

# Voice of Swaraj

Volume 1

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## 1 Editorial Note

It is a visceral moment for us to present the first edition of “Voice of Swaraj” to all our readers on 6th December. We consider this periodical an integral part of our ideology and politics. In the Indian context, December 6 holds a special significance as Babasaheb Ambedkar’s death anniversary or Mahaparinirvan Diwas, which brings forth the light of social justice upon us. Saluting this idea, the editorial team of “Voice of Swaraj” dedicates the first edition to social justice. The editorial team of the magazine is of the opinion that in accordance with contemporary politics, we should see the generality of social justice in different dimensions, and the writings published in this edition present this generality of social justice to the readers. As the first edition, there must have been many shortcomings. For this, we humbly request the readers to give their feedback, so that we can remove these shortcomings in the coming editions. At last, thanks to all the readers for loving and supporting our endeavor of “Voice of Swaraj”.

## 2 Is reservation appropriate? Necessary? Adequate? | Yogendra Yadav

There are a few controversial issues in Indian society where a person becomes aware of his identity. Along with the question of Kashmir, the question of Hindu-Muslim, the question of women, reservation is such a subject where even the most knowledgeable person stumbles. All over the world we find many such controversial issues, but there is a meaningful debate on them. Unfortunately, in India, instead of having a meaningful conversation, the debate takes a different form.

We find inequality in societies all over the world and every society tries to eliminate it. While discussing it in the context of India, we should try to understand it with a balanced view. Before talking about the subject of reservation, we have to consider inequality.

### We shall discuss inequality around three questions

1. What kind of society do we want?
2. Do we live in such a society?
3. How do we create such a society?

### What kind of society do we want?

We want a society where everyone has “equality of opportunity.” No one should be denied opportunity on the basis of the identity based on their birth, such as gender, religion, caste, or rural/urban background. Everyone should have an opportunity to prove their worth.

### Do we live in such a society where everyone has equality of opportunity?

It’s a pity, we don’t live in such a society. The life of most of the people in our society depends on the circumstances of their birth, and “equality of opportunity” is not realized on many reasons in the society.

### How do we create that society?

Often we are told that we can create such a society by eliminating discrimination. Will eliminating discrimination be enough for “equality of opportunity?” America had abolished discrimination on racial grounds in the 1960s, but still non-white Americans could not secure the “equality of opportunity.” To achieve the fullness of “equality of opportunity”, “special opportunities” have to be made available to the classes that have been left out of the mainstream for a long time. This is also called “affirmative action.”

On this basis, the principle of affirmative action is used to realize the “equality of opportunity” in the society. Through these special opportunities, “equality of opportunity” is secured for the deprived and backward classes. One of these methods for special opportunities is “reservation.” Incidentally, reservation is given to different classes on different grounds like women, ex-servicemen, differently abled, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward classes, etc. But in India, politics and debate is centred only on caste-based reservation.

This debate mainly revolves around two points:

1. Why should there be reservation?
2. If there should be reservation, why caste-based?

Talking about “equality of opportunity” and special opportunities we have already discussed the first point — why there should be reservation. On the second point, i.e., “Why reservation should be caste based”, it is often said that by doing so merit is overlooked. In general, merit is used as the basis of opportunity, yet we find many shortcomings in this approach. For example, we compare a child from a rural area with a well-to-do city child. A rural child’s parents may be

less educated and earn their livelihood through daily wages, whereas the parents of an urban child may be educated. While on one hand the urban child would get constant help in studies from the family, the rural child does not have this advantage. Can we put these two on the same scale? Can both possess the same merit? The answer is negative.

The above example demonstrates that it is necessary

to provide special opportunities to certain sections to create “equality of opportunity.” A question that is asked in the debates on reservation is, “Why should it be caste-based? And if it is caste based, then why only for certain castes?” Around these questions, we often hear that caste is no longer relevant. This argument is given especially in urban areas. Consider some statistics on this.

Class	Population Proportion
Scheduled Caste	17% (16.2% as per 2011 census)
Scheduled Tribes	9% (8.2% as per 2011 census)
Other Backward Classes	44% (NSS)
<b>Reserved Category Total Population</b>	<b>70%</b>
Unreserved Category	30%

Table 1: Caste-Population Ratio

In the unreserved category, the proportion of upper-caste Hindu is about 20%. Subtracting women, the proportion remains only 10%.

TV Editor	88%
TV Panelist	70%
Article	72%

Table 2: Representation of Upper-Caste Hindus in Media (Oxfam Report, 2019)

Apart from this, the Upper-Caste Hindu hold 70-80% of other important posts.

According to a report by Satish Deshpande, based on NSSO data, the caste-ratio in various colleges (in urban areas where proportion of unreserved classes is slightly higher):

Class	Medical College	Engineering College	Graduate College
Hindu upper-caste	67	66	66
Hindu OBC	15	10	13
Hindu Scheduled Caste	2	2	4
Hindu Scheduled Tribe	1	2	1
Muslim	5	10	6

Table 3: Proportion of caste in colleges

In other important educational institutions 65-70% of the students are from the general category and the proportion among the teachers is 70%. All this is after having reservation.

Along with this, another argument is made, “Is caste the only basis of inequality.” It is true that there are other grounds of inequality in society, such as — female-male, rich-poor and rural-urban. Caste-based inequality is another such inequality. Let’s understand one the most seemingly cruel inequality of rich-poor on the basis of statistics.

Educational and employment status of people below poverty line by Ashwini Deshpande and Rajesh Ramachandran based on India Human Development Survey data:

Class	At least 12th pass education	Better work than daily wages
Poor Brahmin	40%	29%
Other Upper Caste Poor	16%	11%
Poor SC	12%	8%

Table 4: Educational and employment status of people below the poverty line

These figures show that all the poor are not the same. A poor Brahmin may not have money, but he has many resources which make him stand ahead of a Dalit poor. If the child of a poor Brahmin is unable to study, he can be sent to his relatives or friends for education. This is called “social capital.” This means, even if the upper-caste does not have wealth capital, it still has “social capital.” While a poor Dalit does not have this advantage.

