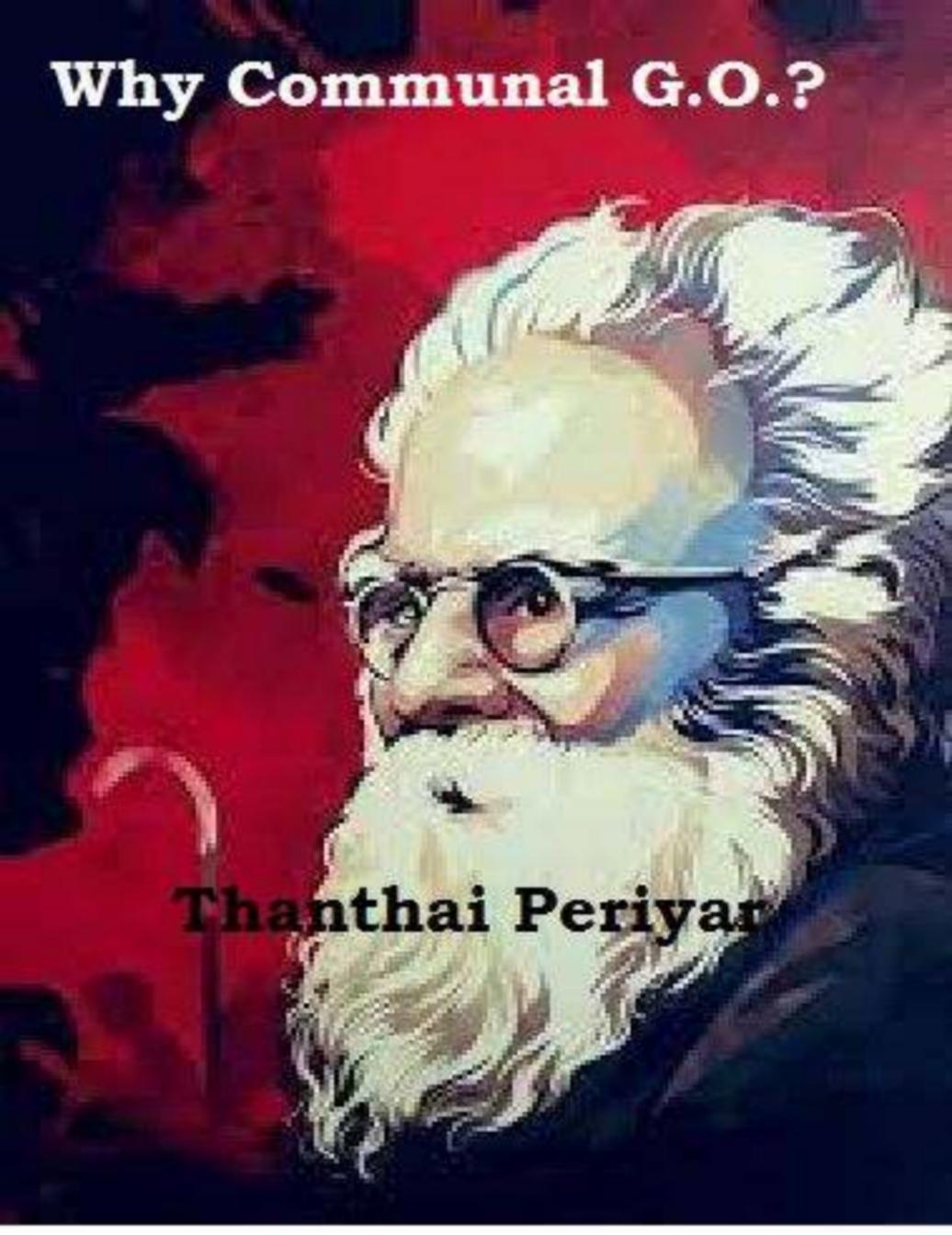


Why Communal G.O.?

A stylized, high-contrast portrait of Thanthai Periyar. He is depicted with a thick, white beard and mustache, wearing round glasses and a white turban. The background is a deep red with dark, shadowy silhouettes of trees or foliage. The overall style is graphic and somewhat somber.

Thanthai Periyar

Why Communal G.O.?

Thanthai Periyar

(Translated by A S VENU)

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E Book by DVK on Aug 2021

Periyar writings and Speeches translated by A S VENU and Addressing a public meeting on
13-08-1950 organised by all parties Thanthai Periyar spoke thus



Dravidar Viduthalai Kazhagam

திராவிடர் விடுதலைக் கழகம்

WHY COMMUNAL G. O. ?

