

**Where do we stand in the movement?**

**Sloganeering is not sedition**

**Or**

**'We' have not raised those slogans**

The very first resolution of the JNUSU council meeting held on 7 March 2016, proposed by Sweta and seconded by Karishma, states that-

*"JNUSU reiterates its condemnation of the destructive and divisive slogans that were allegedly raised on the 9<sup>th</sup> February. Such slogans do not represent the democratic ethos of JNU and are detrimental in the united struggle against the communal fascist forces".*

The central understanding of the movement that we all have been part of has been about the fact that 'sloganeering' cannot be considered seditious, or be criminalized. The councillors resolution says that we will fight towards withdrawing of the sedition charges and repealing of the IPC section on sedition. But it seems to miss the point that even if we do not endorse the alleged slogans, we more importantly assert that sloganeering in itself, under the given circumstances and under the present legal regime, cannot be considered seditious.

It is precisely part of our democratic ethos that, while there is space for different slogans to be raised, we can also condemn and articulate our differences with any of them, if need be. As far as our own position is concerned, we too do not endorse the slogans, while we do think, there needs to be more serious engagement with the struggles and aspirations of the people of Kashmir in our debates. However the fact remains that the entire movement was built around the concern that, even if we agree or disagree with the slogans, the onslaught on part of the administration came precisely in the form of slapping criminal and seditious charges on students of JNU for sloganeering, and we stood united in condemning the fact that the act of sloganeering itself cannot be criminalized in the manner that it was, and we will therefore fight all charges made on anybody on account of sloganeering.

In the past several weeks of the movement, people have voiced different opinion and concerns. We have had several rounds of experts, academicians, lawyers and others joining the movement, addressing on the history of sedition laws, and asserting that even under the present state of legal parameters, imposing of the sedition charges on account of sloganeering was completely unjustified and conspiratorial on part of the administration, acting in collusion with ABVP and RSS. The council resolutions do not mention anywhere that we consider sloganeering itself not criminal or seditious.

As the elected representative of the entire student body on campus, it is important that the council embodies a democratic process and reflects the concerns that have emerged in the course of the movement. While there have been differing voices and interpretations, but a common minimum has been reached through the course of the movement, during open house meetings and in other forums of the movement that we stand united in asserting that as far as the question of raising slogans on 9 Feb is concerned, there can be no charge of sedition or other criminal activity imposed on anybody, whether an 'insider' or 'outsider'. We hope the JNUSU and the Student Council body takes this into consideration and takes appropriate action.

**COLLECTIVE**