Let us then examine some of the reasons, “Why reservation should be caste based”:

1. Caste is a mirror of inequality present in our society. By understanding caste, we can easily measure the inequality present in the society.
2. For centuries a particular section of our society has been kept away from education. Due to this, education has been limited to a few castes.
3. Of course there are many other inequalities, but there are caste-based differences among them.
4. Reservation is not the only method, there can be other means of affirmative action. Reservation is the ultimate and the strongest method.

Another question often asked is, “Reservation has been used for many years, so why not stop it now?” For this we must ask, “Has caste discrimination ended in our society?” Just like the treatment of a disease is stopped only after the disease is cured, similarly reservation can be stopped only after the caste-based discrimination is over.

No doubt reservation is necessary, but it is not sufficient. It needs some improvements. Moreover, reservation is only a solution to fight one kind of inequality. As we talked about earlier, there are four primary inequalities in our society, one of which is caste-based discrimination. For the disparity of poor-rich, scholarship should be given to poor students, and welfare schemes should be run for them. For rural-urban disparity, educational institutions should be opened in rural areas.

While talking about the reforms, we should keep in mind that reservation has only been able to benefit only a limited number of people. Reservation is helpful only for those who have completed schooling for at least 10th or 12th standard. Following are some of the suggested improvements:

1. Reforming school education. The benefit of reservation is available only to those who finish their schooling till class 10th and 12th. Therefore, improving government schools is even more important than reservation.
2. Promotion of Indian languages in education, competitive-examination or interview and ending the dominance of English. Only the rich have received the knowledge and education of English. The use of Indian language will provide opportunities to the weaker sections.
3. Reviewing reserved classes. We see, even among the reserved classes, many sub-classes have not been able to take advantage of the scheme, and the benefit of reservation has remained limited to a few sub-classes only. There can be two remedies for this. First, providing a sub-quota. Second, those who have received the benefit of reservation at one level in one generation, should be the last to get the benefit of reservation at that level in the next generation.
4. There should be continuous review of reserved category lists.
5. Increasing the scope of reservation, it should be implemented in the private sector as well. There are less than 2 crore jobs in the government sector in the entire country, and it is continuously decreasing. Reservation should also be implemented in the private sector. Such a provision is also in the US, where to promote “Workplace Diversity”, non-whites are given special opportunities in private companies.

Use this link to view this talk in detail <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPASCcZK0Ao>

### **3 Bilkis’s struggle embodies the call for justice, equality and security of the common citizen: Shalini Malviya**

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On the morning of August 15, 2022, when the nation was celebrating the 75th anniversary of its hard-fought independence, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a very emotional address from the Red Fort, exhorted the nation to stand up for the dignity of women in the form of “Nari Shakti”. The same evening, 11 rapists of Bilkis Bano and women in her family were released from the jail citing “good conduct”. The release of these rapists was celebrated with joy, by garlanding them and distributing sweets. Clearly, this episode can have only two interpretations. One, the Prime Minister’s call bears no relevance in his own state. Or, the Prime Minister was merely playing with words in

his speech from the ramparts of the Red Fort. Both of these prospects are distressing.

The acquittal of 11 convicts in the Bilkis Bano case cannot be seen as a legal quandary. In fact, it is a sequence of events, which needs to be seen layer-by-layer. Somewhere, embedded in these layers is the call for justice, equality and security of the common citizen. And every Indian citizen needs to introspect while assessing this case.

It took 19 years for Bilkis Bano to obtain justice from the courts. The convicts were jailed in 2008, but Bilkis’ struggle continued till 2018. The first year after the

horrific incident of the brutal gang rape of five-month pregnant Bilkis were extremely humiliating for her. She was not just a rape victim, she was also a witness to the gang rape and murder of her mother and sisters, and the violent murder of her 3-year-old daughter, whose killed by smashing her head against a stone. Despite such horror, she was not being heard. The State of Gujarat dragged its feet refusing to even register an FIR. It was only after the intervention of the National Human Rights Commission and the Supreme Court that the investigation was initiated by the CBI. The trial had to be moved from Gujarat to Maharashtra after Bilkis received death threats. Eventually, in 2008, the special court sentenced the convicts to life imprisonment, which was upheld by the Maharashtra High Court. Later, in 2018, the Supreme Court directed the Gujarat government to pay Rs 50 lakh as compensation and provide Bilkis a job and a house. It is worth mentioning that during this period, where Bilkis was trying to piece her life together, these dreaded criminals kept receiving parole.

And then on 15 August 2022, without even consulting the victim Bilkis Bano, all 11 convicts were released as per the policy of 1992. Whereas the 2014 policy made after the Nirbhaya incident clearly refuses to give immunity to rapists. There was ambiguity on the entire process, as Bilkis Bano was yet to receive the copy of the order of remission. It is also not clear whether the counsel for the convicts had a copy of the order of remission.

While many may see it as a personal tragedy of one person, but it should concern every citizen of the country. This case has trivialized the aspects of a just society. It shows our silence on everything, from the rape of women, to oppression of minorities, to failure of established process for justice, to ruthless acceptance of majoritarianism. After all this, despite protests from women across the country, the BJP even fielded the daughter of one of these rapists in the Gujarat elections. Bilkis has now approached the Honorable Supreme Court against the remission of sentence of the 11 convicts.

### **3.1 Rape is not just a sexual crime, it is a violence to humiliate a person**

Despite India granting equal voting rights for women as soon as it gained independence, the truth is that gender inequality and patriarchy remains a reality. While slogans of “Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao” are raised in various government offices and echoed in rallies, the ground reality is appalling. According to NCRB data, out of a total of 43,196 rape cases (pending and current) in the year 2020, only 23,693 were chargesheeted, while 28,808 were disposed off by the police. Even in cases that do reach the courts, the conviction rate is abysmal. NCRB data for 2020 shows that out of a total of 169,558 rape cases that went to trial, the accused was convicted in only 3,814 cases, while 5,403 were acquitted. It is also important to note

that many rape cases go unreported. According to the Fourth National Family Health Survey, more than 99.1% of cases of sexual violence go unreported. Here too, Bilkis knew her rapists, who were her neighbours, who used to buy milk from her, whom she addressed as chacha and bhaiya. According to her testimony, she begged him to spare her, but none of the men respected the neighbor’s trust, all blinded by hatred.