Dear president, respectable ladies and my dear comrades !

You are all aware of the clandestine conjectures and efforts taken by a section of the people to scrap the Communal G. O.

I issued an appeal to observe 'Hartal tomorrow - completely. I appealed to the students to abstain from attending the schools and colleges. I appealed to the merchants and businessmen to keep their shops closed tomorrow. I appealed to all the people in our state to participate in the procession in large numbers to demonstrate the public opinion in support of the Communal G. O.

Some people have come forward to criticise me for giving such an appeal. They mistake me! They allege that I intend foaming up some sort of serious trouble to them by some agitation. Even some ministers have talked like that. Congressmen attribute some political motives. They write as they like. Let them do anything as they please. I am not at all bothered.

I wish to tell you that you should not do anything just because I appeal or just because they say something. Do not blindly submit to what all I say or take everything they say straight away. You please think over and find out the truth yourselves. You are rational beings. You please think over the pros and cons, good and bad, right and wrong and then come to your own judgement. If you find there is reason, justice and truth in what I say, then do as your conscience dictates.

The communal representation is not a talk of very recent origin. It has been the raging issue even in 1960. Even in those days our leaders, our elders and wise people demanded that

communal representation; ensuring justice for all communities should be implemented in the field of education and in the matter of giving jobs. It was to be based on the population and the respective strength of the various communities. One thing you will have to notice is that those who raised such a demand were for sometime in the Congress. In other words they were in the Congress till they realised the importance of communal representation. When they found that there can be no communal justice meted out to all communities through the Indian National Congress they quitted. The fact that Congress stood for the welfare and progress of one particular community came to lime light. Having failed in their attempts to set the Congress house in order they revealed the truth that the Congress was eternally against the interests of the Backward and the Scheduled caste communities. They came forward to champion the cause of the Backward and the the Scheduled castes, who were all along been groping in the darkness for peace, progress, and prosperity. They raised the voice for communal justice. People began to assert for their rights vociferously. This is what took place here.

In the North the same demand was raised in 1900 itself. They asserted for communal representation in all walks of life based on population. It is the Muslims who first demanded the introduction of communal representation. They were the pioneers to agitate for the same. It may be that many of us are not aware of this part of the history even now. But atleast some of the elders could certainly recollect what actually took place. Some of us know the matter clearly. The Congress opposed the Muslims for demanding the communal representation policy to be implemented. The Congress countered the voice of the Muslims. But in the long run the Congress failed. The then British government of India brought in a new scheme granting separate electorates for Muslims. The British accepted the policy of communal representation even as early as 1900. They came forward to render justice for all

communities. They thought rightly that the communal representation policy is the only boon to help all the communities. At that time the capital of India was at Calcutta. Majority of the residents of Calcutta were Muslims. So it was very easy for the Muslims to gain success. The rulers were not impressed by the plea of the Congress. Somehow the Muslims succeeded in getting separate electorates. The Britishers gave the green signal by supporting the communal representation policy for all communities in all walks of life.

Subsequently the Congress started what is called the Swadeshi Movement. The inner motive of this movement was to create a strong opposition to the granting of the separate electorates to the Muslims. It was a move against the splitting of Bengal. The gullible people were misled to believe what they said: They had very high hopes of Swadeshi Movement. They expected miracles to happen, not being aware of the real motive behind the movement. They did not realise that it is not right to deny the Muslims of their legitimate share. What led to this sort of ignorance? Even now many of our people are ignorant of the fundamental principles of politics. Common man in this country believes what the leaders and others say. They are not sufficiently educated to know things. It was much worse then. They straight away believed that the Swadeshi movement is a patriotic movement. But the Muslims were strong and united. They faced the strong opposition of the Congress resolutely and succeeded in securing their rights.

Even in the year 1910 separate constituencies were allotted to Muslims and Hindus. Further problems arose when they were bifurcated. It was a very difficult thing to evolve the constituencies on this basis. Finally constituencies were divided as, Muslim constituencies first and the rest were called as non-Muslim constituencies. The Congress which was against the Muslims met with failure. Yet it was not prepared to accept the defeat. There was

no other go for the Congress than to yield. At last Congress accepted on the condition that the British should give up the idea of splitting Bengal.

