The last time when the Bill was taken up in the Party Meeting, out of 120 only 20 were found to be against it. When the Bill was taken in the Party for discussion, 44 clauses were passed in about 3½ hours’ time. This shows how much opposition there was to the Bill within the Party.

In the House itself there have been divisions on three clauses of the Bill—2, 3 and 4. Every time there has been an overwhelming majority in favour even on clause 4 which is the soul of the Hindu Code. I was therefore, quite unable to accept the Prime Minister’s decision to abandon the Bill on the ground of time. I have been obliged to give this elaborate explanation for my resignation because some people have suggested that I am going because of my illness. I wish to repudiate any such suggestion. I am the last man to abandon my duty because of illness.

It may be said that my resignation is out of time and that if I was dissatisfied with the Foreign Policy of the Government and the treatment accorded to Backward Classes and the Scheduled Castes should have gone



earlier. The charge may sound as true. But I had reasons which held me back. In the first place, most of the time I have been a member of the Cabinet, I have been busy with the framing of the Constitution. It absorbed all my attention till 26th January 1950 and thereafter I was concerned with the Peoples' Representation Bill and the Delimitation Orders. I had hardly any time to attend to our Foreign Affairs. I did not think it right to go away leaving this work unfinished.

**AMBEDKAR  
RESIGNS**

**REGRETS LAPSE  
OF BILL**

(From Our Correspondent)

**NEW DELHI, Sept. 25: Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who has been piloting the Hindu Code Bill in Parliament, has resigned his post as Law Minister to the Union Government, reliable sources said here today**

**The letter of resignation, possibly regretting the lapsing of the Hindu Code Bill, was sent to Mr. Nehru in the morning, soon after Parliament finally dropped the debate on it, after adopting Clause four.**

In the second place, I thought it necessary to stay on, for the sake of the Hindu Code. In the opinion of some it may be wrong for me to have held on for the sake of the Hindu Code. I took a different view. The Hindu Code was the greatest social reform measure ever undertaken by the Legislature in this country. No law passed by the Indian Legislature in the past or likely to be passed in the future can be compared to it in point of its significance.

To leave inequality between class and class, between sex and sex which is the soul of Hindu Society untouched and to go on passing legislation relating to economic problems is to make a farce of our Constitution and to build a palace on a dung heap. This is the significance I attached to the Hindu Code. It is for its sake that I stayed on notwithstanding my differences. So, if I have committed a wrong it is in the hope of doing some good. Had I no ground for such a hope, for overcoming the obstructionist tactics of the opponents? I would like in this connection to refer only to three of the statements made by the Prime

Minister on the floor of the House.

On 28th November, 1949 the Prime Minister gave the following assurance. He said: "What is more, the Government is committed to this thing (Hindu Code). It is going through with it. Government would proceed with that. It is for this House to accept a measure, but if a government takes an important measure and the House rejects it; the House rejects that Government and the Government goes and another Government comes in its place. It should be clearly understood that this is one of the important measures to which the Government attaches importance and on which it will stand or fall."

Again, on 19th December 1949, the Prime Minister said: "I do not wish the House to think in the slightest degree that we consider that this Hindu Code Bill is not of importance, because we do attach the greatest importance to it, as I said, not because of any particular clause or anything, but because of the basic approach to this vast problem in problems, economic and social. We have achieved political freedom in this country, political independence. That is a stage in the journey, and there are other stages, economic, social and other and if society is to advance, there must be this integrated advance on all fronts."

On the 26th September 1951 the Prime Minister said: "It is not necessary for me to assure the House of the desire of Government to proceed with this measure in so far as we can proceed with it within possibilities, and so far, as we are concerned, we consider this matter as adjourned till such time as the next opportunity—I hope it will be in this Parliament—offers itself.

This was after the Prime Minister had announced the dropping of the Bill. Who could not have believed in these pronouncements of the Prime Minister? If I did not think that there could be a difference between the promises and performances of the Prime Minister the fault is certainly not mine. My exit from the Cabinet may not be a matter of much concern to anybody in this country. But I must be true to myself and that I can be only by going out. Before I do so I wish to thank my colleagues for the kindness and courtesy they have shown to me during my membership of the Cabinet. While I am not resigning my membership of Parliament, I also wish to express my gratitude to Members of Parliament for having shown great tolerance towards me.

*New Delhi, 10th October 1951*  
**Dr B. R. AMBEDKAR**  
*uv@unheardvoices.co.in*



## Dr Ambedkar's concern for national interest

Munish Kumar



**The greatness of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar as a visionary leader can be gauged from the fact that he had refused to write Article 370 of the Constitution of India. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru asked Sheikh Abdullah to convince Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar to include Article 370 in the Constitution. However, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's firm reply to Sheikh Abdullah was, since the Government of India would be constructing roads, opening schools and undertaking other development projects in Kashmir, giving special status to Kashmir would not be beneficial to the national interest. Later on, under pressure from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, an unwilling Gopal Ayyangar penned the Article 370.**

Since Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar made recommendations on a variety of topics to protect the national interests, projecting him merely as a Dalit reformer and maker of the Constitution of India lowers the standard of the great visionary and undervalues his work, writes Munish Tripathi...

Bharatratna Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar was not merely a Dalit reformer, or a chief maker of the Constitution of India. He was a statesman, multi-faceted politician, economist, journalist, commentator on religions and much more. He had pursued his higher education at three premier universities of the world - the Columbia University, the London University and the Bonne University of Germany. He had obtained his doctorate in Economics, specialising in the topics 'Welfare Economy For the Poor, Crisis of the Rupee and Its Solutions'. He always strived to put to use his brilliance and intellectual abilities for uplifting the society and the nation.



Knowledge of his life and achievements is essential to maintain social and national unity in the present times. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar had deep rooted differences with Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress. While Mahatma Gandhi was a staunch supporter of the system that was based on the hierarchy of the Varnas prevailing in the Hindu society, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar believed that the system based on the hierarchy of the Varnas was the main reason for evolution of the caste system. He used to blame the Congress for being inactive and not making any honest efforts for eradication of untouchability. To support this view, he would cite how the Congress made Swami Shraddhanand helpless. He would point out that Swami Shraddhanand was appointed as the Convenor of its committee to eradicate



untouchability in 1922. However, no funding provision was made to facilitate the work he was supposed to do. Not extended to him. As a result, Swami Shraddhanand was forced to resign from the post with a heavy heart.

Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar was also a staunch critic of the Islamic fundamentalism. He had strongly opposed the decision to link the issue of Caliphate with the non-cooperation agitation for the independence of the country. He also opposed tooth and nail the recommendation of the Nehru Commission's report 1929, formed following the Lucknow Congress of 1916 and consequent accord with the Muslim League and the Simon Commission, to provide reservation for the Muslim community. He emphasized that the decision was against the interest of the nation, and especially against the interests of the Dalits. On 19th January, 1929, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar wrote in his newspaper Bahishkrut Bharat, "What is the use of a scheme that harms the interest of Hindus? We do not oppose this report not because it strips the untouchables of their rights, but because it poses a threat to

the Hindus and the entire Hindustan may face threat in future due to it."