Bilkis fought back as a rape victim in the face of such a challenging system. A woman with no resources, barely educated, faced the onslaught of a system that hardly stands up for rape victims.

### **3.2 Hate is fueled by prejudice and a misplaced sense of injustice**

Hate crime is not a crime against an individual, it is motivated by prejudice against a social group because of difference of religion, language, ethnicity, beliefs. What happened in Gujarat in 2022 was the result of hatred perpetrated against a community, and was justified as a reaction to another hate crime, of the burning of a train in Godhra. While the burning of the train is certainly reprehensible and the perpetrators of this crime deserved punishment in accordance with the judicial system, nothing can justify the act of retaliation against a community. From the partition of the country, to the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, to the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits, to the 2002 Gujarat riots, to the Muzaffarnagar riots in UP, and the Jat agitation in Haryana, India has paid a heavy price for such hatred in the past. However, despite their populist attitude, political institutions were rarely seen encouraging notorious elements publicly. Now, the situation has come to such a pass that even this aspect of being “pained” by such heinous crimes no longer seems necessary. On the contrary, this is seen as a matter of pride.

In the recent past, we have witnessed mob lynchings on the pretext of cow slaughter, violence against Dalits for riding a horse or sporting a moustache, and glorification of those who spread hatred. Bilkis was the victim of a similar crime in 2002. But what is more worrying is that two decades later, when her perpetrators were released, they were greeted as heroes. The message is that hatred is acceptable as long as those in power stand with the perpetrators. This incident should be seen as a continuation of other such incidents, where the creators and promoters of Sulli Deals and Bulli Bai were let off lightly as being “innocent” youths, while the women continue to suffer humiliation and online trolling.

A report by statista.com states that between September 2015 and December 2019, there were 928 incidents of hate crimes, of which 619 were against Dalits and 196 against Muslims. Ironically, the NCRB had collected data on mob lynching and hate crime cases in 2017, but the exercise was discontinued as the Home Ministry deemed the data to be “unreliable.” The government gave this information in response to a ques-

tion asked in the Lok Sabha.

It would be a mistake to not consider the injustice meted out to Bilkis and her family as a hate crime. When the noise from mainstream media to social media is deafening, the release of such perpetrators of hate, aimed at increasing communal polarisation, cannot be taken lightly.

### 3.3 Legal is not always Just

The spirit of law in any legal system is to ensure justice. However, many have differentiated between a court of law and a court of justice. India's judicial system was built to ensure that these two courts converge and citizens get justice. Bilkis's arduous journey to justice is a testimony to this. Right when the state did not respond to Bilkis' pleas, the intervention of the Honorable Supreme Court ensured that she had access to justice. When the threats against Bilkis were brought to the notice of the Supreme Court, her case was transferred to another state to ensure a fair trial. However, what is coming to the fore now is disturbing.

As the events leading to remission unfold, it is understood that earlier this year, one of the 11 convicts filed a clemency petition in the Gujarat High Court, which declined to entertain it as the Supreme Court had taken a stand on this earlier. The Supreme Court directed the State of Gujarat to investigate the plea. This was despite the fact that the original trial had to be shifted out of Gujarat to ensure a fair trial. It is also important to point out that the Supreme Court has a long list of pendencies, appeals and cases that do not see the light of day, yet such a petition was heard and moved.

A glimpse into the state of despair of our judicial system is disheartening for any Indian with limited resources. In a written reply on pendency of cases in courts, in March 2022, Law Minister Kiren Rijju informed the Lok Sabha that there are over 4.70 crore cases pending in various courts in the country, of which 70,514 are pending in the Supreme Court, 58,94,060 cases are pending in the 25 High Courts, and 4,10,47,976 cases are pending in the Sessions and District Courts. It does not include figures for Arunachal

Pradesh, Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Did Bilkis know in which system she had set out to seek justice? Perhaps then the pendency of cases was not as bad as it is now. But it certainly wouldn't have been easy even then. In such a situation, Bilkis's courage and patience have to be appreciated. This is proof of her unwavering faith in the judicial system of the country. Her victory inspired many who believe in the law of the land and take up the daunting task of going through a long process for justice. But the impunity of its culprits reduces the hope and faith of a common Indian in the judiciary. Hence, the question any citizen must ask is, "Is there really any justification for going through such a long judicial process, if ultimately it is the will of the Executive which will prevail." Honorable Supreme Court is legally right to forward the plea to the State Government, but is it the sole responsibility of the highest authority of our Judiciary, to forward plea on technical parameters, without evaluating the facts, as to what was the crime, what was its seriousness, what will be its impact on the right and desire of the common citizen to live in a society free from fear?

Amidst these questions arising in the country, the Government remain silent. As if this silence and ambiguity surrounding the entire process was not enough, an elected legislator from Gujarat justified the release and "good conduct" of the convicts by saying that they were "sanskari Brahmins." The implication is quite clear and startling, that some citizens are more privileged than others because they belong to a certain class, caste and religion. Such statements only show the audacity of the executive. And please don't miss the silence of the National Commission for Women and the Minorities Commission amidst this.

Ultimately the onus is on the citizens to come together as inheritors of our great nation, and see the layer-upon-layer of this chronology of injustice to Bilkis, and understand the pain and suffering hidden in the midst of it. Our Constitution has entrusted us with this responsibility, and we cannot turn our backs on it for the sake of a better just country, future and present.

## 4 The way to the country's prosperity lies in the MSP: Ramjanam

The 2020-21 Farmer's Movement has created a stir in the world of political, economic and philosophical thoughts. The movement has forced the thinkers of the world, including India, to deliberate a new economic and political system based on the values of country's soil and the ideas of justice, sacrifice, and brotherhood. Through its programs, slogans, and other activities, the farmer's movement gave such heralds. Through the Kisan Sansad organized during the movement, the farmer asserted that they are not merely producers of food grains, but also know how to run the country and

the society. Through the Mahila Sansad, the farmer declared that they recognize the mother of this nation — the Mother Earth and the Mother Ganga — and subsist their lives on the country's soil; they will not let the bread be locked in a vault. The farmers also raised the old slogan of Har-Har Mahadev and Allahu-Akbar, due to which the BJP's crop of hatred was crushed for a while. Glimpse of Swadeshi and Swaraj was also found in the farmers movement against the corporatization of agriculture. Peasant society has the understanding and the strength to break through the

cruel economic siege of the world and carry forward the policy of Swaraj.

