

advancing  
**people's  
struggles**

*In Defence of Secular Democracy*



PARLIAMENTARY  
SPEECHES OF  
**SITARAM  
YECHURY**

VOLUME 2

## Equality : The Essential Element of Constitution

Sir, I rise in support on this Constitution Amendment Bill. And the reason why I rise in support of this is that two essential elements, which, in my opinion, constitute the essence of the Republican character of the country, are the questions of equality and secularism as my learned elder has said earlier. But in our country's context, equality and secularism cannot be separated from each other. And that is precisely why I think we must recollect today that during the last days of the Constituent Assembly, Babasaheb Ambedkar had warned all of us saying, that "the Constitution that we are adopting gives 'one man, one vote', but the economic and social structure that we have in our country does not give 'one man, one value'. And unless you convert this 'one man, one vote into 'one man one value', the entire political structure that we have built, even that is perilously threatened."

This warning was given more than 50 years ago, but unfortunately, we have still a long way to go on this. Reservation for the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and the OBCs is only a part measure in our opinion, though, we support it fully, yet it is not the final solution for the upliftment of these sections without whose upliftment, we cannot really preserve even the political democracy we have, forget the question of equality. Therefore, I rise to support this principle of reservations in these private institutions from the point of view of the fundamental tenets of our Constitution. I think that is the basis on which this Amendment has been made. Secondly, Sir, I think, while making these provisions, it has been rightly pointed out earlier, why has this menace actually occurred in the field of private unaided educational institutions, particularly, the professional colleges. I don't want to repeat what has already been said. But the basic point, unfortunately, has not emerged in the debate. The privatisation and commercialisation of higher education in our country is taking place precisely because of the abdication of the State and the Central Government in spending in this sphere. The more the state is withdrawing, the greater is the space you are providing for privatisation and commercialisation of education. Right, they have come; they need to be brought in the social control. We want that to happen. We support this. But, at the same time, we should also wake up to the fact that during the last ten years, sir, the amount that is being spent on higher education is less than 0.5 per cent of the GDP. The National Common Minimum Programme today talks of six per cent of the GDP for education as a whole. Good. Last year, the Government put an educational cess. But what it is going to do with that money, we don't know yet. We want that to be clearly stated. But the point is: When are we going to achieve the six per cent of our GDP? Unless we achieve this, we will not be in a position to actually tackle the problem of

## Pledge to Save Secular, Democratic, Socialist Constitution

**M**r Deputy Chairman :  
 Okay, everything is on record. Don't worry. Now,  
 Shri Sitaram Yechury.

Shri Sitaram Yechury : Sir, thank you for giving me this opportunity.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY : Sir, thank you for giving me this opportunity. सर, जब सेशन की घोषणा हुई थी, उससे पहले हमारी पार्टी ने यह मांग की थी कि डॉ. अम्बेडकर के 125वीं जयंती पर आप स्पेशल सेशन बुलाइए, ताकि कुछ नए कानून जो हमारे हिसाब से जरूरी हैं, उन कानूनों को लागू करें। अभी हमारे मित्र शरद यादव जी ने बड़े विस्तार से पूरे आंकड़े बताए कि यह हालत आज क्या है? दलितों की और आरक्षण की जो बात हुई, उसको मैं दोहराना नहीं चाहता, लेकिन आज देखिए, सिर्फ आरक्षण का ही सवाल नहीं है, लेकिन उनके ऊपर जो हमले हो रहे हैं, उसके आंकड़े भी आप देखिए। इसी सरकार ने जो आंकड़े बताए हैं, दलितों के ऊपर 2014 में जब से यह सरकार आयी है, 19 प्रतिशत हमले बढ़े हैं। 2015 में हम खुद देख चुके हैं कि फरीदाबाद में, अहमदाबाद में किस तरीके के अत्याचार दलितों के ऊपर हुए हैं। तो सवाल यहां पर यह है कि जो कानून आज हमारे हाथ में हैं, उसको मजबूत करना है, नया कानून लाना है और उसके चलते हमने कहा था कि नए दस कानूनों की जरूरत है।