This was the agreement. Somehow the Muslims succeeded in getting separate electorates in 1910. Even after this the Congress continued to pursue its anti-muslim policy. This resulted in strengthening the hands of the Muslims. The Muslim League grew up speedily as a powerful political body, opposed to the Congress. The league, was able to withstand the onslaughts of the Congress. All efforts taken by the Congress against the league ended in a dismal failure. It has only led to the strengthening of League. Ultimately, the Congress entered into a pact with the League at Lucknow and that is the famous Lucknow Pact in the history of Congress. That pact has been responsible to enable the league demand a separate sovereign state, which is now called as Pakistan.

It is after, all these developments in the North that the leaders here thought aloud and realised the need to demand separate representation for us. Muslims who were a minority there. were able to secure a considerable share in all fields on account of their solidarity. Their determination and struggle fetched them their rights easily.

When such being the state of affairs in the north, here those who are ninety percent of the total population have somehow forfeited their rights in all walks of life and almost all the posts were monopolised by a particular community which was after all only 3% of the population. The majority was dominated by the minority here. Their fate is very pitiable. They are very backward in all walks of life. Sir. P. Theagaraya was a very powerful Congressman and he was the secretary of the Congress session held at Madras. Till 1916 Sir. P Theagaraya and Dr. T. M. Nair, a versatile scholar and public worker were not in terms. They were opposed to each other. They realised that by their mutual quarrels and enmity the

brahmins' were gaining against the interests of the non-brahmins. They both realised that brahmins were fanning up bitterness amongst them to exploit that situation in favour of the brahmins. They both resolved to forget the bitter past and united together and laid the foundation for the Non-brahmin movement. Since they had the courage to call themselves as Dravidians they named the movement as the South Indian Liberal Federation which was popularly known later as the Justice party. As the policies of the S. I. L. F. were very reasonable and just the movement gained the popular support of the non-Brahmins. They participated in the first elections held in 1920 and scored a resounding victory. I was in the Congress at that time.

The brahmins in the Congress were terribly - jealous of the growing popularity of the Justice party (S. I. L. F.) They had to counteract and concert measures to put down the growing influence of the non-brahmins in the political sphere. They sought the advice of Mr Gandhi At that time Mrs Annie Besant was very popular in Indian politics. The reason for her popularity was that she was a foreigner and her services were mainly to the advancement of the brahmin community, Yet the Iyengar brahmins hated her because it was the Iyer community that was much benefitted by her services She ignored the Iyengar brahmins and encouraged the Iyers Sadasiva Iyer, Mani Iyer, Sir. CP. Ramasami enjoyed the favour of Mrs. Annie Besant. This was hated by the Iyengars. They feared that the Saivite Brahmins would supersede them They were afraid that the Saivite brahmins would one day monopolise all fields leaving the Vaisnavites in the back waters. They resolved to seek a new leader who would work for their welfare They chose Mr. C Raja gopalachari who was considered a clever person. They went to Mr. Gandhi for his advice and consent. It is in this way that Raja gopalachari became the leader of brahmins. For Gandhi has done to Rajaji he made Mr. Gandhi. very big leader in South India. It is at that time i joined the Congress under the

instigation of Rajaji The constructive programme of the Congress was very appealing to me. It attracted a large number of people of eminence towards the Congress. Many became the followers of Gandhi...

What are the things Gandhi preached to us? First, Hindu Muslim unity. Second the eradication of untouchability. Third, the Khaddar scheme for the uplift of the poor. Fourth, the prohibition. Apart from these Gandhi stated clearly that Congress would not seek any post by contesting the elections. I sincerely believed that Congress is primarily a Social Reform Movement I worked for the Congress very sincerely. Naturally the Congress became very popular. When the Justice party won the elections and formed the cabinet, the Congress carried on intensive anti-propaganda. The Congress did not reckon the good works of the Justice party as great. They stooped to follow very cheap politics. They have lowered their political levels. They attacked the Justice party unnecessarily. They made a big fuss about the salary of the ministers. They heckled them for travelling in the first class by train. They talked of their eye glasses, caps, etc. By these they wanted to win the hearts of the poor people. They posed as if they were the only champions of the poor. By these methods they managed to dupe the public and in the 1926 elections the Justice Party faced a defeat, in the elections.