During the freedom movement, the great farmer leader Sahajanand Saraswati said, "The one who produces food and cloth, will lead the nation". Chaudhary Charan Singh, the most influential leader and thinker of the peasant society in independent India used to say that the path to the prosperity of the country and road to powers of Delhi goes through the farmer's fields.

After compelling the government to withdraw the three agricultural laws, today the farmer's movement has entrenched on the demand for minimum support price (MSP). The demand for minimum support price is basically a demand for increase of the income of the farmers. It is a demand to bring farming out of misery and to end the unprofitability in agriculture. It is a demand that the farmer should get a fair price for his labor and knowledge. Today, the income of most of the farmers of the country is meager and they are trapped in debt because farming is unprofitable. In independent India, the issue of unprofitability of agriculture was first raised by Dr Ram Manohar Lohia. Today, most of the people associated with agriculture are migrating towards the cities to earn their livelihood. The agricultural households are surviving on the income of the urban laborers who have been displaced from agriculture. Demonetisation, pandemic, and the brutal unabated economic system, has made the condition of these laborers even worse. Poverty and suicides are on a rise due to lack of fair price for the farmers' crops and the workers' labor. Farmers are forced to sell their crops at a loss. Whenever the farmers demand fair price for their crops, they are martyred using guns and sticks. Be it Mandasaur or the recent farmer's movement.

When the farmers get a good price for their crops, the markets become vibrant. Along with the economic growth, it also brings prosperity to the society. Hence, the demand for MSP becomes more critical. The demand for legal guarantee on MSP is a justified demand of the farmer's movement. Legal guarantee implies that whether it is procured by the government or bought by the market, the farmer must receive at least the minimum support price for their produce.

Unprofitability in agriculture and unemployment has taken the form of an epidemic. What is the relationship between these two major diseases of the Indian society? A closer look shows that the root cause of both the diseases is the same. The unprofitability in agriculture and the ever-increasing unemployment are rooted in the current political and economic system of our country. The great crisis of unemployment is due to the economic system which flourishes only when both agriculture and wages are maintained at a deficit. The cure for this epidemic lies in MSP. As soon as the farmer's crop and worker's labor and knowledge starts getting a fair value, the solution to the unprofitability in agriculture and rising unemployment will emerge.

Today, more than half of the country's population is employed in agriculture and allied sectors. My own understanding is that if peasants and textile workers receive a reasonable income the country's unemployment will reduce by half. MSP is not just a solution for the income of the farmers, it is also a solution to the unemployment in this country.

Today, the world is passing through a period of upheaval. Systems that usurp man's labor, knowledge, heritage, and resources have taken shape. The economic structure of the world has forced the people earning livelihood wages and doing low-income trade to wander hither and thither. This economic system finds the root of its development in greed and envy. The irony is that the economic structure which was supposed to bring prosperity to the people, is bringing desperation, frustration, and suicide. The economy of not just the whole country but the whole world functions by keeping the farming unprofitable. The gleaming mansions of the big cities, the wide airstrips, such development model rests on the loot of the value of labor and knowledge of the farmer, artisan and worker.

The farmer's movement demonstrates that the next social change and the new systems should be thought of under the light of the values of justice, sacrifice and brotherhood. The call to end the loss and loot is the voice of changing the country and the world. It is a demand for change. It is the demand for expansion and protection of small capital, which provides employment to a large population of India. Farmers, artisans, weavers; the cart, track, and gunti vendors; and shopkeepers of local markets earn their livelihood with small capital. Along with the peasants, the larger community working on small capital is facing the brunt of merciless economic dictatorship. The solution to unemployment lies in the protection of small capital. These communities also hold the power to save the environment and nature. The way to equality and prosperity in India also emerges from call for change.

The struggle against social inequality in India and the formula for the next phase of social justice also lies in the farmer's movement. The meaning and context of the demand for MSP of the farmer's movement can be understood like this:

1. The demand for MSP is a demand for equitable income. This demand has the power to cut or pierce the merciless economic trap that has engulfed the world. Our demand is to make MSP a legal right.
2. The demand for MSP is a solution to the question of employment and income, and it is the basis of the unity of the larger society of farmers, artisans, workers or those earning their livelihood with a small capital.
3. Every farm household should have an income suchlike a government employee. The struggle for MSP is the beginning of movement in this direction.

4. The full value of the farmer's labor and knowledge will be achieved only when they receive the fair price for their crop.

The future of the country will only be secured when farming is profitable. You may believe it or not, but the fate of our future generations and India is entwined with the fate of the farmers and the farming. In independent India, artisans, farmers, villages and the poor have been victims of an economic loot. Bearing all the political-economic onslaughts, these communities are challenging the merciless barbaric power with the values of justice, sacrifice and brotherhood. This has been successfully demonstrated during the year-

long farmer's movement led by the Samyukta Kisan Morcha. Today the economy of the entire world is in turmoil. Bringing our country's economy on the path of equality and prosperity is both a challenge and an opportunity for us. It is hoped, that in such a situation, the farmer's leadership of the country will take a strong initiative for a new economic structure, and will play a decisive role in determining the direction of the economic and political future of the country. Come, let us all contribute together in furthering the struggle for the just demand of farmers' income — the MSP — to save the country, world, society and nature-environment.

## 5 Broadening of Social Justice — Beyond Mobilization: Sunil Kumar

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The politics of social justice has been an important part of Indian political philosophy and discussion since a long time. Various issues concerning the development and prosperity of the deprived and exploited communities who have suffered social discrimination have been discussed in social and political thought. Primarily, the aim of these discussions is to bring the underprivileged and downtrodden classes into the mainstream, where guaranteeing the constitutional and social rights and respect is central.

