

newindpress
.com

Unanimous Indians

Why compel all to conform or lie?

THE Union government got away with hypocrisy last week, on something most of our society has gone along with for a long while.

The ministry of overseas Indian affairs is formally describing the country (in the runup to the next annual Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, the officially sponsored meet of Indians living abroad or those of Indian origin) as the "world's fastest growing free-market democracy".

Minister Vayalar Ravi was queried, as he has been professing a staunch Leftism for decades. "Why? Do you have a problem?" was his amused retort.

Mr Ravi has actually used this description in more than one speech since he took charge of this ministry. What he omitted to mention, and no one cared to raise, is that any political party applying for registration has to compulsorily, since 1989, swear allegiance to socialism. This repugnant legislation, compelling an oath to uphold one particular ideology, was one of the concluding bits of law-making from the administration of Mr Rajiv Gandhi, amending the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

The justification was taken from an even more repellent act, by Indira Gandhi's emergency-era regime in 1976, when it rammed through an amendment inserting new words into the Preamble to our Constitution.

As a result, the founding fathers are made to say that they are resolving on November 26, 1949, to constitute India into, among other things, a socialist republic, when they had done no such thing. Just imagine if the same method had been used to have the founders say, 27 years after the event, that they were resolving to constitute India into a capitalist republic!

Can you imagine the uproar, the horrified cries of official forgery, of repugnance to democratic norms, of illegality? Well, the socialists got away with it and the rest of us see nothing wrong in what was done.

Including the courts. In 1996, S.V.Raju, former secretary to Minoo Masani, co-founder of the then actually free-market Swatantra Party, applied to the Election Commission of India to re-register it. But, the completed application refused to swear allegiance to socialism. The ECI rejected it. He challenged this law in the Mumbai high court. The petition has yet to come up for a hearing. Maharashtra peasant leader Sharad Joshi has formed a party with the same principles.

It has contested (and won) elections, but with no registration; its candidates have to fight as independents. If you think democracy is worth aspiring to, you will demand an end to the conspiracy of silence on this state of affairs.

Print

This site is managed by Express Network Private Ltd.
No part of this site should be used in any other media without prior permission.
e-mail: info@newindpress.com