

Victory for Democracy But the Battle is Far from over

Comrade Kanhaiya, JNUSU President who was arrested on 12th February, 2016 on trumped up charges of sedition based on doctored videos has been granted a 6-month interim bail. This is nothing short of a tight slap on the faces of RSS and its cronies in the campus, the ABVP. **SFI salutes not only the fighting spirit of the JNU students, but the remarkable solidarity shown by the teachers and JNU staff with the students in the face of this fascist terror tactics.** At the same time, this is a partial victory and there are many more demands which have to be met by the government and the JNU administration.

On the High Court Judgment:

SFI finds many of the pronouncements made by the Delhi High court disappointing and regressive. On this whole episode, the court commented that *"I consider this as a kind of infection from which such students are suffering which needs to be controlled/cured before it becomes an epidemic. Whenever some infection is spread in a limb, effort is made to cure the same by giving antibiotics orally and if that does not work, by following second line of treatment. Sometimes it may require surgical intervention also. However, if the infection results in infecting the limb to the extent that it becomes gangrene, amputation is the only treatment."*

- The court also pointed that the faculty and the students in the university should introspect on why incidents of this nature are happening in the campus. SFI would like to stress that JNU does not suffer from any infection. It is one place in this country where the constitutional values are upheld in its true spirit. **Even when the judiciary of the country meekly surrendered during the emergency, students of JNU were in the streets and in the jails, fighting for the rights upheld by the constitution of our nation. In the last few years we have seen in repeated court judgments how the democratic rights have been throttled.**
- For example, in October 2015, the Supreme Court bench consisting of Justices Dipak Misra and PC Pant suggested the government to scrap reservation from institutes of higher education. Despite the fact that reservation is probably the only option through which some degree of social mobility can be attained by the poor and marginalised in our country, these judges had the audacity to claim that reservation is nothing but a privilege.
- In December 2015, the same Supreme Court upheld Haryana gov't's decision to fix minimum educational qualification for contestants in Panchayat polls. It held the view that illiterates can be barred from contesting polls saying that it is a reasonable restriction on people's constitutional right to contest polls. The fact that millions of illiterate rural poor, predominantly from the Dalit community can be marginalised from decision making process of the grass roots democracy through this judgement may not have mattered for the court when viewed through their brahmanical lenses.

Therefore, this is our humble request to the Delhi High Court and the judiciary to show sensitivity towards the complex socio-economic reality.

Release Umar and Anirban; Drop sedition charges; Stop Witch hunting of Umar:

Since the prima facie evidence against Umar and Anirban was the same as that of Kanhaiya, it is only reasonable that both of them are immediately released. It has been conclusively proven that these videos which were submitted as evidence by the police were doctored. In all the other videos, there is not even a single instance in which an anti-India slogan was raised by the students of JNU. Some most condemnable and irresponsible slogans were raised by some unknown elements who were probably outsiders. But even these most objectionable slogans do not amount to sedition since there was no use of violence or even intention to use violence. **Despite the fact that many students were involved in organising the program which happened on February 9th, Umar has been specifically targeted and witch hunted by the Delhi police and the BJP government because of his identity. Delhi police has been peddling lies about him in the most shameless manner, recently claiming that he could even be connected with the attack on the tribal rights activist, Soni Sori. This has to stop and we appeal to all the students to stand united in exposing this conspiracy to specifically target Umar.**

Registrar must Apologise; Revoke the suspension of eight students:

It is the intervention of the registrar which resulted in the incidents since 9th February to be blown out of proportion. Police could enter university and arrest students because of the blanket permission given by the registrar. He was instrumental in bypassing all the mechanisms in forming a high level committee without taking any section of the campus community into confidence. This committee unilaterally suspended eight students without any form of hearing. In an interview to "The Hindu" newspaper on February 14th, the registrar claimed that he saw videos of Kanhaiya and others shouting anti-India slogans and therefore decided to debar them. But then again, these videos were doctored. **Considering all this, whereby it is clear that the registrar intervened in the matter in the most irresponsible and anti-student manner, we demand that he publicly apologise to the student community.** Also, with an immediate effect the suspension of eight students who were falsely accused has to be revoked.

Apart from all this, we also demand that the section 124 A of Indian Penal Code which deals with sedition law be dropped since it is not only archaic and colonial, but it has been consistently used by the government to check voices of dissent. We once again appeal to all the students of the campus to remain part of this struggle until all these demands are met.