Voicing his concern over increasing numbers of Muslims in the then existing Royal Indian Army, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar did not mince words while sounding alert that it would pose a threat to national security. He recommended exchange of Hindu and Muslim population at the time of the partition to resolve the issue of communal conflict in India permanently. When the Muslim League was included in the interim government of India in 1946, he reacted while terming the government as 'Government of Two Nations'.

For a long time, the communists have been using false interpretations of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's thoughts to spread all types of anti-national narratives and to create chaos and confusion. Therefore, it is essential for the society and the country to know what thoughts on the communists Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar had written and said 'Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar: Life and Mission' authored by noted biographer-historian Dhananjay Keer is considered the most authentic book written on Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar so far. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar himself had appreciated the book saying it was as good as his autobiography. The book quotes Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar as saying, "Dalit community should maintain distance from the communists and avoid participating in strikes called by them. The Dalits should not follow the communists because it would affect the Dalits themselves."

In his speech on the topic 'Buddha or Karl Marx', delivered at Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal on November 20th, 1956, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar said, "The communist do not recognise religion although it is impossible for human beings to live life without religion. They aspire to establish a welfare state through violence and believe that rule through force and bloody violence is appropriate. However, a state better than the welfare state envisaged by the communists can be formed with the help of the principles of Buddha religion such as non-violence, equality and self-restraint. How can a rule imposed by force and the slaying of human beings be justified?"

In his book, Dhananjay Keer reveals that when Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar went on a tour of Pune on 21st May, 1932, a saffron flag on which Om was marked was unfurled on his vehicle. In a similar incident that took place at Mumbai on 3rd July, 1947, when Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar reached airport, some workers of the Hindu Mahasabha went to meet him and demanded that being a **(Continued on 15)**



# DOUBLE DANGER : Intersection of Gender and Caste

**In India, the intersection of caste and gender creates profound challenges for Dalit women, who face double discrimination. This article explores how these overlapping identities amplify inequality, impacting education, employment, and social inclusion, demanding urgent, intersectional solutions.**

**Shravani**



In India, caste has long shaped social hierarchies, deciding who holds power and who does not. But when caste discrimination combines with gender, the result is a deeper level of unfair treatment especially for women from lower castes.

This overlap creates unique challenges that can't be understood by looking at caste or gender alone. This idea is explained by a concept called intersectionality. It was introduced by a legal expert and civil rights activist, Kimberle Crenshaw. Intersectionality helps us to understand how different forms of inequality like caste and gender don't exist separately. Instead, they work together and make discrimination worse. For example, women from marginalized castes already face

social exclusion, lack of access to resources, and limited freedom to move or make choices. On top of that, being a woman adds another layer of struggle. This is often called double discrimination because they are judged and held back for both their caste and their gender.

This double burden leads to fewer opportunities, more violence, and higher chances of being ignored or mistreated. That's why it's so important to look at how different forms of discrimination combine. It helps us better understand the real challenges that marginalized women face and how to work toward a more equal society.

Double discrimination is not only material but also intellectual. In India, it is not simply "gender + caste" or "gender + religion," but a



structural entanglement where

caste dictates the parameters of womanhood, and gender reinforces caste boundaries. As Anupama Rao puts it, humiliation and violence directed at Dalit women are not incidental but central to the functioning of caste society. Philosopher Miranda Fricker refers to this as epistemic injustice when someone is disbelieved or ignored because of prejudice, Dalit women experience this doubly: as women in a patriarchal society and as Dalit in a caste-based society. They face discrimination across multiple domains, including education, employment, healthcare, and more.

In today's world, education is one of the most important tools for empowerment and should be accessible to everyone without discrimination. Unfortunately, this is not the reality. Marginalized women, particularly Dalit women, have reduced access to quality education and skill-building opportunities. According to recent NFHS data, only 66% of Scheduled Caste (SC) women are literate, reflecting the limitations in educational access and resources. Education has always been a contested space for marginalized women. While government scholarships and reservation policies have improved access, dropout rates among Dalit girls remain high largely due to economic hardship, early marriage, and discrimination within educational institutions.

Historian and feminist scholar Shailaja Paik demonstrates how Dalit women's pursuit of education often brought both empowerment and stigma, as society questioned their morality and respectability. In this way, education itself becomes a site where double discrimination is both challenged and reproduced.

Another critical area of concern is employment and wages. Dalit women often face significant barriers in the labour market, being predominantly employed in informal, low-paying, and insecure jobs. Their access to stable employment is limited due to multiple factors, including high transaction costs and pervasive discrimination particularly in the private sector. In urban areas, many Dalit women work as domestic labourers, where abuse is widespread and legal protections are minimal.

However, these challenges are not limited to cities. In rural areas, Dalit women working as agricultural labourers are often paid less than their male counterparts. There has always been a strong interconnection between education and employment, both of which significantly influence an individual's economic status. As educational attainment continues to be a key

driver of labour market outcomes, lower-caste women face compounded disadvantages due to limited access to quality education. These disparities in human capital not only hinder their economic mobility but also reinforce cycles of poverty and social inequality.

The lower-caste women have faced a lot of issues due to oppression, social hierarchies, patriarchy and some cultural factors as well. These issues include limited representation in mainstream discourse, higher unmet needs, limited healthcare access, social exclusion affecting personal and professional spheres and violence which leads to depression or other mental health issues and also affects their ability to participate in public discourse, get justice, and even form a coherent sense of self.

Addressing the structural oppression faced by Dalit women requires more than isolated measures—it calls for comprehensive policy and legal reforms that are both intersectional and inclusive. While affirmative action policies like reservations in education and employment have opened some doors, they often fail to account for the compounded disadvantages of caste and gender. Policies must be strengthened to specifically address the needs of Dalit women, ensuring their equitable access to quality education, dignified employment, and safe public spaces. Institutions such as schools, colleges, and workplaces must be made accountable through the implementation of anti-caste discrimination cells and gender sensitization programs.

Additionally, reforms in land rights and access to credit are crucial, particularly for rural Dalit women who are often excluded from economic decision-making. The state must also enforce laws like the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act more effectively, ensuring timely justice and protection for Dalit women. True empowerment requires policies that not only protect rights on paper but also transform systems of exclusion on the ground.

There are many literary works which give you great insights on this topic. Works such as Baby Kamble's, 'The Prisons We Broke' (1986), Bama's Karukku (1992), and Urmila Pawar's, 'The Weave of My Life' (2008) offer not just testimonies of suffering but also narratives of resilience and defiance. Sharmila Rege, one of India's most influential feminist thinkers, put it bluntly: "Dalit women talk differently." By this she meant that the experiences of Dalit women cannot be neatly captured by mainstream feminism. Dalit women live at the intersection of caste humiliation and patriarchal violence, and therefore speak from a unique standpoint.



