

Forcing Urdu Writers to become paid writers

The stipulation by the Human Resources Ministry that the Urdu writers seeking a monetary support from the Indian Govt must sign a declaration is one among the series of onslaughts by the BJP Govt on the right of people to freedom of expression. The National Council for Promotion of Urdu language, an autonomous body under the Union Ministry of Human Resources Development has demanded that the writers must sign a form of declaration that their writing “does not contain anything that goes against the policies of the Indian government”. Clearly, this is an out and out anti-democratic and autocratic move. Here is an attempt on the part of BJP govt to reduce a legitimate financial support meant for the promotion of Urdu language into a tool of bribing or pressurising the writers to sell away or mortgage their ideas for a price.

Naturally, the writers, artists and playwrights have sharply reacted against this move. The Forum of Urdu writers and artists of Karnataka led by Jafer Mhiuddin, its convenor and Girish Karnad, a renowned film director and artist held a demonstration on April 2, 2016 in Bangalore in protest against the govt’s move. Mr. Jafer Mohiuddin said that the stipulation such as this “is unheard of in a democracy and would run counter to the writers/artists to be critical of the govt or the state.” He also said that the govt’s are supposed to extend the financial support to the writers, not dictate what they should do. The protesters demanded the Human Resources Development Ministry withdraw the norm of seeking the declaration.

The Urdu writers took objection to their being indentified (Urdu writers) by the Union Ministry of HRD for such a declaration. They called the move to associate the language (Urdu) with a particular community as “dangerous”.

It is not new for the rulers in our country to use the levers of power and state’s financial resources to lure, bribe, pressurise the intellectuals, writers and artists into their own service. Appointing under serving persons to head various institutions, creating the posts or institutions; bestowing wards, scholarships, granting aids, stipends and other monetary benefits to the persons are some of the methods used by the parties in power to lure or buy persons to their own side. The BJP govt is acting in a more brazen manner in misusing the power as well as financial resources of the state. This deserves condemnation by one and all.