Of course, today, the politics of social justice is often found drifting from its original objectives and principles, but we must note that this disconnect has arisen only due to self-centered politics, where the leaders did not raise the issues of social justice for their greed of power. This disparity or compromise in politics has created brought some questions before the politics of social justice.

This question of significance of social justice seems more necessary when Hindutva forces are spreading social frenzy using political patronage. Supporters of social justice believe that the social and cultural poison spread by Hindutva elements can only be challenged through the politics of social justice. At a time when the idea of Hindutva versus social justice mobilization is being spread large, it is necessary to ask whether the politics of social justice matches ideas like mobilization? At the same time, it must be asked whether the use of the word "mobilization" in line with the goal of broadening of social justice? Does this word not have the opposite sense of the idea of social justice?

### 5.1 Idea of Social justice and Mobilization

In the context of Indian politics, the word or the concept of mobilization has been used frequently. Primarily the mobilization is organizing around identity, religion, community, or caste. But the concept of mobilization is not limited to organizing only, it has been

further used for political or electoral purpose using social or religious divide. Politics based on mobilization does talk about interests and justice-injustice, but essentially it tries to harvest its political crops. Politics that emerged after 1990 has presented two examples of mobilization.

The first and most fierce mobilization is clearly visible in the politics of Hindutva. Under this politics, various sub-castes and sects have been consolidated in the name of Hinduism. Herein, in the name of Hinduism, attempts were made to create social and communal frenzy by pitting various sub-castes against Muslims and other minority classes. During the Narendra Modi's Government, this mobilization, in its poisonous form, is constantly threatening the existence of India with many questions. It is seen here that the use of mobilization is more to create a conflict with the other minority communities than for the struggle against injustice.

The glimpse of the second mobilization is seen in dishonesty in the name of social justice. In order to get rid of caste oppression and backwardness, political experiments used mobilization by wearing a cloak of social justice. Along with the dispute of the temple-mosque, Mandal and Bahujan politics also rose in Indian politics. While this politics makes tireless efforts to provide justice and respect to the underprivileged and the exploited, it remains limited to some sub-castes of Dalits and the backward, the advancement of which has been presented as social justice. As a result of this politics, social justice has become narrowed and limited only to a few sub-caste of Dalits and backwards. In this politics, mobilization was undoubtedly different from the politics of Hindutva, but it has also shown a glimpse of negative politics. Even the leaders of this politics have fostered the distance between the castes and sub-castes for personal benefits and greed of power.

Two great examples of mobilization, Hindutva and

Mandal-Bahujan politics, clearly suggest that in this stream, identity, religion, and caste has been used in politics only for spreading frenzy or conflict. This perception makes us ask, whether social justice is so narrow that it would be based on frenzy? Will the politics of social justice be used to obtain political benefits by differentiation between castes and sub-castes?

## 5.2 Broadening of social justice

A positive consciousness has developed in the contemporary society through the tireless efforts of the leaders and the activists of social justice. It is a matter of joy that this consciousness is not limited to the deprived or exploited classes, but is considered an important principle for social upliftment by the supporters of progressive and egalitarian ideas. The ideology of social justice has been understood as a retaliation or alternative to the narrow and parochial ideology Hindutva or BJP/RSS. Of course, idea of social justice is considered as a solution to religious and cultural fundamentalism, but it is not limited to this. While the politics of saffronisation creates tension, hatred and frenzy among different religious classes, and raised questions against the principles of Indianness, the politics of social justice protects the fundamental principles of Indian Constitution and Indianness.

Similarly, social justice is vocal about the communities deprived due to social barriers. Understanding the principle of social justice, it seems that its prevalence should not be limited into caste narrowness, as has been in the Indian context for a long time. Social justice talks about all classes and strives that all classes are assured rights and resources. The concept or principle of social justice is a progressive and egalitarian theory in which the primary focus is to establish fraternity between all identities, classes, communities and sects. Of course, the politics so far, has in the name of social justice, tried to create tension and struggle on the basis of caste, but it will not be justified to limit this concept here. To broaden the politics of social justice, it has to be focused mainly on two subjects.

**Beyond the scope of caste** In today's era, the concept and politics of social justice will have to adopt the path of social empowerment, moving beyond Mandal and Bahujan politics. There will be importance of caste justice in this politics, but it will have to move beyond the caste bound-

ary, where social harmony efforts will be present along with caste justice. Similarly, the politics of social justice should not be concentrated only to some castes or sub-castes. Being limited to some castes or sub-castes, the concept of social justice takes a negative form. In the context of contemporary India, the concept of social justice should be taken beyond this limit of caste. Undoubtedly, Dalit, tribal and backward castes have lagged behind in mainstream development, and have faced social and economic injustice, and the politics of social justice will have to struggle and work continuously on these subjects. But the concept of social justice should not be limited only here. For a long time, social justice has been considered as the politics of caste justice in the Indian context. In order to be meaningful in today's politics, other social classes will have to be included in this concept. As times change, the changes in demands and problems will have to be incorporated in the politics of social justice.

**Continuous synergy with mass movements** In today's era, the idea of social justice will have to be constantly coordinated or harmonized by mass movements. Social justice began with movements and struggle, but with the passage of time, its link with mass movement was broken. Just as the politics of social justice has to be carried along all the deprived communities, similarly it has to be kept in harmony with the mass movement and struggles of these classes.

For a long time, the flag of the social justice has been limited around the Mandal and Bahujan politics. Instead of contributing to the politics of social justice, it has limited its reach. The main reason for this is to consider the concept of social justice as caste politics. For a long time, it was believed that only the politics of Dalit and backward society is the politics of social justice. On a deeper introspection, it seems that the politics of social justice remained only as the politics or political empowerment of Dalits and backward castes and some sub-castes. This kind of politics cannot be social justice in any sense, it cannot even be considered the politics of the entire Dalit and backward societies. In today's era, the social justice will have to be broadened, only then this idea can prove to be the retaliation of Hindutva politics.