To create a more just and inclusive society for Dalit women, it is essential to amplify their voices across cultural, academic, and digital spaces. Social media, literature, cinema, and other cultural productions play a powerful role in challenging dominant narratives and bringing visibility to the lived realities of Dalit women. By focusing on their stories and perspectives, we can raise public awareness about the deeply embedded caste and gender inequalities that shape their everyday experiences. This visibility, however, must translate into action. Multidimensional strategies are needed ones that include inclusive policy reforms, meaningful representation in decision-making spaces, and structural changes in education, employment, and healthcare. Strengthening public healthcare and ensuring equitable access to basic services are critical, as Dalit women often face multiple barriers in accessing even their most

fundamental rights. Importantly, economic growth alone cannot dismantle deeply rooted caste and gender biases. Sustainable change requires a transformation in societal attitudes through education, community engagement, and media representation that challenge discrimination and promote equity. Real progress will come only when Dalit women are not just included but empowered to resist, and redefine systems of power and privilege and to do so Dr. Ambedkar's words should remain our compass: "Caste is a disease of the mind. And women are the worst sufferers of this disease. You cannot build a nation without liberating its women. You cannot liberate women without destroying caste."

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## Dr Ambedkar's concern for national interest

**(Continued from 12)**

member of the Flag Committee, he declares the saffron flag to be the national flag of India. He assured all possible cooperation if a proposal is tabled. However, resolution to the effect could not be passed due to lack of cooperation from other members of the committee.

Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar was well aware of the limitations of Sanskrit language. He had tabled a proposal to make Sanskrit official language through the member from Bengal Nazaruddin Ahmed on 13th November, 1949 and had himself become the proposer to it. He himself had learned to converse in Sanskrit. He had been seen conversing with Laxmikant Maitre in Sanskrit at the Constituent Assembly House and many newspapers including the Leader, Daily Aaj, Hindustan, Herald had published reports about it. Sanskrit could not be made official language as the number of votes polled in favour of and against the resolution was the same and the president did not cast his deciding vote.

The communists caused a lot of confusion and chaos by propagating a narrative concerning the false theory of arrival and invasion by the Aryas, thereby spreading inferiority complex and hate among various cross sections of the society. They succeeded in achieving their intended result to an extent. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar, in his book 'Who Were Shudras', proved that Aryas were original residents of India and the Shudras were

also Arya by using the references of descriptions from the Vedas and Anthropometry (systematic collection and correlation of measurements of the human body).

The greatness of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar as a visionary leader can be gauged from the fact that he had refused to write Article 370 of the Constitution of India. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru asked Sheikh Abdullah to convince Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar to include Article 370 in the Constitution. However, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's firm reply to Sheikh Abdullah was, since the Government of India would be constructing roads, opening schools and undertaking other development projects in Kashmir, giving special status to Kashmir would not be beneficial to the national interest. Later on, under pressure from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, an unwilling Gopal Aiyangar penned the Article 370.

Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar came forward with his well-founded opinions aimed at protecting the national interest on a wide range of topics including agriculture, irrigation, formation of states or foreign affairs. Therefore, projecting Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar merely as a Dalit reformer and maker of the Constitution of India lowers the standard of the great visionary and undervalues his work.

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**Karnataka's move could set a national precedent. Experts argue that the combination of field data, constitutional backing, and institutional safeguards makes it one of the most robust attempts at equitable distribution of the benefits of affirmative action policies for different Scheduled Castes. However, the policy may face judicial scrutiny, particularly on whether the three categories adequately capture the nuanced differences highlighted in the survey.**

## **Karnataka's Landmark Step: Internal Reservation for Scheduled Castes**

**Dr. C.R.Mahesha**



**I**n a major policy shift, the Karnataka government has introduced internal reservations within the 17% of the Scheduled Castes (SCs) community's quota, seeking to address long-standing disparities in the distribution of benefits. It is widely regarded as one of the most significant affirmative reforms in the state's history. It may be pertinent to note that the State of Karnataka i.e., the erstwhile State of Mysore was one of the few princely states, which had adopted affirmative policies for the emancipation of weaker sections of the society much before India's independence and integration of the state with the Union of India.

This significant reform has been made to meet the long-standing demands of certain castes in the Schedule, which



have been claiming for sub-quota within the quota on the ground of inter se inequalities among various Scheduled Castes. Their claim is that all the castes in the Schedule have never been a homogeneous group. While some sub-castes made significant progress, others claimed to have marginalized. This created resentment, particularly as better-off groups cornered jobs and college seats reserved for the entire Scheduled Castes.

#### **Earlier attempts at sub-classification**

In India, some of the States had taken lead in initiating the reforms in reservation policies for addressing inter se inequality among the Scheduled Castes. In the united Andhra Pradesh, the conflict between Malas and Madigas sparked a major social movement

Further, while Das's original recommendation grouped SC communities into five categories with distinct quota allocations viz., left – 6%, right – 5%, 'touchables' – 4%, nomadic groups – 1%, and others – 1%, the state cabinet, has afforested, simplified the classifications into three categories. This deviates from Das's five-group structure, leading to concerns that his nuanced approach was diluted.

demanding for sub-categorization. The State of Andhra Pradesh had yielded to it and made sub-classifications of Scheduled Castes but the Supreme Court, in *E.V. Chinnaiah v. State of Andhra Pradesh* (2004), struck down the sub-classification on the ground that the States cannot sub-classify Castes included in the Schedule by the President of India. Relying on the said judgment, similar sub-classifications made in other states like Tamil Nadu, Punjab etc., have also been challenged before the Supreme Court in subsequent cases.

In Karnataka, the first ever attempt came with the appointment of A.J. Sadashiva Commission, which examined inequalities within the SCs category. It recommended dividing the 15% SC quota into four groups: 6% for SC Left (Madigas and others), 5% for SC Right (Holeyas and others), 3% for Bhovi, Lambani, Koracha, Korama, 1% for other groups. The proposal, however, was

never implemented due to lack of updated socio-economic data and political resistance. The decision of the Supreme Court in *E.V. Chinnaiah* also came in the way. It was, in fact, the major obstacle in bringing about reforms for addressing the issue of inter se inequalities among the SCs. The turning point came on August 1, 2024, when a seven-judge bench of the Supreme Court, in *State of Punjab v. Davinder Singh*, overturned the *E.V. Chinnaiah* ruling that that states can create sub-classifications among SCs and STs provided it is based on empirical household data.

#### **The Push for Fresh Data**

It is pertinent to note that in Karnataka in 2022–23, the BJP government under Basavaraj Bommai, while increasing the SC quota from 15% to 17%, had proposed a four-way split of SCs. But some of the communities protested and the move was stalled. The judgment in *Davinder Singh* gave Karnataka the legal backing that was needed, as it upheld the power of the State to sub-classify SCs based on the empirical data to prove inter se inequalities. The Congress government led by Siddaramaiah acted swiftly and appointed Justice H.N. Nagamohan Das Commission to conduct a comprehensive castes survey.