The Congress managed to form an alternative government with the independents led by Dr. Subbarayan, Raghupathi Mudaliar and Arangasamy Mudaliar were his colleagues in the cabinet. But it could not remain in power for long. Except Dr Subbarayan all the other ministers submitted resignations. Later Mr. S. Muthiah Mudaliar and Sethurathina Iyer became members of the cabinet. The Justice party supported this ministry. This cabinet did a lot of good things to the people. What all the Justice party was hesitant to do during its period, this cabinet boldly implemented. Of all the good things done by this cabinet was the

introduction of the Communal G.O. which is most important and praiseworthy. Without caring for the opposition in many quarters, Mr. Muthiah Mudaliar boldly passed the order, ensuring communal justice to all the communities.

For this good act of meeting justice to all communities the Brahmins took cudgels against Mr. Muthiah Mudaliar. They described him as a 'Rakshasa' They defeated him twice in the subsequent elections. But Mr. Mudaliar was not at all perturbed. He knew the consequences and boldly acted to lift the suppressed sections of the society. He took the evils as the reward for his good acts.

Being the pioneer of the Communal G.O. he has through out his life dedicated himself to safeguard the same from dangers. He took all the attempts, to resist the attempts made to invalidate the co either by legal methods or otherwise He stood firm to save the G.O. whenever there was danger by the enemies That is why you find him now very much worried. You find some people criticise him for this. If he has no right to fight for the G.O. I ask, who else has the responsibility? Let the critics understand this much.

I was in the Congress when the communal G.O. was given statutory recognition, by the Justice Party. Even though I was in the Congress then. I had very unshakable faith in the communal representation. I had a specific understanding with the leaders that the Congress would implement the same. In those days, Thiru. V. Ka. and Dr. Vara darajulu Naidu were opposed to the communal representation inside Congress. But I was very strong and stubborn. For my sake Mr. Raja gopalacbari also supported me. His view was that some seats atleast should be reserved to the non-brahmins. He did not totally agree with the communal G O. He also declined to accept the name Communal G.O. So far as I am

concerned I did not attach much importance to the name. If any. thing serves the purpose it was enough for me. That is why I agreed to the purposal of Rajaji.

After this clear understanding with Rajaji we started the Madras Presidency Association to counter act the activities of the Justice Party, and the non brahmin movement. We began to work against the Justice Party. Mr. Kesava Menon was the President of the Association. Myself and Mr. Govida Doss were the vice-presidents. Dr. Varadarajulu Naidu was the secretary It was clearly accepted that fifty percent should be reserved for the non-brahmins

But this was not acceptable to Messrs Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, S. Satyamurthi Iyer, Srinivasa Iyengar and other leaders of the brahmins in the Congress. They accused Mr. Rajaji for having exten ded his support to me They thought Rajaji was afraid of my influence. They even went to the extent of overthrowing Rajaji. They formed another natio nal organisation with Vijayaragavachari as President, Myself, Rajaji and T. Prakasam were elected as secretaries. Messrs Kasturi Ranga Iyer, and V.O.C. were elected as vice presidents. Even in this it was clearly understood that everyone should talk of nationalism after getting the due share for all the communities in national matters. The quota for the non-brahmins was tentatively fixed at 50% This national association gained the mass support because we announced 50% to the non brahmins. But Mr. Rangasami Iyengar and Mr. S. Satyamurthi became Very jealous. They secretly planned and announced the working programme of the Congress and their plans were accepted by the working committee. I think it is clear to you that the Congress too accepted the principle of proportionate representation to ensure justice to all the communities based on the population,

In the year 1921 the Tamilnad Congress session took place at Thiruvannamalai. I presided over the conference, In that conference Rangasamy Iyengar Srinivasa Iyengar, induced their

followers to attack Sir. P. Theagaraya Chettiar and other Justice Party leaders vehemently. They used very abusive language. I was very much provoked at their indecent behaviour. Myself and Mr. S. Ramanathan decided to pay them in their own coin. Being the president I permitted Mr. Ramanathan to speak. He condemned the brahmins as communalists. Next Mr. Shafe Mohamed came forward to speak. He attacked Ramanathan without rhyme or reason. Next Messrs. Annamalai Pillai and Venkatakrishna Pillai came forward and replied to the speech made by Shafe Mohamed. I mention this to enlighten you that I remained in the Congress even though I had differences of opinion with the brahmin leaders

