

RAJYA SABHA

***SUPPLEMENT**

TO

SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE

(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

Thursday, February 25, 2016/ Phalguna 6, 1937 (Saka)

SHORT DURATION DISCUSSION

**Situation Arising in the Central Institutions of Higher Education
with Specific Reference to Jawaharlal Nehru University and
University of Hyderabad -*Contd.***

Shri Javed Ali Khan: Slogans raised against the nation in the campus of JNU were wrong and should be condemned. It should be ensured by the Government as well as by all the citizens who love this country that such slogans are never raised again. This is the question of consensus. Patriotism is not merely related to political parties. There is general consensus among all people who have faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India and who get inspiration from the heritage of freedom struggle that we would not tolerate anything against the geographical unity of India and brotherhood of our citizens. Incidents of sloganeering in the praise of Afzal Guru and Yakub Menon and against the Indian nation are not new within the territory of India. Such slogans are shouted every now and then in Jammu & Kashmir. But, before branding other political parties as anti-national on this issue, the Government should also look towards his allies.

*This Synopsis is not an authoritative record of the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha.

The strategy of BJP on the incident of JNU is to underplay the issue of Rohit Vemula and overplay the issue of Afzal Guru, as their idea of nationalism will not be vindicated without doing it. The idea of nation, as enshrined in the Constitution, is followed by most of the persons sitting in this House, but the idea of nation, which BJP subscribes is either of a Hindu nation or of ultra-nationalism. We should take the issue of JNU very seriously and political parties should not caste aspersion on each other. We should carry forward the glorious tradition of JNU on the basis of political consensus and should discourage the anti-national forces at every front.

Shri K.C. Tyagi: Now, justice is also being delivered on the basis of caste. Hence, the next agitation should be on the issue of representation of dalit and deprived classes in the judiciary. I wish that whenever an FIR is registered by a dalit under the SC-ST Act, the accused should be arrested within 24 hours. In the incident of Hyderabad, no action has been taken so far against the accused named in the FIR. 18 dalit students who were getting higher education were forced to commit suicide within four years. Dalit students like Rohit are noticed very occasionally, as 71.3 per cent SC-ST students discontinue their education before passing their high school and only one or two students among those who still continue for higher study rise to the level of Rohit. And, when a student like Rohit is killed or forced to commit suicide, the possibility of becoming a Rohit is finished. Scholarship to Rohit and some of his fellow dalit scholars was stopped. How could they take pride in the name of their nation? When they follow Periyar, they are branded as casteist. When they realized the need of a separate organization, the Ambedkar Student Association (ASA) was formed. They no longer want to remain in slavery and are fighting against the '*Manuvaad*' through the organization.

Now, on the issue of Kashmir, the common minimum programme finalized between BJP and PDP says that it would involve all the stakeholders of Jammu & Kashmir including Hurriyat Conference and the Hurriyat Conference says that Kashmir is not an integral part of India. We do not possess lesser passion of nationalism

in comparison to the mainstream political parties. Hence, it is not correct to brand entire opposition as anti-national. Even during the emergency in 1974-75, you and I were declared as anti-national, but that was wrong and similarly, the present occurrence is also wrong. According to the National Crime Bureau, on an average after every 14 minutes a dalit is victimized and four dalit women are raped, 13 dalits are killed and 6 dalits are kidnapped within a week. Rohit's death pains me because 71.3 percent children belonging to SCs and STs leave their studies before reaching high school. Out of few remaining meritorious students only one or two are born as Rohit. The scholarship of Rohit and his friends was held up. Their stipends were held up. How they can say with pride that this country is theirs? Before concluding I would like to say categorically that we have the feeling of nationalism to the extent of the other main stream national parties. Therefore, branding the opposition as anti-nationalist, campaigning against them, is not a right thing.

SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY: Rohit's death was not the first of its kind. It also happened in the past at regular intervals. This unfortunate incident once again establishes the fact that even bright scholars, belonging to Backward Class, are not safe within our University campus. The cruelty which was inflicted upon Rohit Vemula must not be repeated and the caste discrimination must come to an end forever and all the culprits must be brought to book.

