

## Again at the Game of Divide and Rule

The ruling classes and their political representatives are again playing game of divide and rule. They have learnt this nefarious tactics from the British colonial rulers. Since then they perfected the application of these tactics with the sole aim of weakening the united strength of the people and to divert them from the path of struggle for the resolution of their basic problems.

They are employing the religious, caste, regional and linguistic diversities existed among the people to divide the people. The British rulers played this game by sowing dissensions between Hindu and Muslim communities, which led to the partition of South Asia into India and Pakistan. This enabled the imperialist powers to continue their stranglehold on the sub continent.

The caste system in India is inextricably linked with feudal relations and caste oppression and discrimination, in its most suppressive form untouchability - still continues as Indian society remained as semi feudal.

While adopting the constitution of India, the reservations in educational institution and jobs in public sector was provided for the most down trodden sections of the society-the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes. The aim of this policy is to uplift SC & ST from the backwardness to which they have been condemned for generations. This had led to the demand and later it was met through the provision of reservation to OBCs.

The development strategy followed by the Indian ruling classes has not brought any perceivable development in the lives of the people. As the semi feudal nature of the society is preserved and as the imperialist plunder continues to suck the life blood of the country, not a single basic problem faced by the people got resolved. Unemployment is such a problem that haunts the youth. The unrest and discontent is often leading to agitations.

This discontent among the youth is being utilized by the ruling classes and parties for their political gains as well as to divert the attention of the youth from the real causes of the problem by making target their ire at reservations by dividing them on caste lines.

We have seen a decade back in AP an agitation demanding categorization SC quata so that sub-castes among SCs would have rightful share in the reservations. Though every ruling class party approved the demand it did not fructify. Meanwhile the ruling classes were able to divide the two major castes among SCs and for years together antagonism persisted between them. For some years the Jats, an upper caste are demanding their inclusion into OBC list. The government decision to this effect were overturned by the Supreme Court. Meanwhile the society in Rajasthan got polarized on caste lines. There are scores of examples all over India in which the ruling classes have played one caste against another.

One should see the agitation of Patels for inclusion into OBC list in this background.

The prosperous and politically influential Patel communities-or Patidars, as they called-are on the path of agitation. The three month old agitation led by Patidars Amanat Andolan Samiti (PASS) gathered around half a million people in Ahmadabad suggesting the show of strength was well funded and organized. It turned violent and the army had to be called to restore order. The PASS demanded the inclusion of Patels in the OBC list; if this demand can't be met, it asked for the scrapping of all reservations.

The Patels have been the supporters of BJP since 1985. At that time, in the context of Mandal Commission recommendations, the Patels opposed the reservation by supporting it the BJP gathered steam. Now the VHP General Secretary, Surendra Jain stated that VHP wanted a situation where reservations on the basis of caste are done away with. The RSS echoed the same stand asking the government to relook at the system of reservation. The PM Narendra Modi appealed to Patels to maintain peace as it is an anachronism in the land of Gandhi, which he never did during the riots in 2002. This makes clear that the Patel agitation has tacit support from the powers at the helm of affair.

The agitation has brought to the fore the hollowness of the Gujarat model of development. It only provided an happy hunting ground for the imperialist sharks, where disparities among the people have widened further. According to the RBI, about 2,60,000 small industries have closed their shutters, throwing nearly 2 million workers out of jobs. While the inflation and price rise have made the people's lives very difficult, the self financing system of education right from the primary to higher level had its toll on the people. The declining opportunities in education and unemployment are at the root of unrest among the youth.

The Patels, a heterogeneous umbrella community based largely on the land relation, which later expanded to business are now feeling the pinch of declining opportunities and as a consequence, class stratification is taking place among them.

Gujarat has witnessed many such mass agitations - during 1974, when the mess charges had raised in colleges, and in 1981 and 1985 against reservations. All these agitations have polarized the society on caste lines side lining the real issue of unemployment. The anti Muslim riots organized by the BJP in power in the state in 2002 again polarized the society on communal riots. Now when the Gujarat model of development, which was designed by the imperialist financial institutions, had skewed in favour of dominant classes and castes, the Patles agitation became a hand tool for the ruling classes to perpetuate the caste division.

No doubt the Patel's agitation is the result of wrath of youth against the system which only gave them unemployment and dark future. Their anger is being directed wrongly against the minimal affirmative measure for the up-liftment of socially downtrodden and discriminated section of the people, instead of fighting against the very socio-political system of exploitation, that is, semi-feudal and semi colonial system of society.

It is imperative on the part of the youth to realize the treacherous game of divide and rule being played by the ruling classes and struggle unitedly for a complete change of society in which there are equal opportunities to everyone without exploitation and oppression.

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