Between May 5 and July 6, 2025, enumerators visited 27.24 lakh households, covering 1.07 crore SC individuals to assess: (i) Social backwardness, (ii) Educational backwardness, (iii) Representation in government jobs of different castes. The findings revealed sharp inequalities. Many nomadic and artisan castes were under-represented, while certain larger groups, particularly touchable communities included in the Schedule, continued to dominate government jobs and higher education. The most deprived sub-castes are significantly trailing behind in almost every educational and employment indicator. Some of these castes remain completely excluded from state structures and opportunities, despite decades of affirmative action. They were deprived representation even in Panchayat structures, let alone any other level. These communities have experience greater social stigma and social exclusion even to date.

#### **Recommendations of the Nagamohan Das Commission and its implementation**

Justice Nagamohan Das submitted a detailed report of 1,766-pages with all the relevant data that established the inter se inequalities among the SCs. The report recommended a five-way split of the 17% SCs



## Increasing the Reservation of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe in Karnataka

### Justice H.N. Nagamohandas Commission

quota to ensure fair representation to all the castes. However, after number of deliberations, the Cabinet decided to simplify the structure to three categories for administrative ease and faster implementation: 6% for Group – A - consisting of 16 castes including Madigas, another 6% for Group - B - consisting of 19 castes including Holeyas, and the remaining 5% for the Group C - consisting of Bhovis, Lambanis, Korachas, Koramas, and 59 other smaller nomadic castes. The Government Order issued in August 2025 made paved the way to clear stalled recruitments and college admissions to resume under the new distribution.

#### **Political Reactions and Community Responses**

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah described the move as a “historic correction of social injustice.” The government also announced the creation of a Permanent SC Commission to monitor progress, audit the data, and recommend updates. The opposition parties, however, accused the government of “repackaging” earlier proposals. Several members staged a walkout during the Assembly discussions demanding a longer and larger debate. Despite many groups welcomed the decision, representatives of the 59 nomadic SC communities expressed dissatisfaction. They argue that compressing five categories into three overlooked their specific disadvantages. Petitions challenging the order are expected to reach the courts soon.

#### **Why Does It Matter?**

Karnataka’s move could set a national

precedent. Experts argue that the combination of field data, constitutional backing, and institutional safeguards made it one of the most robust attempts at equitable distribution of the benefits of affirmative actions for different Scheduled Castes. However, the policy may face judicial scrutiny, particularly on whether the three categories adequately capture the nuanced differences highlighted in the survey.

For now, Karnataka’s 6-6-5 formula marks a new phase in the state’s social justice framework. Whether it can become a model for the rest of India depends on various factors. One has to wait and see whether it stands judicial scrutiny in the first place, given the Supreme Court’s insistence that it has the power to review sub-classifications to see whether the classification is reasonable and is based on verifiable empirical data. But it is certainly a move that can probably address the issues relating to inter se inequalities among the SCs in education, employment and political representation.

#### **Some Concerns**

Though it has the potential to ensure equitable distribution of benefits of affirmative action policies to different castes in the Schedule, there are serious concerns. One major concern is the possibility of benefit duplication. Approximately 4.75 lakh individuals from sub-castes such as Adi Andhra, Adi Dravida, and Adi Karnataka could claim reservations under multiple groups leading to overlaps, misuse and encroachment. Despite a large-scale survey (May–July 2025) covering over 1 crore



individuals, urban non-responsiveness and awareness gaps hindered its completeness. Justice Das acknowledged difficulties, noting some respondents were unaware of their sub-caste or hesitant to reveal their original caste on account of stigma.

Further, while Das's original recommendation grouped SC communities into five categories with distinct quota allocations viz., left – 6%, right – 5%, 'touchables' – 4%, nomadic groups – 1%, and others – 1%, the state cabinet, has afforested, simplified the classifications into three categories. This deviates from Das's five-group structure, leading to concerns that his nuanced approach was diluted.

Between May 5 and July 6, 2025, enumerators visited 27.24 lakh households, covering 1.07 crore SC individuals to assess: (i) Social backwardness, (ii) Educational backwardness, (iii) Representation in government jobs of different castes. The findings revealed sharp inequalities. Many nomadic and artisan castes were under-represented, while certain larger groups, particularly touchable communities included in the Schedule, continued to dominate government jobs and higher education.

Critics, including the BJP, accused the government of modifying the report for political ends—merging groups in a way that disregards socio-economic backwardness of the nomadic groups. They claimed it is 'directionless and meaningless', and BJP state VP highlighted that the perceived inequalities of certain castes have been made the basis for their inclusion into different groups even though they have been advanced and progressed. He demanded a revised report to address this disparity. Further, nomadic Scheduled Castes (SCs) communities have historically been among the most marginalized groups in India, often lacking permanent settlements and official documentation, which severely restricted their access to welfare benefits and inclusion in government opportunities. Many of these communities were once criminalized under colonial-era

laws like the Criminal Tribes Act, and despite formal inclusion in the SC category, they continue to face deep-rooted social stigma and administrative invisibility. The Justice H.N. Nagamohan Das Committee recognized this structural and historical marginalization and recommended internal reservation as a corrective measure—specifically proposing a dedicated 1% reservation for nomadic SC groups. However, by placing these communities within a broader category such as Category C alongside relatively less backward groups, the government has effectively diluted the intent of the report. It sacrificed nuanced justice and marginalized the most vulnerable SC subgroups. The original five-group model offered a more equitable approach by recognizing varying levels of disadvantage.

Nomadic SC leaders have actively demanded that 1% quota be honoured in full, and some have indicated their intent to seek judicial intervention. This resistance reflects a broader constitutional concern: as sub-classification within SCs is constitutionally permitted to ensure equity, disregarding the committee's recommendations. This could amount to a violation of the Supreme Court's guidelines in the Davinder Singh (2024) judgment. Experts and analysts have criticized the government's three-category compromise formula as politically expedient rather than rooted in social justice, arguing it betrays the nuanced understanding of backwardness presented by the committee. As one social justice analyst noted, "It would have been a fitting tribute to the Constitution if the government had implemented the recommendations in toto." Departing from the proposed structure undermines the foundational goals of equity, representation, and recognition for the most neglected sections—particularly the nomadic and denotified tribes.

In essence, while the Das Commission aimed to bring a data-driven, equitable sub-categorization within SCs, these issues around data integrity, modification of groupings, administrative delays, and political criticism cast a shadow over its implementation. Perhaps the time only will reveal its strengths and weaknesses and further reforms may be warranted in times to come.

