



PARLIAMENTARY BRIEFING BY DR. GOVIND SINGH OF DELHI GREENS NGO

Parliamentary Briefing on The Need for Evolving an Anti-Racial Law in India

30 MAY 2018

Parliamentary Briefing by Dr. Govind Singh on the Need for Evolving an Anti-Racial Law in India

The North-east India is one part of the country which has remained bereft of India's development story for a long time. Consequently, as basic infrastructure like transport improved in the region towards the end of the twentieth century, the region has experienced steady exodus of people for finding better livelihood, etc. opportunities.

Delhi became a natural choice for migration both because it is the National Capital and because it offers better living standards, education facilities and livelihood opportunities. However, an emerging problem faced by the people of Northeast India upon their arrival and settlement in Delhi is that of racial discrimination or racism. While

this seems surprising for a country known for its "Unity in Diversity", discrimination on the basis of religion, region and cultural beliefs has been rampant in India, and is more pronounced in the Delhi NCR.

The International Encyclopaedia of the Social & Behavioural Sciences defines racism as an ideology sanctioning the domination or exclusion of one ethnic group by another on the basis of difference believed to be hereditary and unalterable. This is often reflected in popular media, with jokes made on how people from certain regions speak, look or behave. Stereotyping has been a pressing issue in Delhi NCR. Its collusion with racism has made it into a major challenge and the



Feedback from Parliamentarians

Rajya Sabha MP from Assam and PCC President Shri Ripun Bora addressing the gathering with his feedback on the Briefing.



Group Photograph Expressing Solidarity Towards the Cause

All members present agreed to take the Anti-Racism Law to the Parliament.

people from North-east India residing in Delhi NCR often become victim to racial slurs thrown at them.

The Government of India has responded by attempting to put corrective measures in place by instituting policies and practices for discouraging such discrimination. However, racial discrimination continues to exist and often rises to unfortunate proportions.

A Review of research work on the prevalence of racism in Delhi against people from the North-east suggests that more than 90% of the people surveyed in all these studies have faced some or the other form of racial discrimination. Racism is also very commonplace even in educational institutions, both among the peer-groups and in power hierarchies.

In my own research work, I found that 86% of the respondents agreed that the prevalence and experience of racial discrimination had changed their life in a way that they had not imagined.

I found that there is no one pattern with regards to the prevalence of racial discrimination in Delhi and there is also no one pattern as to how the people from North-east India respond to it. However, the focus should not be to find such patterns but on eradicating this menace altogether through a top-down approach.

On a business visit to South Africa, while travelling on a train, Gandhi was ordered by the conductor of

the train to move to a third-class compartment due to his race. Gandhi refused and stood his ground since he had a valid first-class ticket and was therefore thrown out of the train.

A plaque in the railway station where Gandhi was forced to spend the freezing night reads, "In the vicinity of this plaque M.K. Gandhi was evicted from a first-class compartment on the night of 7 June 1893. This incident changed the course of his life. He took up the fight against racial oppression. His active non-violence started from that date".

Gandhi was fortunate to return to India after this harrowing experience and use the latter as a motivation for fighting the freedom struggle of his motherland. 120 years later, Nido Taniam, another victim of racial discrimination – this time in his own country – did not share the same fortune as Mahatma Gandhi. On 29 January 2014, Nido, a 20 year old student from Arunachal Pradesh, was murdered in the national capital of India simply for "looking different"

So my appeal to the dignitaries on the stage is that fighting and eradicating racism through an Act of the Parliament is not only about fighting this social prejudice, but it is also about saving human lives.

Addressing racial discrimination is thus the need of the hour, and a pre-requisite for carrying out inclusive growth and overall development of India today.



Dr. Govind Singh
 govind@delhigreens.org
 Co-Founder & Director
 Delhi Greens