## 6 History of Kisan Movement: Mamta Nayak

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Farmers' movements has a long history, and in this chronicle, numerous peasant rebellions from different regions of the world have been recorded. A peasant movement is a social movement related to agricultural policies and the rights of farmers. The main demands of these movements are focused on better

prices for agricultural produce, better wages for agricultural laborers, better work, and increase in agricultural production. The credit for the first organized peasant movement in India goes to Swami Sahajanand Saraswati. Despite being a dandi sanyasi, Sahajanand Saraswati saw roti as God and termed the farmers



greater than Almighty.

In another remarkable event, about 115 years ago, in 1907, Ayyankali laid the foundation of an organization called "Sadhu Jan Paripalan Sangam". This organization worked for the right to education for the Dalit children. On the call of Ayyankali, Dalit farm-laborers belonging to Pulaya and other castes began a historic protest. The primary demands of this movement were, to ensure the right to education for Dalit children, to end the violence against farm-laborers and stop implicating them in false cases, to cancel the breast tax, to end the practice of serving water and tea in different cups to the Dalits in the shops, to provide the time for rest during the work, and for the payment of wages in cash instead of grains or other goods.

This protest was significant in many ways. First, it was India's first movement under the leadership of Shudra-Dalit-Kisan-Mazdoor, in which millions of Dalit farm-laborers participated. Second, it was a direct rebellion against the varna and class system, where farmers and laborers, who were considered as servants, started demanding compensation for their hard work. As the protest continued, the landlords hoped that the laborers would return to work when they would run out of food, but the movement remained unwavering. Seeing the situation deteriorating, the landlords, with the mediation of the princely state, conceded the demands for increasing the wages of Dalits, allowing their children in schools, and their right to travel freely.

The Farmer's Movement of 2020-21, which began from Bharat Bandh on 25 September 2020, lasted longer than a year. This movement saw many ups and downs, endured a lot, but was finally victorious. The biggest

credit for this victory goes to the farmer's leadership, who made wise decisions, and defeated the Government's tricks through ground action.

Farmers made camps on the borders of Delhi — in Tikri, Singhu, Shahjahanpur, Ghazipur, Chilla, Jhatikara, etc. They were demanding the repeal of three agricultural laws, withdrawal of the electricity amendment bill, proper resolution of the stubble problem, and strengthening of the mandis. Farmers arrived at the borders of Delhi with complete preparedness. Bringing their ration, clothes, quilt, gas cylinders, utensils, they showed that their intentions were resolute.

The success of the farmer's movement can be recognized from its impact in uniting the common people. After independence, this was the largest farmer's movement in India, which lasted for such a long duration.

It is noteworthy that under the recommendations of the Swaminathan Commission Report of 2004, the minimum support price (MSP) should be fixed at one and a half times the comprehensive cost. But instead privatization is being promoted under the guise of the Shanta Kumar Commission Report of 2014, which talks about withdrawing the government's responsibilities in the agriculture and public distribution system. This committee says that the government should reduce the number of beneficiaries in the public distribution system from 67 percent to 40 percent. That is, its entire goal was to reduce the government investment and promote private investment.

Let us understand what were the three laws against which the farmers of the country had to rise up:

**Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020** This act was the chief cause of contention between the farmers and the Government. Here, the axis of the farmers' demand was to guarantee the MSP and to keep the corporates away from agriculture. This law is a means of providing free reins to the private corporations, instead of improving the APMC (Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee) mandis. It is a provision for allowing the corporates to open private mandis independent from the APMC, which would not be under control or management of the Government. It creates two parallel markets, instead of "One Nation One Market."

**Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act 2020** This law removes the limit to stock agricultural produce. That is, in layman's terms, under this law, now the farmers and corporates can hoard agricultural produce in large quantities. It is worth noting that in the year 1955, law was enacted against hoarding to prevent black marketing. That is, hoarding, which was once illegal and black marketing, is now being made legal. The question arises as to who has the resources to stock large quantity of agricultural produce? According to the 70th survey of the NSSO (National Social Survey Office), only 57.8 percent (or 9.2 crore) of the total agricultural households (15.614 crore) in rural areas own farmland. 86.58 percent of these landowning farmers are small and marginal farmers. These are the farmers whose cultivable land is less than one hectare i.e. 2.5 acres. 69.44 percent of these farmers survive on less than an acre. In other words, most of the farmers in India are small and marginal. Let alone stocking agricultural produce, they don't even have a pucca house. This shows that the law was being brought only to make corporate black marketing legal.

**Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020** This law is called contract farming in common language. Under this law, the farmer would be able to sign direct contract with businesses and corporates and sow their seeds for them. On this issue, Bhartiya Kisan Union leader Sahab Singh says that when this law will be implemented, the farmers will become bonded laborers, and they won't even be able to go to court.

The voice against these agricultural laws was first raised from Punjab. But where initially Punjab led the movement, later farmers of other states of India also joined. This farmers' movement will be remembered as one of the great movements of this century. Certainly, the movement was successful and the farmers were victorious. Yet, the farmers were apprehensive. This is because their problems were not solved, just some new troubles were overcome, which the Government wanted to bring under the guise of the new laws. Farmer's leaders and farmer brethren realized the true intention of the Government, which opened the pages of the history of centuries-old exploitation in front of them. They united and came on the streets, so that the capitalist forces does not prevail. This was a struggle between two classes, going on for centuries, in which the government had to bow down and the farmers were victorious.

This victory is a huge achievement for the farmers. It is not just the victory of the farmers but is also the victory of all the citizens of the country who eat food. It is the victory to protect the food security of the countrymen. It is the victory to strengthen the belief which has, through a strong, organized, and united movement, humbled the greatest narcissistic rulers. It is also a victory for protect the regressing democracy.

It was on the morning of 19 November 2021, that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address truly brought a relief to the apprehensive countrymen for the first time. In his address, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, announced the repeal the three agricultural laws — Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act 2020, Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act 2020, and Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act 2020 — imposed on the farmers a year ago.

This announcement worked to reduce the suffering of farmers who were facing countless calamities, severe winters and summers, rains and storms, and the propaganda of mainstream media and social media. This victory is against the Government's atrocities — batons, water canons, tear gas shells, fake cases, barricades, barbed wires. There was no such tactic left, which the Government had not adopted to crush this movement. Farmers were called Khalistani, traitors, terrorists, Maoists, tukde-tukde gang, and Pakistan supported. This victory is also against the ongoing saffronisation in the country, which is trying to divide the society on the basis of religion, caste, language and region. Due to this movement, more than 700 farmers lost their lives. It is tragic that they have not received justice till date.