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# Judicial Oligarchy & Myth of Merit

Jay Bharat



The recent introduction of reservation for non-judicial staff in the Supreme Court is appreciated but is not enough. It is progress, but only at the very margins. The heart of the judiciary—the bench itself remains untouched. To continue like this is to turn democracy into a hollow ritual where the majority are judged by the few. It is time to pierce the myth of merit and confront the hypocrisy at the core of India’s judicial system.

The Indian judiciary likes to see itself as the guardian of democracy. Yet, when it comes to its own house, it remains the last untouched fortress of privilege. While Parliament, public services, and even universities have—however unevenly—opened doors for Dalits, Adivasis, OBCs, minorities, and women through reservation, the higher judiciary has entrenched itself in an architecture of exclusion. It is the one institution that preaches equality while systematically refusing to practise it.

### Persistent Exclusion, Shrouded in Opacity

Let us be clear: the numbers are damning. Less than 23% of judges appointed to High Courts since 2018 come from SC, ST, OBC, minority, or women backgrounds, even though these groups constitute well over 80% of India’s population. At the Supreme Court, the diversity deficit is even sharper: caste-disaggregated data is not officially maintained, making opacity itself a mechanism of privilege. What little we know comes from civil society monitoring and independent reporting. That the judiciary does not even bother to collect and publish caste-based data on its own composition speaks volumes about its resistance to accountability. This is not an accident. It is a direct outcome of the collegium system—a closed circle

where sitting judges appoint the next crop, reproducing themselves in the image of so-called “upper-caste”, male privilege. Appeals for reform have been dismissed for decades under the lofty pretext of “independence of the judiciary.” But independence cannot mean immunity from the democratic principle of representation.

### Merit as Myth, Justice as Hierarchy

The rhetorical shield against reservation is always the same: “merit.” Yet, as sociologists like Pierre Bourdieu, Satish Deshpande have shown, merit in India has long been a caste-marked privilege and not a neutral measure of ability or talent. Access to elite schools, English-medium education, coaching classes, and personal networks of influence—all disproportionately cornered by upper castes—are passed off as “talent.” Professor of Law at Yale University Daniel Markovits in an interview expressed that Merit is a Sham, and it is used by those having necessary equipment, coaching, capital, and connections to artificially tell the world that they are the ones who’re most capable and most talented. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar warned against this very danger during the Constituent Assembly debates. For him, representation was not a

If reservation is a beacon of hope, why exclude the judiciary? Only 3% of High court and Supreme court judges are Dalits, only 12% women. The Supreme court has never had a woman Chief Justice or an ST judge. Never.

We are tired of your hypocrisy milord. Practice what you preach.

## Reservation a beacon of hope to weed out caste inequalities: Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud

concession but the essence of democracy. Without true representation of the historically oppressed, democracy itself becomes a tool of domination. The judiciary's insistence on a narrow, credentialism notion of merit is not neutrality—it is hierarchy disguised as excellence. In fact, the Supreme Court itself, in a 2025 judgment, however belatedly admitted that merit must include social context and empathy. Yet, it stopped short of extending this logic to judicial appointments? This selective application of justice is itself evidence of a deeper contradiction: the judiciary claims to interpret equality while refusing to be accountable to it.

### Historical and Contemporary Parallels

This resistance is not new. As early as the 1980s, scholars and activists began demanding judicial quotas, pointing out the near-total absence of Dalits and Adivasis on the bench. But these voices were ignored. Globally, India's judiciary looks even more isolated. South Africa's post-apartheid constitution mandates that judicial appointments must reflect the diversity of the nation. The United States has no formal quotas, but presidents routinely consider race, gender, and background to ensure the bench is not monopolised by one class. In the UK, there is sustained debate and policy effort to diversify judicial appointments. India, by contrast, hides behind the myth that neutrality requires exclusion.

### Substantive vs. Procedural Justice

This is where critical legal theory helps us see the problem clearly. Courts in India pride themselves on procedural justice—ensuring hearings, paperwork, and technical rights are followed. But without substantive justice—justice rooted in lived realities—procedures are hollow. How can a bench dominated by upper-caste men adjudicate meaningfully on atrocities against Dalits, on reservations in jobs and education, or on gender violence? Critical legal studies remind us that law is never neutral—it reproduces the social hierarchies of those who

interpret it. And when the interpreters are overwhelmingly upper caste, law inevitably tilts in their favour.

### Democratic Necessity of Representation

True judicial independence does not rest on insulation from democracy. It rests on the confidence of the people. And people cannot have confidence in an institution that excludes the majority of the country from its very ranks. To treat representation as a threat is to misunderstand democracy itself. What India needs is not token appointments but a constitutional roadmap for reservation in judicial appointments. This could mean: Extending the logic of Article 16 (public employment) to Articles 124 and 217 (judicial appointments), Institutionalising diversity audits of the judiciary, and Embedding representation as a principle of "independence" rather than its opposite. And after all, Making caste and gender data on judges publicly available.

### From Myth to Mandate

The recent introduction of reservation for non-judicial staff in the Supreme Court is appreciated but is not enough. It is progress, but only at the very margins. The heart of the judiciary—the bench itself remains untouched. To continue like this is to turn democracy into a hollow ritual where the majority are judged by the few. It is time to pierce the myth of merit and confront the hypocrisy at the core of India's judicial system. As Dr Ambedkar said, "Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it's social democracy." If the judiciary refuses representation, it in my opinion clearly refuses democracy. Reservation in the judiciary should not be considered a charitable concession. It is a constitutional necessity, the very condition for justice to be credible. Until the bench reflects the diversity of the people, the promise of justice for all will remain an illusion guarded by the privileged few.

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# Report by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB): Justice on Hold

**The delay in NCRB reports is not a clerical backlog; it is a question of transparency and accountability. Each missing report chips away at public trust, weakens policymaking, and fuels suspicion that inconvenient truths are being buried. Crime is a constant feature of society; its measurement must be just as constant and credible.**

Tanishka



It's September 2025. India has lived through two summers, two monsoons, and two parliamentary sessions since 2023, but its crime data remains trapped in bureaucratic limbo. The NCRB's Crime in India 2023 report is yet to be published. In Parliament, every query is met with the same formulaic response: the report is "in its final stages." What has become a ritualistic mantra now reveals the deeper institutional failure at play, a chronic inability to produce timely, credible data. Meanwhile, crime continues unabated, assaults, scams, and tragedies are reported daily, while the nation's official mirror of social reality remains blank.

For the world's largest democracy, this is more than bureaucratic delay. Each missing update erodes public trust, undermines policy responses, and breeds suspicion that uncomfortable truths are hidden. The NCRB, tasked with publishing Crime in India, Prison Statistics India, and Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India, is supposed to be the nation's gold standard of crime data. Yet too often, its reports arrive late, stripped of crucial details, or omit sensitive categories altogether. The silence signals more than inefficiency; it reveals a system stalled by outdated methods or unwilling to confront truths that may unsettle public confidence.