जिसके अंदर हमारी अर्थव्यवस्था में जो यह निजीकरण हो रहा है उसको ध्यान में रखते हुए, शिक्षा में और रोजगार में जो आरक्षण का प्रावधान आपने पब्लिक सेक्टर के लिए दिया था, उसको आप बढ़ाकर प्राइवेट सेक्टर में ले आइए। प्राइवेट सेक्टर के अन्दर यह आरक्षण हो कम से कम उसके बारे में चर्चा तो हो और कानून बने। हम यह चाह रहे थे कि एस.सी., एस.टी. के लिए statutory status मिले। हम यह चाह रहे थे कि जो आज रिजर्वेशन है वह प्रोफेशनल और हॉयर एजुकेशनल इंस्टीट्यूशंस में हो। हम यह चाह रहे थे कि National Mission for Eradication of Untouchability हो। जैसा अभी शरद जी ने बताया कि पार्लियामेंट के अंदर हमारे सफाई कर्मचारियों की क्या हालत है, मैं उसको दोहराना नहीं चाहता हूँ, तो एक नए कानून की जरूरत है जिससे यह दुरूस्त हो सके। So, what we wanted was

So, what we wanted was enactment of all the legislations on the basis of which we can carry forward the vision of social justice that Dr. Ambedkar stood for. Now, instead, we have a situation where the Government has come forward saying that we reaffirm our faith in the Constitution. Where is the question of reaffirming? You are here, I am here, and all of us are here on an oath on this Constitution. What is this drama of reaffirming? If the Constitution is not there, then, you won't be here. The Government of the day must know, the Leader of the House—he is not here now—should know that they are there only because we affirm this Constitution. What is this question of now saying, “We will reaffirm”? And what is this Constitution Day, sir? Go through the history. On 26th of November this Constitution was signed by the President of the Constituent Assembly. It was voted upon and the draft was adopted and in the draft you have said explicitly that "on the 26th of January India shall be a Republic in 1950 when this draft will turn into a Constitution and we shall enact." Can this Government answer? I want our esteemed lawyer, the Leader of the House, to tell us what law governed India from 26th of November, 1949 to 26th of January, 1950? Was it this Constitution? Is it known, sir? The law that governed India during those two months after you adopted this Constitution was India Independence Act, 1947 moved by the British Prime Minister Attlee in the House of Commons in London. What is this Constitution

## Make Civil Society Part of Fight against Terrorism

Sir, at the outset, I wish to state that my Party, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), unequivocally condemns these terrorist attacks that have taken place. We deeply mourn the loss of lives and the injuries that have been sustained. But, at the same time, it is not merely a question of expressing concern and condemnation because the choice of places that have been made by the terrorists is also very ominous. The fact that the judicial arena, which was outside the purview of terrorist attacks so far, has also been drawn into their orbit and that in courts such explosives were planted and they could actually cause such a large number of deaths is ominous and this is a warning that the Government must take very seriously.

Sir, I do not know whether you are permitting a discussion or allowing us only to seek clarifications but since it is taking the form of a discussion, I would like the Minister also to apprise us of

the level of Intelligence that is there is our country today and whether there are any serious lapses that are occurring and why these are not being corrected. We cannot see these blasts only in isolation; in the last so many months we had a series of blasts taking place all over the country, at the Mecca Masjid in Hyderabad, in the city of Hyderabad, and now, in Varanasi, Faizabad and Allahabad. In all these places, why is it that the Intelligence apparatus is not able to forewarn us? Now, this is a serious issue which needs to be gone into in depth and I hope the Government will be able to do so and apprise us in the Parliament as to why the process of being forewarned in such attacks is not taking place.

Sir, I refer to para 8 of the Minister's statement. We fully appreciate the concern of the Government and the fact that the fight against terrorism has to be fought at different levels and involving the civil society and the media is also very important; we fully understand this. But the question that we have to understand now, and which is very important in my opinion, is that it will be very unfortunate if we were to bracket all these terrorist attacks into some sort of a straitjacketed Muslim extremism or Muslim terrorism. We have been victims of terrorist attacks that run across all forms of religious affiliations and all forms of regional affiliations. In fact, we have lost two of our Prime Ministers to such attacks, and the perpetrators of these assassinations had nothing to do with Muslim terrorism or Muslim extremism. Therefore, let us not confront this only with ideological blinkers, as some people have said, in order to target one community. If the Minister and the UPA Government are sincere about para 8 of theirs, then the atmosphere has to be created of sincere security amongst the minorities in our country. On that, we are still appalled as to why in spite of the Sachar Committee recommendations, in spite of the status of the minorities that has come before all of us, even now action on that report is not proceeding. We would like to warn the UPA Government that no action on that count will be tantamount to succumbing to pressures of the principal Opposition's charge