As far as the incident of Jawaharlal Nehru University is concerned, the admitted position is that a commemorative function was organised to observe the death anniversary of a hard core terrorist in the name of cultural evening and anti-India slogans were reportedly raised to glorify the deadly terrorist who was instrumental in attacking the Indian Parliament. But the question is why the permission for organizing the programme was accorded despite full knowledge of the fact that such commemorative function were also held in the campus twice in succession soon after the execution of the terrorists following the Supreme Court verdict. It is reported that some outsiders and noted separatists thronged the campus on the fateful evening and raised slogan and posters glorifying the terrorists and also demanding

freedom for Kashmir. While this is extremely deplorable but the question arises as to why no preventive measure could be initiated and how the separatist elements from outside the campus entered and resorted to anti-national acts. Though we condemn all acts of anti-national activities wherever they take place in the country but we also decry any attempt to brand anyone as anti-national who is otherwise not involved in such activities. Similarly, the attack on journalists at Patiala House Court shows the worst form of brutality by a section of advocates who are otherwise duty bound to defend the law.

So far as the issues of sedition and Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code are concerned, this Section was not in the original Act of 1860. It was incorporated in 1870 by the then British Government to punish our freedom fighters and to curb the voice of our media and intellectuals. This Section 124A has been misutilised both by the colonial rulers and the successive Governments in free India to throttle the voice of dissent or disaffection which must not be followed by the present Government. It is high time that we should also have a relook at Section 124A of IPC to avoid misuse and harassment. Our nationalism is the principle of the majority of our countrymen, but ultra-nationalism, under no circumstances, is accepted. What the nation today wants is not jingoism but patriotism. We are committed to our motherland to protect our national integrity at any cost.

SHRI NARENDRA KUMAR KASHYAP: Yesterday, our leader had raised a very serious issue related to the incident of suicide by Rohit Vemula in Hyderabad Central University. There were indications from the Government that a judicial inquiry commission has been set up to inquire into this incident. We had demanded that one of the members in that judicial inquiry commission should be from the Scheduled Castes. But, going by the debate held in the House so far, we feel that the Government is not seriously considering the issue. There is a sense of insecurity among the 25 crores dalits of the country. Earlier also, 9 dalit students have committed suicide. The continuous attacks on dalits and tribals may be the part a controversy. The dalit community is feeling insecure and offended even after 69

years of independence. It is absolutely necessary to appoint a person belonging to Scheduled Castes in the inquiry commission.

There was immediate arrest on recent incident of 9th but no one was arrested for the incident that took place 37 days ago in Hyderabad. We have no objection if someone is arrested for sedition, but the government must check if there is any conspiracy. Accusing anyone without concrete proof is against human rights. I appeal to the government to carry out independent enquiry in this regard.

SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH: Whether Intelligence Bureau had informed that anti-national slogans would be raised on 9th February. If anti-national activities were going on in Central University of Hyderabad for four months, what was the government doing. Our party does not support anti-national slogans being raised against the motherland anywhere. Public opinion has to be respected in democracy. It would be better if Kanhaiya and Rama Naga were given a hearing. A young man's life should not be suppressed for a small error. If uniform education policy is implemented in the country and 15th August, 26th January and birthdays of national leaders are celebrated, then it will foster nationalism and patriotism.

SHRI D.P. TRIPATHI: It is agreed that hate speech can never be free speech. There are certain similarities in what happened in the Hyderabad Central University where Rohith Vemula was forced to commit suicide and JNU incident. I disagree that the whole of Central University of Hyderabad and JNU have become a den of anti-national activities, No action has been taken regarding the Patiala House Court vandalism and what the Delhi MLA did.

We have come to a stage in this country where patriotism is not merely being taught by gangsters, but these gangsters are also garlanded. If you take action against any anti-national activity, we are all with you, with the Government. But in the name of 9th February happening, if you brand the entire institution as anti-national, that is something which is not acceptable. JNU is not merely a centre of internationally acclaimed academic excellence, but it has been a centre of tolerance also. This whole atmosphere of hate will create

hate only. It will not help. So, reconciliation is the need of the day. Why is this University being attacked? Jawaharlal Nehru University has always opposed the ideology of Communalism and Fascism. It has stood for democratic values with all valour. That is why that Institution is attacked.