## **What NCRB Reports Are & How They Are Compiled?**

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) was established in 1986 under the Ministry of Home Affairs with an ambitious goal: to bring order to India's chaotic crime records by standardizing police data across states. In theory, the process is straightforward. A crime begins with an FIR at the local police station. That data is passed upward to state agencies, which in turn send it to the NCRB in Delhi. There, it is compiled, categorized, and eventually published in annual reports such as crime in India, prison statistics India, and accidental deaths and Suicides in India. On paper, this makes the NCRB indispensable. It is the only centralized and consolidated record of crime in a country as vast and diverse as India. Policymakers, researchers, and the media all rely on it to understand patterns in policing and justice.

But the reality is far more complicated. The data is only as strong as what local police stations record, and those records are vulnerable to underreporting, political pressure, and poor infrastructure. Uneven digitization across states adds another layer of inconsistency. For a country of India's size, the NCRB is both indispensable and flawed. It



is the only map we possess, but it often arrives late and is frequently blurred.

Over the decades, the NCRB has expanded the range of reports it publishes: Crime in India (CII), Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India (ADSI), Prison Statistics India, Fingerprint in India. These reports, taken together, form India’s only consolidated map of crime, prisons, and public safety. The ongoing delays in their release have diminished their intended purpose.

### **The Cost of Delay: Weakening Policy and Institutions**

When crime data is delayed, it does more than frustrate researchers. It actively weakens the institutions meant to safeguard democracy. Policymakers legislate without an accurate picture, while Parliament debates rely on stale numbers. Ministries such as Women and Child Development or Social Justice are left guessing when designing schemes. The damage ripples outward. Courts, national commissions, and watchdog bodies lean on NCRB reports to benchmark progress and hold governments accountable. When those numbers are delayed, diluted, or incomplete, oversight itself becomes compromised. As one critic put it, without timely numbers, India’s democratic machinery becomes a guessing game.

For example, the NCRB’s Crime in India 2022 report reveals a deeply unsettling picture of violence against Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) women. Across categories of assault, whether sexual harassment, stalking, voyeurism, or insults to modesty, the data shows not just prevalence but persistence. In 2022 alone, there were over 4,200 cases of assault on SC/ST women with intent to outrage modesty, 760 cases of sexual harassment, 721 cases under the POCSO Act, and 226 cases of insult to modesty.

But these figures already lag behind reality. The delay in releasing the Crime in India 2023 report erodes accountability. Without timely, disaggregated data, the scale of violence remains concealed, leaving marginalized women doubly invisible: marginalized by caste and gender, and again by the state’s silence.

### **Patterns of Delay**

The issue of justice for undertrial prisoners in India is inextricably linked to the significant backlog of cases and the socioeconomic status of the accused. Data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) highlights this crisis, showing that undertrials constitute over 75% of India’s total prison population. This is a particularly stark reality for marginalized

communities, who are disproportionately affected. According to various reports, while Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) make up around 24% of the country’s population, they comprise roughly 34% of the prison population, indicating a gross overrepresentation.

Many undertrials, unable to afford legal representation or post bail, are forced to languish in jail for extended periods. For instance, the Prison Statistics India 2022 report reveals that 8.6% of all undertrials have been in prison for over three years. The core problem remains the judicial backlog; Indian courts have over 40 million pending cases, with the subordinate courts, where most trials occur, accounting for a significant majority of this pendency. The Prison Statistics India report had started well after its launch in 1995, becoming steadily timelier by the mid-2010s. But the data publication has now reversed, and delays have crept back into the system.

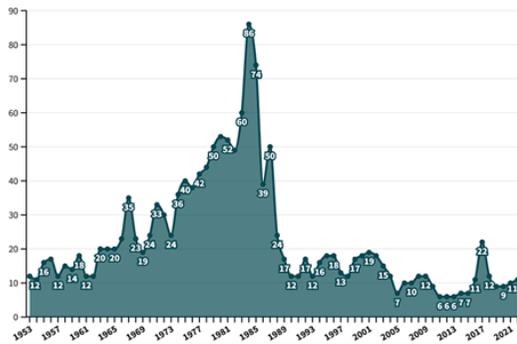
### **Crime/Atrocities against Scheduled Caste(s) - 2020-2022**

State	2020	2021	2022
Haryana	1210	1628	1633
Karnataka	1398	1673	1977
Madhya Pradesh	6899	7214	7733
Odisha	2046	2327	2902
Rajasthan	7017	7524	8752
Uttar Pradesh	12714	13146	15368

*Source: Crime in India Report 2022, as shown in the following*

In India, a persistent increase in reported atrocities against the Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities is evident in the available data from 2020 to 2022. Key states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh show a consistent and troubling upward trend in cases registered under the Atrocities Act. The absence of the National Crime Records Bureau’s (NCRB) 2023 report creates a significant analytical void, impeding a comprehensive assessment of recent trends in crime and justice for these marginalized groups. The missing data is a critical barrier to evaluating the effectiveness of government interventions and ensuring accountability to improve the safety and rights of the SC and ST communities.

Delay in release of NCRB Reports: Crime in India (value denotes the number of months delayed)



Indeed, the growing political sensitivity of crime data has mirrored the slow pace of its release. Critics observed that as reporting categories expanded to include sensitive areas hate crimes, lynchings, attacks by religious vigilantes, and Khap Panchayats, data became “vague or unreliable” and was often withheld or delayed. Some analysts argue that “any dataset that did not project the current administration in a favourable light was either tweaked or hidden.”

“Delay has become a habit, and habits reveal culture. In India’s governance culture, transparency remains negotiable.” This sentiment underscores that systematic delays in releasing crime data reflect not mere administrative lag, but a deeper governance tendency to defer or dilute transparency, particularly when reporting politically sensitive information.

### Procedure, Limitations, and Gaps

Every NCRB report begins with the First Information Report (FIR), filed at local police stations and consolidated at district and state levels before reaching the NCRB for national compilation. While the procedure appears standardized, it carries deep structural flaws that particularly disadvantage Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). The limitations are stark. Crimes against SCs and STs, ranging from caste-based violence to atrocities against tribal land and dignity, are often underreported due to police reluctance to register FIRs, intimidation of victims, and long-established social hierarchies. Even when cases are recorded, non-standardized categories across states obscure patterns of caste and tribe-targeted violence, weakening comparative analysis. Custodial torture, gendered violence against Dalit and Adivasi women, and atrocities in rural pockets often disappear in this bureaucratic filtering.

Structural gaps worsen the crisis. India continues to rely on delayed annual PDF reports

rather than a real-time crime dashboard that could track caste and tribe-based atrocities as they unfold. There is no system of independent audits to verify whether states are suppressing sensitive data, nor are methodological revisions explained, further eroding trust in the system. As one analyst put it, “In an era of big data, India still produces its crime map as if it were the 19th century.” For SCs and STs, this gap between lived violence and official statistics is not merely a technical issue; it is a denial of justice and visibility.