Another session of the Congress was held at Kancheepuram in 1925. Mr. Thiru. Vi. Ka. presided over the same. A day before the conference I convened the meeting of the non-brahmins at Kancheepuram itself. Messrs. Muthiah Mudaliar, Sir. RK. Shanmugam Chetty, Vellingiri gounder, Ramalinga Chettiar and other non-brahmin leaders attended to same. We resolved to table a resolution in the Congress session demanding Communal G.O. to be accepted. I myself took the resolution to the working committee. The brahmins objected stating such a resolution should not be permitted in Congress. I then argued, 'In our propaganda we have criticised the Justice Party and proclaimed that Congress is the only true representative of the non brahmins I remind you that Congress had already accepted the principle of communal representation. It has already fixed 50 percent as the reservation quota for the non-brahmins. As such it is unfair to disallow the resolution.' They did not reply to any of the arguments. They simply disallowed the resolution. I once again rose up and argued that as the Congress has now decided to enter the Assembly there is the necessity to take up the resolution as relevant. It is known to all that Swarajist Party is the offshoot of the Congress.. When it contests the elections Congress is bound to extend its support As such the question of reserving 50 percent to the non-brahmins is absolutely necessary. It is

our moral obligation to assure all the non-brahmins in view of the elections After all these, the president said that the resolution could be taken up in the open session the next day. I agreed. That night the brahmin leaders met privately. They hatched a plan. Thinking that I will not have the support of delegates they asked me to submit the signatures of atleast thirty delegates of the conference. I accepted their terms, and I procured the support of 50 delegates. After all these, the resolution was bluntly disallowed stating that it is against the very fundamental principles of the Congress.

I was shocked to hear the verdict. I rose up and said, "You wanted the support of 30 delegates. I got the support of 50 delegates. I was assured yesterday that the resolution could be taken up for consideration today. In spite of all these the resolution is simply disallowed. Is there any justification. I want a clear verdict from the president"

Immediately the brahmins started shouting. "The president of the conference has delivered his ruling and passed on to the next item in the agenda Nothing can be done now. You sit down, sit down' This is what the brahmins were able to do. I observed their behaviour and retorted saying "This is a matter between me and President. It is for him to say whether I could press or not. If he says that I should not speak I will obey him. You please keep quiet."

The brahmins again started to shout "Sit down Sit down."

Facing them I said, "There is no use of your shouting like this. We can also shout. If we do so your cries will not be louder. All of you may have to get away." Utter pandemonium prevailed in the conference. Then I realised that there is no use of my remaining in the Congress any more. I walked out of the conference. Many more followed me. It was for the sake of Communal G. O. that I left the Congress.

After that my friend Rajaji and Thiruv. Kai came to me four or five times and asked me to join the Congress once again. It was all because there were others still in the Congress who wanted the communal representation. Only about 30 to 40 delegates left the Congress with me at Kancheepuram. Those who remained in the Congress with my view had no courage to take a bold decision

The Self Respect Movement was started by me soon after leaving the Congress. I stood for political reform along with social reform I was for the eradication of all the social evils first. When Muthiah Mudaliar became a cabinet minister he boldly brought in the Communal G.O. I was the first person who felt very happy. I took it as my victory. If only I had continued to be in Congress I would have gained many big positions. Why did I leave the Congress? Was it for any post or power? No. I did not even think that I would become a leader championing the Communal G. O. That is why we are all much worried about the Communal G. O. now. We want to save it out of the danger. We cannot afford to lose it. That is why we are determined to fight for it. - Please do not think that we are now agitating, just because the high court has held the Communal G. O. as invalid. Even if the Supreme court gives a judgement tomorrow setting aside the orders of the High Court, we have got to agitate for the implementation of the G. O. fully in all the fields. Why do I say so?

Even this G O. does not ensure proportionate representation to all the communities based on the population. By the present G.O the Brahmins who are three percent of the population get fourteen percent reservation. The Christians who are three percent, get seven percent. The non Brahmins who are eightyseven percent, get only seventy two percent. You please study these figures. Could it be said that proportional representation is fully ensured to all communities? Why should the Brahmins who are only three percent of the population get fourteen percent by this G.O. Why should the non-Brahmins who are eighty two percent get

only seventy two percent? Why should they lose? Is it not right on our part to agitate Another factor we have got to seriously consider is the brahmin dominance in the services. They are already monopolising the services, In some departments their representation exceeds 60 percent to 70 percent. As senior officers they enjoy 90 percent of the posts. You would have read the details of the facts and figures published in the "Vidutbalal during the past few days.

