

A.F.S.P.A must be Abrogated

Our country calls itself to be the world's largest democracy. But our rulers for all these 70 years are relying on a military dictatorship-type law. The Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) for continuing their 'democratic rule' in certain states, refusing to resolve the democratic aspirations and demands of the people of those states.

The roots of this AFSPA are in the British colonial ordinance of Armed forces special powers, which was promulgated in 1942 by the British colonial government to quell the Quit India movement.

Subsequently this came handy to the 'Indian rulers' after the transfer of power. Initially they imposed this draconian law in 1958 in united Assam and Nagaland on the pretext of countering terrorism. Later this law was extended and imposed on the North-eastern states. From 1998 onwards this draconian law has been imposed on Jammu & Kashmir.

With the total immunity and protection provided by the AFSPA the army has been playing havoc with the lives of civilians in those states, duly misusing the powers vested in it. On a number of occasions the army has been found unlawfully misusing the Act not only against innocent people but even against civil authorities.

People of those states imposed with AFSPA have been continuously opposing it and are demanding for the revocation of the draconian law.

Irome Sharmila of Manipur had gone on hunger strike for 16 years in protest against this draconian law demanding its withdrawal. Against the brutal killing of Thanqajam Manorama by the Army, some women even protested in nude to expose that brutality to the world.

Today we witness resistance of people in Jammu&Kashmir against the army that has been perpetrating untold atrocities and killings against the civilians in the name of fighting insurgency, tackling terrorism and protecting from a major security threat to India and national territorial integrity of the country. We see army undermines the civilian administration and the government of the state adamantly refusing to be accountable for its violations.

Time and again various committees and commissions enquired in to the Question of justifiability of usage of AFSPA, constituted by the central government have recommended revoking the law. Former supreme-court judge B.P.Jeevan Reddy who has tasked by the UPA government with suggesting amendments to AFSPA recommended that the law be replace altogether.

But the ruling class parties do not heed such recommendations nor do they consider accountability for human rights violations is sacrosanct.

Recently when much criticism arose against the imposition of A.F.S.P.A, and demands from states for the revocation of the Act, during budget session, Union Minister of State for Home, Hamlarao Gangaram Ahir informed Lok Sabha in a written reply that the government was considering a proposal to make AFSPA more "operationally effective and humane". Thus he disclosed the NDA government's refusal to abrogate the AFSPA at any cost.

But recently the Central Ministry of Home Affairs considered that in Meghalaya which for the past 27 years was under AFPSA, the Act has been revoked from all the areas of the state from April 1 and the Act is scaled down from 16 Police stations to eight in Arunachal Pradesh. This announcement cannot taken as a "change of mind" of as NDA rulers towards the protection of human and democratic rights, but a mere gesture in accordance with its machinations of its power game politics. No one can have illusions with this announcement that AFSPA is going to become humane. It is exclusively to hood-wink people with democratic aspirations and to divert their attention from the crux of the point.

Since the trigger happy army is in favour of the continuance of AFPSA, our rulers supposed to be policy makers wish not to venture to scrap the draconian AFSPA, since such stance will also help to further the agenda of NDA rulers.

But the people of India who aspire for a real democratic rule but not a military rule in the guise of democracy demand the abrogation of AFSPA once for all and to resolve all the conflicts and problem of the people that arose in those states! No alternative to this demand is acceptable.