### Durkheim’s Lens: Crime as a Function of Society

Émile Durkheim, a renowned Sociologist, argued that crime is not an aberration but an inherent part of social life. For him, crime serves a function; it offends the collective conscience, provoking punishment that reaffirms shared values and restores social solidarity. When the state acts as the agent of punishment, its legitimacy depends on timely recognition and action. Delayed or withheld crime data disrupts this process, weakening public trust in institutions meant to safeguard order.

Durkheim also emphasized that deviance reveals underlying social tensions. Rising theft may signal economic hardship, while increased violence can point to failures in education or socialization. In this sense, crime statistics are not merely records of wrongdoing instead, they are diagnostic tools highlighting areas in need of reform. When reports are delayed, society is deprived of this mirror. Citizens are left speculating about hidden realities, and opportunities for timely reform are lost.

As one analyst observed, “Delayed data doesn’t just weaken governance, it robs society of its ability to confront itself.” In Durkheimian terms, the collective conscience loses its chance to respond, heal, and strengthen. Data that arrives too late risks becoming irrelevant, undermining both governance and the trust it seeks to uphold. ‘If it were not for injustice, man would not know justice’. - Heraclitus

### A Stark Contrast: Supreme Court’s 2024 Report

While the NCRB continues to delay even its basic crime statistics, another arm of the state has demonstrated what institutional initiative can achieve. In 2024, the Supreme Court’s Centre for Research and Planning released Prisons in India. This report went beyond tabulating numbers: it mapped the prison system across states, examined overcrowding, compared prison manuals, and offered reform-oriented insights. It demonstrated that a national institution can collect complex data,



synthesize it, and publish findings promptly.

The contrast could not be clearer. The NCRB relies on outdated figures, eroding accountability, while the judiciary has taken on the task of reviewing prisons, a sector closely tied to crime and justice. Around the same time, both President Droupadi Murmu and the Supreme Court raised alarms about overcrowded prisons. The President even asked: “If we are moving towards progress as a society, then why do we need new jails? We should be closing down existing ones.”

But overcrowding is not just about space, it is about the growing number of undertrial prisoners, who now make up nearly three-fourths of India’s prison population. Most are too poor to access bail or fast trials, which means they are confined without conviction. Building more prisons without addressing this crisis does not solve the problem; it merely expands it.

Here lies the contradiction. The state debates constructing new jails, yet fails to publish updated data on crime, prisoner populations, or conviction rates.

#### **Solutions: From Bureaucratic Reform to Democratic Imperative**

The delays in NCRB publications are not mere bureaucratic inefficiencies; they require essential structural reform that impacts the safety and dignity of marginalized citizens, particularly Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), who face disproportionate victimization. A first step is to establish statutory deadlines for NCRB reports, ensuring they are released within six to nine months of the reference year. Like the annual Union Budget, timely crime reports are crucial for preventing atrocities against Dalits and Adivasis from being obscured in data vacuums. Second, implementing independent audits of crime statistics would enhance credibility and reduce manipulation, particularly regarding caste and tribe-based violence, akin to practices used by the UK’s Office for National Statistics and the FBI. Third, a real time digital crime dashboard is needed, providing monthly updates for greater transparency in policing and policy, ensuring that atrocities are visible as they occur.

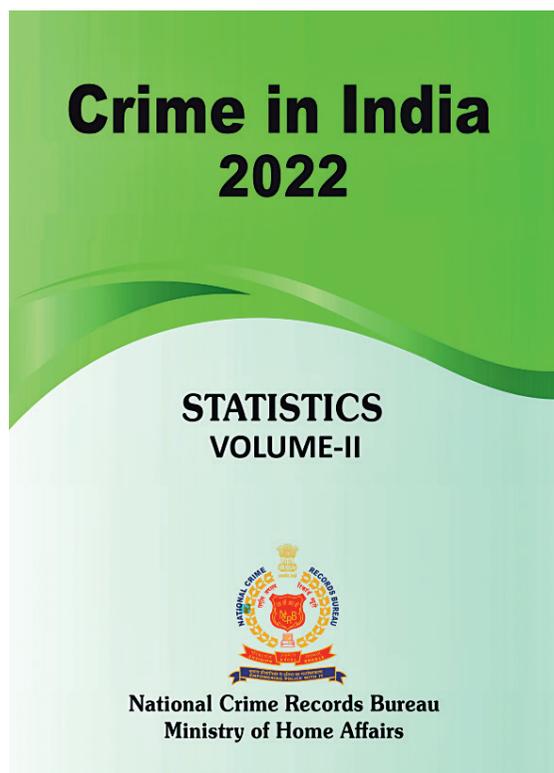
Lastly, NCRB reports should be presented in Parliament, fostering debate and scrutiny of crime data. This step is vital for SC and ST communities, helping to bring their struggles into the heart of national policy discussions.

#### **Conclusion**

The delay in NCRB reports is not a clerical backlog; it is a question of transparency and

accountability. Each missing report chips away at public trust, weakens policymaking, and fuels suspicion that inconvenient truths are being buried. Crime is a constant feature of society; its measurement must be just as constant and credible.

But behind these numbers are lives of marginalized groups who remain most vulnerable to violence and least likely to find justice. Their struggles are compounded by an overburdened criminal justice system, where conviction rates remain low and undertrial prisoners now form nearly three-fourths of the prison population. For them, every delay in data is not just a statistical gap; it is the



erasure of lived realities. As India moves towards its 100th year of independence, the demand for timely, transparent crime data is more than administrative housekeeping. It is about ensuring that atrocities are confronted, conviction processes strengthened, and undertrial injustices reduced. A democracy cannot call itself mature if it cannot count, acknowledge, and address the crimes committed against its most marginalised citizens. The message is clear: if crime data lags, justice lags, and the dream of a more equal nation remains unfulfilled.

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# Why Fair Treatment at Work Matters for Everyone

Workplace discrimination continues to harm people from marginalised communities. The case of P. Senrayaperumal, a Dalit professor from Tamil Nadu, shows how deep these issues run. Senrayaperumal worked hard to become an assistant professor, but was removed from his position over a year ago, allegedly because of his caste. Even though the court ruled in his favour, the university still refused to reinstate him.

This experience is painful and discouraging for many people who belong to Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes. Discrimination does not only happen in colleges and universities. Many workers from SC and ST backgrounds face such problems in offices, factories, and government jobs. Recent data shows that nearly half of all employees in India feel that they face



discrimination at work. The India Discrimination Report found that SC/ST workers are less likely to get regular jobs compared to people from other backgrounds. In rural areas, only about 35 out of 100 SC/ST workers get regular jobs, while 41 out of 100 people from other communities do. These numbers show that discrimination is real and affects a lot of people.

Research by Professor Sukhdeo Thorat has shown that people from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are often not hired, promoted, or given important responsibilities even when they are just as qualified as others. Many times, they are not invited for interviews, or their applications are ignored. Even if they do get jobs, they may not be treated with respect. They may face taunts, unfair treatment, and a hostile atmosphere. This makes them feel isolated and lowers their confidence.