For a year, farmers sat on the streets peacefully, forsaking their lives to save their fields, they stayed on the morcha indefinitely, renouncing their home, family, and fields. That too to raise their demands to a Government which was not ready to consider them a

farmer. Let alone the winter and the rains, the farmers also endured the media and saffron propaganda.

The changes in Constitution reflects the continuous change in the society. But whether the society and the laws are heading towards development or towards destruction, can take the country ahead or back. It is not necessary that every change is improvement, some changes also become the cause of destruction. In the name of historical reform, the people of the country have suffered demonetisation and saw a terrible outcome. This one step ended millions of jobs and many lives. GST was hailed as India's economic independence, claiming to increase the GDP growth rate by 2 percent. But regrettably, instead of increasing GDP, it fell.

Announcing the withdrawal of three agricultural laws, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "I want to say with a sincere and pure heart that there may have been a inadequacy in our penance, due to which we could not communicate the light of the lamp like truth to some farmer brothers. Today I have come to tell you, and the whole country, that we have decided to withdraw three agricultural laws."

The clouds of propaganda, which were raising questions against the farmers, were now subsiding. The "sincere and pure heart" cannot be ascertained, but this movement forced the Prime Minister to accept that the people in the movement were true farmers. Otherwise, he had addressed them with names like "andolanjeevi."

Prime Minister's words were, "We could not communicate the light of the lamp like truth to some farmers." Actually, the truth is that the foundation of these agricultural laws rested on a big lie, in which there was nothing other than deceit for the farmers. At the time when the nation was under lockdown, the Union Government had passed these ordinances without discussing the farmer organizations. It was not just keeping the farmers in the dark, but not less than a fraud.

In September 2020, within a week, the three Bills were passed in both the houses of Parliament without discussion, and signed by the President. In the Rajya Sabha, the opposition leaders were thrown out of the House and the bills were passed. If these laws were light of lamps like truth, then why did the Prime Minister need to pass it in the dark? As for the matter to understand these three laws, it is important to recognize that today's farmer is not illiterate. If they are asking for record of their accounts, then they know how to read and understand.

## 7 Timeline of Farmer's Movement

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**5 June 2020** The three agricultural bills were brought as an ordinance.

**14 September 2020** All three agricultural bills were

introduced in Parliament.

**17 September 2020** Bill passed in Lok Sabha.

**20 September 2020** Bill passed in the Rajya Sabha.

**24 September 2020** Three day rail Roko campaign of farmers of Punjab.

**25 September 2020** Farmers from all over the country took to the streets on the farmer's organizations call for Bharat Bandh.

**26 September 2020** Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) broke away from the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) on the subject of the agricultural bill.

**27 September 2020** The President gives assent to the Agricultural Bills and three Agricultural Bills became law.

**25 November 2020** Farmers' organizations in Punjab and Haryana call for the "Delhi Chalo" movement. Delhi Police refused to allow them into Delhi on the grounds of COVID protocol.

**26 November 2020** Farmers marching towards Delhi faced water cannons and tear gas shells in Ambala district of Haryana while the police tried to disperse them.

**28 November 2020** Home Minister Amit Shah laid a condition, that only after vacating the borders of Delhi and going to the protest site in Burari, that he would talk with the farmers. The farmers turned down his proposal.

**3 December 2020** The Government held talks with the representatives of the farmers for the first round. The meeting was inconclusive.

**5 December 2020** Second round of talks between farmers and the Government were also inconclusive.

**8 December 2020** Farmers call for Bharat Bandh. Farmers of all states support this call.

**11 December 2020** The Bhartiya Kisan Sangh associated with the RSS headed to the Supreme Court against the three agricultural laws.

**16 December 2020** The Supreme Court proposed the formation of a panel with representatives of the Government and farmer organizations to end the deadlock on the controversial agricultural laws.

**21 December 2020** Farmers went on a one-day hunger strike at all dharna sites.

**4 January 2021** The 7th round of talks between the Government and the farmer leaders were also inconclusive because the Union Government did not agree to withdraw the agricultural laws.

**7 January 2021** The Supreme Court agreed to hear the petitions against new laws and protests on January 11.

**11 January 2021** The Supreme Court reprimanded the Union Government for dealing with the farmer's protest. The court said that it would constitute a committee headed by a former Chief Justice of India to end the deadlock.

**12 January 2021** The Supreme Court stayed the implementation of 3 controversial agricultural laws and formed a committee.

**26 January 2021** Tractor parade was called by farmer organizations on Republic Day.

**28 January 2021** In Ghaziabad district, the administration issued an order to vacate the protest site at night. Tension increased on the Ghazipur border, in which the tears of Rakesh Tikait rejuvenated the movement.

**2 February 2021** Case of foreign support and toolkit.

**18 February 2021** Call for the nationwide "Rail Roko" by Samyukta Kisan Morcha.

**27 May 2021** To mark the six months of the movement, farmers observed "Black Day" and burnt the effigy of the Government.

**5 June 2021** The protesters celebrated the Total Revolution Day to mark the first year of the announcement of agricultural laws.

**July 2021** Farmers began a parallel "Kisan Sansad" near the Parliament during the monsoon session, in which 200 farmers took part daily.

**7 August 2021** Leaders of 14 opposition parties held a meeting in the Parliament and decided to attend the Kisan Sansad held at Jantar Mantar in Delhi.

**28 August 2021** Many farmers were injured and one died in the lathicharge on farmers in Karnal by Haryana Police.

**5 September 2021** Farmer leaders organized a massive show of strength in Muzaffarnagar.

**7-9 September 2021** Farmers reached Karnal in large numbers and surrounded the mini secretariat.

**4 October 2021** Ashish Mishra, son of Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Mishra Teni, ran over the farmers protesting in Lakhimpur. 8 killed in incident, many injured.