In spite of all these, we find the G O. declared unlawful in the Madras High Court. Even if it were declared lawful, do you think that it is really a just G. O. So it is clear that the ideal of rendering just to all communities is yet to be reached. We have been demanding this for the past many years. That 18 I say, that even if the Supreme Court passes an against the judgement of the Madras High Court, and declares the Communal G.O as perfectly valid, we will have no other go but to fight for the fulfilment of our age long demand for proportional representation based perfectly on the population. Any day we have got to agitate and secure our legitimate share. We cannot be docile. We should seek equal justice for all communities based strictly on the population.

Another important fact we have got to realise is that this G O. is now implemented only at the State level This G.O. is not binding on the Centre. At present the Centre is not heeding to the wholesome principle underlying the Communal G.O. That is why -- you find brahmin domination in almost all the Central services Even big posts are held by them They enjoy 70, 80 percent of the posts in the States already. They are monopolising almost all the posts in the Centre and the State, Many malpractices are seen in the recruitment of personnel to the services. The brahmins are hunting for jobs from the State to the Centre. They easily get the jobs as if the govt. is their own. They create vacancies easily. Sometimes one brahmin is sent on leave and another brahmin is appointed temporarily. By the time the leave expires another is sent on leave. Simultaneously steps are taken to provide a post permanently. By

that time he will be drawing Rs. 500 a month. This is one of the ways brahmins are helping their own community to get jobs.

See what is the position in the Railways. Everything is in their hands. At least in the foreign rule we were able to get some jobs. Today the railways are monopolised by Iyengar brahmins. They have shifted the recruiting office from Madras to Bombay. Almost all the members of the selection board are brahmins. When the matters are like this, how is it possible for our people to get jobs? It is at all we are in the majority it is only in class four services as peons. Nowadays even for the peon posts they are also competing. It is said that out of the 65000 peons 1300 are brahmins. Under these circumstances is there any justification for the brahmins to go to court? They say that they are denied admission in the educational institutions. Let us see what the position is. They are undoubtedly enjoying more than their legitimate share. When we peruse the figures given by the government we are shocked. They are snatching away 90 percent of the places in the colleges. They are today going to the court stating that they are discriminated. They are not worried at the great injustice meted out to all other communities. They even went to Gandhi thinking that he would support them. But Gandhi replied, "Most of you are already educated in large numbers. It will be appreciable if you could devote for service to god for some time. Let the non-brahmins who have not been educated so far read". This is what Gandhi said. The brahmins were disappointed. After some time Gandhi died.

I am telling this to make you realise that justice is on our side. The wise world will ever support our cause. Imagine what will be our future if we are not worried about the Communal G.O. now. What will be the fate of our next generation? Now only we are regaining our status and dignity in the society. Now only we are considered as human beings fit to learn. It is the Justice Party that opened our eyes. It is only after the G.O. that our communities have

started to enter the schools and colleges in large numbers. Some of us were able to get some jobs. What was the position before the advent of the Justice Party and the Communal G.O. District Judges, Tahsildars, Munsiffs, Sub-Inspectors were all brahmins. Before the Justice party came to power the non-brahmins were cent percent uneducated. After 15 years of the Justice rule and even after independence and the Congress rule, our literacy is below 10 percent.

If our people are uneducated it is not their fault. Can it be proved that we are unfit for education? real fact is that we were not given sufficient facilities and encouragement. That is all. Most of the

Sudras are working classes. They were paid the wages needed for their daily life. They are able to get higher wages only when the prices of commodities went high. Under these circumstances how can we expect the son of a cartman, sweeper, cobbler, labourer, and others to read. Compare the conditions of the brahmins. Even a water brahmin's son is able to read in the B.A class. He can go as a Judge. For the brahmins it is their high caste that remains an asset. The sacred thread they wear is enough for them. We can see even poor brahmins reading. Amongst us only the sons of richmen as zamindars and Mirasdars are able to read. . Even if we study with all these difficulties we have no future. We are denied jobs and seats. The principle of merit and efficiency works against us. Our boys even though they pass the examination and are declared eligible for higher studies they are not able to get admission. We want our boys to read. Is it a crime?

There are many malpractices in the selection. This year 68006 appeared for the S.S.L.C. examination. 38000 students failed. Can it be said that the failed candidates are unintelligent. How much money would have been spent for studying upto S.S.L.C. Under

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