

Academic Council Fails to Uphold Social Justice YET AGAIN! CASTEIST JNU Administration Continues its Dilly-dallying Tactics to Delay Implementation of SC/ST Reservations in Faculty Positions!!

Shamefully, the casteist JNU administration has yet again refused to uphold constitutionally mandated SC/ST reservations in faculty positions. At the AC meeting held yesterday (31st March), the anti-reservation forces entrenched in positions of power in JNU argued that JNU had to seek legal opinion from the Solicitor General (SG) before taking a final decision. **Despite overwhelming support in the AC that JNU should implement SC/ST reservations in all faculty posts, the JNU administration has decided to first ‘seek opinion’ from the SG.** This is nothing but blatant dilly-dallying tactics on behalf of those in the administration who want to scuttle all provisions of social justice by hook or crook.

It is extremely deplorable that a forum like the AC in a university like JNU which claims to be ‘progressive’ and socially inclusive has been shamelessly used by the anti-reservations lobbies in JNU to push their subjective biases to scuttle constitutional provisions. The JNU administration knows full well that reservations for SC/ST candidates in faculty posts is mandatory: this is NOT merely a ‘guideline’.

If this was an issue to be settled on the basis of law and directives flowing from constitutional mandates, then it is a settled issue! Way back in 2007 itself, the JNU EC had on this legal basis decided in favour of implementing SC/ST reservations in faculty positions. In 2008, in the course of a hearing in the Supreme Court on a PIL against reservations, JNU assured the Supreme Court that it would implement reservations in faculty positions, saying it was “obligatory on its part to implement the guidelines of reservation policy of the government” and that “it had no alternative but to implement and carry out the direction of the Central Government.” Based on the same position, in 2009, JNU advertised for 149 faculty posts which were to be fulfilled in keeping with the SC/ST reservations called for by the MHRD guidelines.

Why, when the legal stand was crystal clear *all this while*, was the whole issue opened up once again for the charade of “debate and discussion” in various Centres and in the AC? It is obvious that the “debate” DID NOT LIE in any ‘confusion’ over interpretation of the law – but was *manufactured* by the well-entrenched casteist lobby in JNU led by Prof. Aditya Mukherjee following the advertisement for faculty appointments. In an open display of his biases, the JNU VC used a brazenly casteist letter circulated by Prof. Aditya Mukherjee to upturn all the previous decisions of the Administration in this regard. However, contrary to his hope and efforts, the anti-reservations did not prevail either in terms of logic or numbers in the Centres or in the AC. **So finally, once it was clear that the ‘debate’ initiated by the casteist lobby was going to be settled in favour of reservation, the JNU Administration has taken refuge in the farce of ‘legal opinion-seeking’ with the Solicitor General!**

In any case, one wonders, who is authorized to interpret the law for Universities? The MHRD, Law Ministry and UGC to which it is accountable? Or to individuals or specific offices like the SG? Let us remember that the anti-democratic stance towards JNU of the present SG Gopal Subramaniam has been amply demonstrated, since it is he who intervened to stall JNUSU elections for so long on the pretext of Lyngdoh recommendations. Remember also that the YFE which virulently opposes reservations also pushes for Lyngdoh in JNU at the cost of the JNUSU Constitution! **THE PRO-LYNGDOH AND ANTI-RESERVATIONS FORCES HAVE NEATLY GANGED UP – AND THE JNU ADMINISTRATIONS’ CHOICE OF GOPAL SUBRAMANIAM AS ARBITRATOR IS NO COINCIDENCE!**

There is always space for discussion and retrospection on issues. However, if ‘discussion’ is used as an excuse to stall and postpone the proper implementation of constitutionally mandated provisions, this is highly condemnable. One can have subjective opinions regarding an issue, one can also strongly disagree with legally mandated provisions. **This however cannot be used a license to stall the proper implementation of laws related to social justice.** This is unfortunately exactly what happened yesterday at the AC meeting. Some members of the faculty and the JNU administration actually held forth at the AC for literally hours to argue that reservations should not be implemented in faculty posts - going to the absurd extent of arguing that there is absolutely no casteism in this campus!

We have time and again seen how the JNU administration has flouted every rule in the book to ensure that the issue of reservation remains thrown in cold storage for as long as possible. Despite the presence of a strong consensus in the JNU teaching community in favour of SC/ST reservations in faculty posts, the casteist lobby in the administration has yet again managed to stall reservations. **By referring the matter to the EC and by pretending to ‘seek legal advice’, the administration has in effect attempted to *indefinitely* postpone reservations in faculty posts.** Even in the case of implementing OBC reservations in student admissions, the JNU administration for two years criminally denied admission to several eligible OBC students by willfully violating MHRD directives and Supreme Court guidelines. It is only after a sustained campaign for two years that the administration has finally agreed to rectify its crimes. **This gameplan of the administration to stall reservations and social justice as long as possible has to be exposed and resisted by the entire JNU community.** We appeal to the JNU community to strengthen the movement for social justice in the campus against the well-entrenched casteist forces in the JNU administration in the days to come.

Abhishek

Vice-President, AISA, JNU

Atif Rabbani

Jt. Secy, AISA, JNU