**14 October 2021** Ashish Mishra sent to jail by SIT.

**29 October 2021** Delhi Police started removing barricades from the Ghazipur border, where farmers were protesting against the agricultural laws of the Union Government.

**19 November 2021** Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the withdrawal of agricultural laws.

**21 November 2021** Samyukta Kisan Morcha sent a letter to the Prime Minister regarding their pending demands, including the demand for MSP.

**9 December 2021** Mr. Sanjay Aggarwal, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, wrote a letter to the Samyukta Kisan Morcha, on the behalf of the Union Government, to fulfill the pending demands of the farmers soon, and urged to end the movement.

**11 December 2021** Samyukta Kisan Morcha suspended the Farmer's Movement which lasted for over one year.

## 8 Youth for Swaraj: Puneet Kumar

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Youth for Swaraj is a youth organization associated with Swaraj Abhiyan. The organization believes in socialist ideologies inspired by great Indian leaders and thinkers like Mahatma Gandhi, Ram Manohar Lohia, Acharya Narendra Dev, Jayaprakash Narayan. The democratic values of India are paramount to us. We want to build a nation that is based on the ideas of justice, fraternity, and freedom.

Youth for Swaraj organizes regular discussions programs on social media platforms like Facebook Live and Twitter Spaces. We aspire to create a bridge between the energetic youth with creative thoughts and the experienced and learned senior members of the Swaraj Abhiyan. This helps us in finding solutions to the problems that our country is facing.

Some programs organized by Youth for Swaraj in recent weeks:

1. On 28 September 2022, Youth for Swaraj member Sanjeev Kumar held a Facebook Live discussion on the subject of "Destruction of Himalaya: Truth, facts and solutions" with Kulbhushan Upamanyu, the president of the Himalaya Niti Abhiyan. The destruction of Himalaya and the environment began with the advent of the Industrial Revolution. If any abrupt change occurs in the Himalayas, it does not remain confined to here, but affects the entire environment. The current mainstream development model is extremely destructive for the Himalayas, the result of which is in front of us. Today, there is a need for a development model which is sustainable. Video link — <https://www.facebook.com/youth4swaraj/videos/760604128567579/?mibextid=nnvzg8>
2. On 11 October 2022, the 120th birth anniversary of Jayaprakash Narayan, Puneet Kumar, member of Youth for Swaraj, held a Facebook Live discussion with Prof Anand Kumar, the senior leader of Swaraj Abhiyan, on the subject of "Relevance of JP Narayan in contemporary India". In this discussion, Prof Anand Kumar recalled how there are some similarities and some

differences between the Emergency and the India of today. He admitted with sadness that the Total Revolution of JP could not come true, and problems like poverty, unemployment, corruption remains in front of us. The contribution of youth will be essential for realizing JP's dreams. Video link — <https://www.facebook.com/youth4swaraj/videos/668120511199838/?mibextid=nnvzg8>

3. On 14 November 2022, Puneet Kumar of Youth for Swaraj spoke to Rajiv Yadav, the youth representative of Rihai Manch, on the ongoing farmer's movement against Azamgarh International Airport, through Facebook Live. Rajiv Yadav said that farmers from 8 villages of Azamgarh, who will be directly affected by the construction of the international airport, are protesting against it. This protest is a fight to save home, farmland and life. The administration is trying to suppress it brutally. Yet, the courage and number of the farmers is getting bigger. Video link — <https://www.facebook.com/youth4swaraj/videos/17704679766666668308/?mibextid=nnvzg8>
4. Youth for Swaraj observed Constitution Day on 26 November 2022. It was the historic date of 26 November 1949, when we adopted and enacted the Constitution of India. Prashant Bhushan, advocate of the Supreme Court and member of the Swaraj Abhiyan, shared his views on the topic of "Indian Constitution: Challenges and the road ahead" through Twitter Space. He highlighted the core structure of the Constitution which is under attack today. The democratic system guaranteed by the Constitution is shattering. Constitutional bodies are losing their autonomy. For the road ahead, we will need to reconsider the electoral system, the electoral bonds have to be eliminated. The mass movements on the ground will strengthen the roots of Indian democracy. Video link — <https://twitter.com/i/spaces/1ypkkgmqawzkj>

## 9 In this hour: Rajendra Rajan

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You can read history no matter when  
But at times such moments arrive  
When you watch history being made  
That is the moment  
When the truth doesn't lie beneath the covers  
Does not stay away or hidden beside  
Standing at the fore  
So that everyone can see  
Even those who see nothing clearly  
This is the moment  
When the mountain of pain melts away  
When a sleeping dream becomes a deluge  
Overflowing on the streets  
When the man running backwards  
Stands tall in the shadow of the bayonets  
This is the moment  
When the game of lure and deception intensifies  
When the conspiracies get deep  
And greed vehemently casts its net

When new weapons of intimidation are tried  
And those who read ballads in the glory of the regime  
Sing louder  
When the benefits of keeping eyes closed is advised  
And not opening your mouth is rewarded  
When oppression appears dressed as justice  
You can put your price if you want  
Sing in harmony with the courtiers  
Or remain silent  
Or take the risk  
Look into the eyes of a new history in the making  
Shake its hands and walk beside it  
As far as you can  
In this hour  
When history is being made  
The trial gets tough  
And asks everyone  
Which side are you on?

## 10 This is such a regime: Rajendra Rajan

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In your fields  
They want to reap their profits  
They want to loot your hard work  
They want to hold you in bondage  
They want to enslave your mind  
So that their every decision  
You accept without hesitation  
They want to teach you such blind devotion  
That whatever crimes they commit  
No matter how many conspiracies they hatch  
You cheer them  
This is the new regime  
Standing on the debris of democracy  
Which has erased the difference  
Between truth and falsity  
Which changed the meanings of word

Put thorns in your course  
Said your way is easier than ever  
Besieging you on all sides  
Said that you have  
More opportunities, more options  
Putting an artifice in your hand  
Said here is your gift  
They are calling the ruin a reform  
Bad days are called acche din  
Propaganda and repression are their weapons  
This is such a regime  
Which snaps everyday at the poor  
But wags its tails in front of the rich magnates  
It is not easy to fight this regime  
But there is nothing more necessary.