

Bengaluru Declaration calls for SC/ST quota in judiciary

'Dynamic blueprint': Chief Minister Siddaramaiah at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar International Conference 2017 in Bengaluru on Sunday. | Photo Credit: [V. Sreenivasa Murthy](#)

The Bengaluru Declaration adopted by the State government sponsored Dr. B.R. Ambedkar International Conference 2017, on Sunday recommended a slew of affirmative action measures in private sector, judiciary, educational institutions, government contracts and promotions for Dalits.

The declaration, coming in an election year, significantly concentrates not just on SC/STs, but has also proposed several measures for the larger AHINDA (Kannada acronym for minorities, backward classes and Dalits) community, the political constituency of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

It called for reservation of seats in legislature for other backward classes and setting up of a farmers' income commission.

The eight-page declaration has 40 recommendations under six broad categories — safeguarding the people, strengthening democratic institutions, deepening social justice, enhancing human development, ensuring responsive governance, and promoting social security.

"This Peoples' Declaration hopes to be a dynamic blueprint that addresses the needs and aspirations of all Indians, and a starting point for an 'alliance of equity' of all progressive forces committed to safeguarding the idea of India," the preamble stated."

The Bhopal Declaration that called for "liberalisation of capital for Dalits" was adopted in 2002 during the tenure of Congress leader Digvijaya Singh in Madhya Pradesh.

Significantly, the Bengaluru Declaration called for upholding Rule of Law through police reforms and state action to prevent lynchings. It called for a law against gender and caste discrimination at education institutions.

It further recommended for SC/ST reservation in appointment of judges, promotions, government contracts up to 1 crore, in private higher educational institutions and private sector. It also proposes establishment of an Equal Opportunities Commission, to oversee affirmative action.

Much focus is also given on ensuring land ownership for SC/STs, including a proposal to establish SC/ST land bank, where government buys these lands at market prices and re-allots to the same community, to ensure non-dilution of ownership. It further recommends allocation of 20% of the land in private housing layouts for urban poor.

The declaration calls for a wider social security net. It recommended a "living wage" and comprehensive social security scheme for all labourers working in the unorganised sector apart from ensuring dignity in retirement through enhanced pensions of 1,500 per month.

Public Works Minister H.C. Mahadevappa, who read out the declaration, said: "Regressive social and political forces have consistently resisted and tried to undermine both the constitutional idea of India and the efforts of the State in the last 70 years."

The conference on the theme "Quest for Equity" was attended by scholars from across the country and abroad. Mr. Siddaramaiah and his Cabinet colleagues attended the valedictory function held at GKVK auditorium here.

Mature sandalwood trees in Bengaluru to have anti-theft sensors to alert guards

Local magistrate has remanded Siddalinga Swamy in judicial custody for 10 days

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