## Terrorism of all Shades is Anti-Human

Sir, I begin by making a request to you. After the learned words of wisdom by my learned friend, Dr. Keshava Rao, you have to give me extra time to steer the discussion back to the issue and also to wake up a number of people who have lulled into sleep. So, I require extra time and I hope you will give me extra time.

Mr Deputy Chairman : I am sure, you can do it in ten minutes.

Shri Sitaram Yechury : Sir, on this issue of terrorism, to my mind, I recollect the powerful words of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore when he returned his Knighthood after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. He had said these words, which I think, are the powerful expression of our anger and anguish at this menace of terrorism. Rabindranath Tagore said, *“Give me a voice of thunder, That I may hurl imprecations upon this cannibal, Whose gruesome*

*hunger, Spares neither the mother nor the child.*” It is this menace of terrorism which is anti-national, anti-human which neither spares the mother nor the child and is something for which, at least, I and my party have zero tolerance. Therefore, to fight against terrorism there can be no compromise and the struggle against terrorism is non-negotiable. Having said this point, we have to recognise the Indian reality also that terrorism in India cannot be categorised into any compartment. Neither is it something that has some boundaries nor some religious delineation. We have in our country lost the Mahatma to the bullets of a religious fanatic; we have lost a sitting Prime Minister to the bullets of a Sikh fanatic; we have lost a former Prime Minister, who was contesting those elections, to the bullets of the LTTE assassins. We are losing today everyday scores of people, hundreds of people in the North-East because of various insurgent groups that are operating. We have had a situation in our country where we have to combat terrorism of fundamentalism of all sorts of religious hues. You also have *Hindutva* terror that has to be combated. You have this situation in the country and, therefore, we cannot label terrorism as belonging to any one particular religion, to one particular group or to one particular region. Any attempt to communalise or politicalise the fight against terrorism will only undermine our resolve to get rid of this menace. While we have to tackle cross-border terrorism, we have to tackle internal factors that give rise to terrorism and we have to tackle also, what Dr. Keshava Rao had also mentioned right now, the conditions that give rise to another variety of terrorism. The Prime Minister has said that the single largest menace to India’s internal security is the Maoist violence. Now, if this has to be tackled, sir, there are two premises that, I think, all of us must unequivocally accept. The first is to create an atmosphere that does not breed the growth of such terrorism. You cannot have a situation like you had during the anti-Sikh riots; you cannot have a situation like you have during anti-Muslim pogroms; you cannot have situations like you have during anti-Christian attacks and the

## Discovering a New India

**S**ir, I am rising in support of this Bill, and fortunately, I am in such a position where I cannot see either of the boards, unless I develop a pain in my neck turning towards this side and that side. And, you do not have one put up on your side. So, I kindly seek your indulgence.

Sir, I am rising in support of this Bill. I am also very excited at the prospects of the establishment of such a University which is an international project, a project of 16 countries jointly to establish this University with a very eminent team of international thinkers, philosophers, Nobel Laureates, etc. I am excited at the prospects of this University being established, not in terms of settling scores of the past in history, but in terms of trying to revive the glory that once was of Nalanda, which is very important - I would want it to be revived - and not in terms of saying that so and so did such and such wrongs, and therefore, I am doing this to correct the wrongs