I request you to stop, at least, the people of your party and all those organizations which are threatening to kill the people. They are not only to be stopped, but to be punished also. An atmosphere of hatred and fear is being created in the country. The country exists because of unity. Therefore, in order to maintain that unity, it is essential that the student power is not insulted. Everyone knows the power of youth and students.

PROF. MRINAL MIRI: First of all I condemn the horrible slogans raised at the JNU meeting and the totally unacceptable banners displayed. Then, I would like to say a word about the idea of a nation and nationalism. The idea of a nation is much larger than the idea of the State. We are still in the process of building our nation. We cannot have any deep understanding of the nation unless we resolutely put the nation above party politics. For the JNU crisis, the university administration must take the blame for its lack of understanding of what a university is about. The police, likewise, must take the blame for its over-enthusiastic and unmindful handling of the situation. The political parties are to be blamed for the unseemly political turn that the crisis has taken. The blame is to be taken by media for its over-reaction.

SHRI SANJAY RAUT: There has been an effort to define patriotism but it cannot be defined as it is the voice of one's soul. Stability of the country should be discussed instead. It seems that the people responsible for sloganeering in favour of Pakistan and separatist have found support within the country. The language used in JNU campus echoed the language being used by separatists against India in the neighbouring country. It is not a subject matter of politics. We all should speak in one voice against treason. The attack on Pathankot airbase is result of our intelligence failure in which many soldiers were killed. My party has been fighting against

terrorism and treason on its own. The persons who favour these types of people have to be counselled. The unwarranted slogans were heard in one of our states in favour of JNU students. Our police kept waiting outside the JNU campus for want of permission from the university authorities. The Government must clarify its stand on Pakistan. The freedom of speech must not be against India

SHRI S. THANGAVELU: The hon. Supreme Court has said that imposition of sedition charges must be limited to the cases where there is actual threat. But, recently, the Delhi Police have acted hastily in arresting the student body leader of Jawaharlal Nehru University. It seems that there is an attempt to create terror among the students for holding anti-establishment views. Commemoration of Afzal Guru by a handful of JNU students should not be a provocation for tarring the students' union with the brush of alleged anti-nationalism. Interference by the Government in functioning of various universities, undermining the autonomy of these educational institutions is a cause of immediate concern. Many sections of our society feel that the death of scholar Rohith Vemula was due to such meddling in the affairs of the Central Universities, by the Government.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Suicide by a dalit scholar Rohith Vemula is a matter of serious concern. Persons responsible for this will be strictly dealt. Stringent action should be taken against persons found raising slogans against the country in the JNU campus. A dalit should be included in the enquiry commission constituted for enquiring into the incident of suicide by a dalit scholar.

SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: The issue of Rohith Vemula is a very serious issue. Rohith Vemula was a very good scholar. The RSS and the ABVP are trying to impose their ideology on other students of the Universities. Mr. Appa Rao, who was the Vice-Chancellor repeatedly spoke about the suppression of the SC students. At that time, they formed the Ambedkar Students Association. After that, Sushil Kumar who is the ABVP president called the Ambedkarite students Gundas. The main issue started from here. Mr. Appa Rao did 'not take this sentimental issue seriously rather involved MLC Ramchandra Rao who gives patronage to RSS

and ABVP in this University. I demand action against Mr. Appa Rao and Ramchandra Rao.

SHRI TARUN VIJAY: JNU is the only university in the country which is always in the news for wrong reasons, whether it is celebrating the killing of CRPF personnel or it is the indecent depiction of Hindu goddess. Some leftist organisations of J.N.U. have been voicing seditious thoughts against India as well as the judiciary. Attacking the judiciary is their tradition. Our democratic Constitution guarantees to all citizens the Right of Freedom and Speech, Expression and Association. But if somebody interferes with the Constitution and becomes a threat to national security we will not tolerate it.

SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA: I feel, since a month there is an atmosphere in this country where not only the dalits, minorities are feeling unsafe but even the intellectuals, artists, poets are feeling unsafe. The death of Rohith and arrest of Kanhaiya has multiplied this fear. The incident of tragic death of Rohith is not the only case. In the very university, nine dalit students committed suicide. In other universities also this thing is taking place. If after 67 years of independence, untouchability is not eradicated, if discrimination in the casteist society is not eliminated, how will we build a progressive nation and a democratic society. The present Government has already set up one Judicial Commission to enquire into the death of Rohith. I also propose that one dalit person should be there on the panel of the commission in order to regain the confidence of dalits.

SHRI P.L. PUNIA: It is a matter of serious concern that in the recent past, various kinds of incidents took place in Universities. Even today, in Tamil Nadu a dalit medical college student has committed suicide. These incidents are not only confined to Hyderabad and JNU alone, but in entire country. The situation has become worsen because the Government is putting its hand into the matter directly. In Hyderabad University, it seems that the Government is stood for the University administration.

SHRI D. RAJA: What is happening in the universities today is a matter of concern for the entire nation. There is social discrimination in all institutions of higher learning. In Jawaharlal Nehru University, ABVP makes a complaint. Then, a BJP leader writes a letter to the Minister and the police took action against Kanhaiya Kumar but the charges were baseless. In Hyderabad, a situation was created, thereby Rohith has committed suicide. It was not a suicide. It was a murder. In the case of Kanhaiya Kumar, the charges of sedition must be quashed. We don't need certificates of patriotism from anybody.

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI), replying to the discussion, said: A child passes away in Hyderabad. I publically pay homage to him. We identified him as a scholar, but there are many who identifying him as a vote bank. This is the bitter truth that confronts us today. Rohith himself said on his facebook wall about the psyche of the CPI(M).

He is waiting until this amendment is made so that he would convince his party to take dalits into leadership or he is just of the feeling that private sector will be damaged automatically if once industries are compelled to take dalits into their teams. I want to say that if the communist parties are allegedly for the downtrodden then why do they have women wing, dalit wing and minority wing. Even Rohith said that SFI, HCU are trying to portray Chief Warden as the main culprit for their unexpected embarrassment as casteist. They should avoid trying to pitch dalits against dalits.

This is an issue of FIR which was filed on the 4th of August. That FIR states that 40 people unlawfully entered into a hostel room. Are we want to divide our students and academicians? I think that is the main intention. This morning I was portrayed as accused. My grateful thanks to Azad Saheb and I am genuinely grateful for there are many anomalies, that you corrected in your speech today. My grateful thanks for that.

As regards to University of Hyderabad, Ex-judge was appointed. Law took its own course. The Hon'ble President of India removed the Vice-Chancellor. Hence, I removed a Vice-Chancellor is a bit of an anomaly and an incorrect statement. I humbly submit that due process of law was followed. It is not something that I did happily. For a university which was established by Shri Rabindranath Tagore, nobody would want such a Vice-Chancellor, to be appointed after proven charges of sexual misconduct and the appointment was done by my predecessor. I have the infamy of sacking the first ever Vice-Chancellor in the history of this country. The four year programme took place in the Delhi University. I was faced with a challenge that in a course where 50,000 students enrolled and the degrees that they get after four years would be absolutely legally untenable. I had a choice to step in and save those children. Otherwise, after four years, these 2 lakh children will be on the streets of the capital saying, 'Our degree has got no value.'

I would humbly submit that I have never leveraged any political patronise, in any discourse. We tried to provide as much support as possible to ensure that reservation policy, as sanctified by the Government of India, by this very House and Parliament, is applicable. There was no intention in ICHR to saffronize education. This is not first such incident, but in an incident in 2009, police did enter the campus of JNU and lathi charged students. (*Speech unfinished*)

SHUMSHER K. SHERIFF,
Secretary-General.

rssynop@sansad.nic.in