

SUSPECT MOVES: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON CHANGES TO RESERVATION POLICY IN KARNATAKA

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Government policies & interventions for development in various Sectors and issues arising out of their design & implementation incl. Housing

To enjoy additional benefits

CONNECT WITH US

March 29, 2023 12:20 am | Updated 08:31 am IST

COMMENTS

SHARE

READ LATER

Statecraft involves management of competing demands for accommodation and inclusion, without unduly affecting the interests of any section of society. However, some rulers, such as those in Karnataka, want to be seen as discriminating against a minority group in the hope of garnering the support of the majority. The [Karnataka government's decision to scrap the 4% quota for Muslims](#) within the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category and earmark an additional 2% each to the dominant Vokkaliga and Veerashaiva-Lingayat communities is a divisive gamble in the expectation of electoral dividends. The BJP regime has also created four sub-categories to introduce internal reservation for different Dalit communities under the Scheduled Caste (SC) category. The scrapping of reservation for Muslims, whose poorer members will now have to compete with the general category for the 10% 'Economically Weaker Sections' quota, is reminiscent of the [abrogation of the 5% quota for Muslims in Maharashtra](#) in 2015. While reservation on the basis of religion alone is untenable, it appears that there has been no recommendation from the Karnataka State Backward Classes Commission for the withdrawal of reservation benefits for Muslims. The BJP has sought to portray the introduction of reservation for Muslims in 1995 as an instance of minority appeasement.

It is indeed true that the Constitution does not allow reservation on the basis of religion alone, and that there have been judicial verdicts striking down quotas for Muslims for not being backed by a proper study on the extent of backwardness in the community. However, it is possible to extend reservation benefits to the backward sections among religious minorities identified on the basis of relevant criteria. Some States have been implementing reservation in educational institutions as well as public employment for Muslims by including them in the Backward Classes (BC) list. It is futile to argue that large sections of Muslims have reached a level of social and educational advancement that will justify their exclusion from the BC category, or that they are not under-represented in the services. While Muslim leaders and organisations have opposed the scrapping of the reservation, the categorisation of the SC communities is also controversial. Sections of Dalits are up in arms against the reordering of the 17% SC quota among different groups. Major decisions, such as changing the reservation policy, in the run-up to elections are not merely suspect, but may end up stoking unwanted fires.

[To read this editorial in Telugu, click here.](#)

COMMENTS

SHARE

[Karnataka](#) / [Reservation](#) / [minority group](#) / [Bharatiya Janata Party](#) / [religion and belief](#) / [constitution](#) / [government](#) / [politics](#)

BACK TO TOP

Comments have to be in English, and in full sentences. They cannot be abusive or personal. Please abide by our [community guidelines](#) for posting your comments.

We have migrated to a new commenting platform. If you are already a registered user of The Hindu and logged in, you may continue to engage with our articles. If you do not have an account please register and login to post comments. Users can access their older comments by logging into their accounts on Vuukle.

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com