of history. I think I am excited at the prospects for the future; I am excited at the prospects of what we have contributed in the past, which needs to be carried forward for the future. Dr. Saheb has very correctly said about Bakhtiyar Khilji's troops and the vandalism they did at Nalanda. This is the history, sir. The barbaric nomads and tribes called Huns destroyed the mighty Roman Empire. But these wrongs of history are not the ones to be corrected by establishing a University, or, for that matter, a question that plagues all of us is that after the 7th century A.D., is Buddhism thriving outside the borders of India. Why is it that inside the borders of India you find Buddhist culture only in caves, where people were ostracised from the society? Why is all their art and literature underground in caves? These are issues of history. That is not the project of this University. The project of this University, sir, from what I can conceive of it, and I want this to be considered seriously, is what Nehru says in '*Discovery of India*' on the eve of Independence. How does he describe India? Jawaharlal Nehru invokes the very evocative example of the palimpsest. Now, what is the palimpsest? In ancient times, before the discovery or invention of paper, the palimpsest was either a tablet of stone or a tablet of wood on which every victor would erase the past history and write his own version of history. But then, as Nehru says in the *Discovery of India*, "India is an ancient palimpsest on which layer upon layer of thought and reverie had been inscribed, and yet, no succeeding layer had completely hidden or erased what had been written previously".

Sir, we are the churning crucible of human civilization, and that is what these lands represented. Various tendencies have come; we have assimilated various tendencies and on that basis, we have advanced. And today, the BBC describes, in its Epic History series, India as the only continuing civilization in the history of human civilization anywhere in the world. Dr. Karan Singh referred to Raja Raja Cholan's Thanjavur temple built in 1002 B.C.; in 2010,

## Political Dialogue Only Solution for Kashmir

Sir, this is the third occasion in the last three days when I am rising with a degree of agony, anxiety and anger at what is happening in the Kashmir Valley. I have heard my colleague from the treasury benches. We have heard the pace and direction of the development in Jammu and Ladhak regions of Jammu & Kashmir. This is very important issue we should discuss. But now today we are here to discuss the deteriorating situation in Kashmir Valley. Today is the thirty-second day of the curfew. There has been a continuous curfew for thirty-two days and every day firing is taking place. Every day somebody is being killed. Every day people are getting injured. Why is this agony and pain continuing unrelenting in the Valley? And how can you stop it? That is the issue before us. We are not talking about the old packages for Kashmir that all of us had announced and why they are not being implemented. They are important. Development of other

regions of Jammu and Ladakh is important. But right now the issue is this. What is happening in the Valley? And why are we not able to control it?

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Sir, I am continuing with the same anguish, the same anger and the same anxiety over what is happening after thirty-two days of curfew. We have not come to any way of trying to find a solution to the situation there. I had suggested in the last two days to stop using these pellet guns. Start the political process. Call an all-party meeting in Delhi. Call a meeting in Jammu and Kashmir. Consult all shades of opinion and start the process of a political dialogue without which there cannot be a solution. Unfortunately, till now this has not happened. And I again demand that this should be done immediately. Of course, there is a question of Pakistani interference, cross-border infiltration. All those questions will always be there. I think the whole House, the whole Parliament, the whole country has, without any hesitation, said that that is something which must be stopped.

We always stood against it and we will stand against it. They have no business to interfere. That is a different question. But please remember that. Sir, I want you to listen to this point. Even a vulture, when it dips down to eat on the carcass, comes down only when it smells blood. Only when it smells blood that there is a dead carcass, the vulture comes down to feed on that carcass. That blood is being spilt and we are allowing vultures across the body to come and feed on that. Why is that blood being spilt? Why is there a trust deficit today in the Valley? Why is there a degree of alienation amongst the people? That is the question which needs to be addressed. We have to stop this violence. That is one aspect. But, address the trust deficit. Why is that trust deficit happening? Sir, we have to ponder over that. The people of Kashmir, men and women, at the time of our independence, fought against the Pakistani raiders to defend our independence even ignoring the

## Lynching in the Name of Faith : Blot on Democracy

Sir, I am glad that you used the word ‘comrades’.  
Mr Deputy Chairman : ‘Comrade’ in the larger sense.

Shri Sitaram Yechury : I am glad even if you used it in that sense. Sir, I am rising to speak with a very heavy heart and also in the background of what happened in the House just now. Sir, the sort of atmosphere that we have seen here does not augure well for our parliamentary democracy. Since the problem is solved, I do not want to go into that. But, actually, Sir, I am standing with my head hanging in shame. Where has our Republic come to? Seventy years earlier, we had the pride in the world to say - while no other western democracy could have the courage to say - that from day one, we shall give universal suffrage for everybody in our country. Irrespective of their religious affiliation, irrespective of their caste, irrespective of their gender, we gave universal suffrage, which was

**End of Preview.**

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