When someone faces discrimination at their workplace, it harms their ability to do a good job. People from marginalised backgrounds are often not given a chance to use their skills. Their hard work and talent are ignored. This is unfair to them, and it is also bad for the workplace. When workers are unhappy and feel left out, teamwork suffers. A company or office where people are not treated equally cannot work well as a team.

Discrimination also harms the talent pool. Many talented young people from SC and ST backgrounds lose hope when they see how elders are treated. Some may refuse to apply for jobs or higher education. Others may quit their jobs if they are always made to feel less important. This means that society loses out on their skills and ideas, which could help everyone.

There are several known examples where discrimination has stopped people from achieving their goals. In schools, SC and ST children may feel left out or discouraged from taking part in activities. In offices, they may not be considered for promotions even if they work hard. Sometimes, they do not get fair pay for the same work. All these examples show that discrimination is a big problem.

Some reports say that only about half of companies in India take strict action against managers who discriminate against people from marginalised backgrounds, and only a little more than half mention anti-discrimination policies in job offers. This shows that stronger steps are needed. Laws are in place, but they must be enforced and followed, not just written down.

To solve these problems, workplaces must protect employees from SC and ST communities. This means making sure everyone gets equal chances and is treated with respect. Rules against discrimination should be clear and followed strictly. There should be help available for people who feel targeted. Training programs can teach everyone to respect others and value teamwork. All workers should be able to join in making decisions and have good mentors. If companies check their record and listen to complaints, staff will feel safer and more respected.

The story of P. Senrayaperumal is just one example, but there are thousands more across India. These problems can only be solved with strong support and honest efforts from both working people and leaders. When everyone is treated fairly, workplaces become better, teams are stronger, and the whole society benefits. A fair and welcoming workplace is not only the right thing to do—it also makes good business sense. Only when companies protect and support workers from all backgrounds will India be able to truly use its best talent for progress.

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## SC to Examine Plea for ‘Creamy Layer’-Like System in SC/ST Reservations

The Supreme Court has issued notice to the Centre on a plea seeking a “creamy layer”-style system within Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe reservations to ensure benefits reach the most deprived sections. The petition, filed by Ramashankar Prajapati, argued that reservation benefits are disproportionately cornered by economically well-off groups within SC/ST communities, leaving the poorest still trapped in poverty. It proposed a two-tier system prioritising economically weaker members, without reducing the overall quota.

Citing the 2024 State of Punjab vs. Davinder Singh ruling, the plea stressed that excluding affluent SC/ST families from quota benefits is essential for real equality. The Bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi said the issue must be handled with sensitivity given its far-reaching implications.



## ‘We finally feel accepted’: Gujarat village ends Dalit haircut ban after decades

In a breakthrough against caste prejudice, Aalwada village in Banaskantha has lifted its decades-old ban on Dalits visiting local barbers. On August 7, 24-year-old farm worker Kirti Chauhan became the first Dalit to get a haircut at a village shop, calling it a moment of “freedom and acceptance.” For generations, the 250 Dalits in this 6,500-strong village had been denied service, forced to travel elsewhere for grooming. The change came after months of persuasion by Dalit residents and activist Chetan Dabhi, followed by police and administrative intervention. “We simply followed society’s diktat earlier, but now it’s also good for business,” said barber Pintoo Nai, who gave Kirti his historic haircut.

Village elders, barbers, and the administration backed the move, with sarpanch Suresh Chaudhary calling it “a proud moment.” While

residents hailed the step, Dalit families noted that discrimination persists in other spheres, such as seating at community feasts.

## Manipur caste certificate law gets Presidential assent

A new law to regulate the issuance of caste certificates for Scheduled Caste (SC) and Other Backward Class (OBC) communities in Manipur has received Presidential assent, nearly a year after it was introduced during the ethnic conflict of 2024 by the then N. Biren Singh government. The legislation aims to prevent fraudulent claims and standardise procedures for granting caste certificates. Manipur has seven SC communities and four OBC groups, with reservations fixed at 2% and 17% respectively, while Scheduled Tribes enjoy 31%.

The law prescribes application procedures, defines competent authorities, and empowers newly constituted Scrutiny Committees to verify suspicious certificates. These committees can initiate inquiries suo motu, and their decisions will be final—subject only to judicial review in the High Court.

While similar frameworks exist in States like Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, Manipur’s move formalises a system that had previously relied on executive orders and circulars.

## SC: Anticipatory bail barred in caste atrocity cases unless no prima facie offence

The Supreme Court has ruled that anticipatory bail under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 can only be granted if it is clear at the outset that no offence under the law is made out. A Bench led by Chief Justice BR Gavai set aside a Bombay High Court order granting pre-arrest bail to an accused in Maharashtra’s Dharashiv, where the complainant alleged casteist abuse, assault with iron rods, and threats to burn down his house after he refused to back a candidate. The Court said the FIR clearly showed caste-based humiliation in public view, leaving “no escape” from concluding that the Act applied.

Citing Section 18 of the Act, which bars anticipatory bail, the Court clarified that exceptions apply only when accusations are patently baseless. It stressed that judges cannot hold “mini-trials” while assessing FIRs and must uphold the law’s aim of securing social justice for SC/ST communities.

*Compiled by Prajvalant.  
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# DIN VISHESH

## Dhamma Chakra Pravartan Din

2nd October



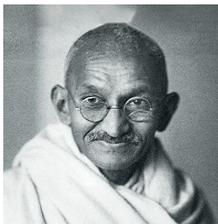
Dhamma Chakra Pravartan Din celebrated, to commemorate Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's mass conversion to Buddhism with approximately 600,000 followers on October 14, 1956, at Deekshabhoomi, Nagpur. This pivotal event, also linked to Ashoka Vijayadashami, symbolizes the revival of Buddhism in India and the fight against caste oppression. Dr. Ambedkar, rejecting Hinduism's caste system, embraced Buddhism for its principles of equality and justice, initiating the Dalit Buddhist movement. During the ceremony, he took 22 vows, renouncing Hindu practices and affirming Buddhist teachings like the Four Noble Truths and Eightfold Path. Celebrations in 2025 will center at Deekshabhoomi, featuring prayers, Dhammaksha ceremonies for mass conversions, and cultural events. The festival fosters community unity through free medical camps, Buddhist literature stalls, and speeches. Special trains may facilitate travel to Nagpur. This day honours Ambedkar's legacy of social justice and the enduring relevance of Buddha's teachings, inspiring millions to embrace equality and dignity.



**26th September**  
Shankardev Birth  
Anniversary



**27th September**  
Raja Ram Mohan Roy  
Birth Anniversary



**2nd October**  
Mahatma Gandhi  
Birth Anniversary



**5th October**  
Jogendra Nath Mandal  
Death Anniversary



**12th October**  
Ram Manohar Lohia  
Death Anniversary

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