

The anti Dalit mindset of the BJP/RSS and the Government has been manifesting itself in various forms across the country, with blatantly partisan crimes and atrocities being committed against dalits with active encouragement and commission by the Central Government. What is all the more shocking is that when the acts of atrocities come out in public, the Government and its Ministers, rather than bringing the guilty to book and providing justice and relief to the victims, come out in open support of the perpetrators of such crimes.

The Union HRD Minister, Smt. Smriti Irani, who claimed to be and is indeed the constitutional custodian of students across the nation, yesterday lied through her teeth in her bid to protect the killers of Rohith Vemula. She came up with a set of lies that have been thoroughly and totally exposed in less than 12 hours of her assertions to the contrary.

In a shameless attempt to put the onus of guilt on the 5 suspended students, Smt. Irani made an assertion that the Proctoral Committee which had earlier taken an objective and therefore lenient view of the supposed violence against the ABVP President, had taken an ex parte view and therefore the case had to be referred to a sub committee of the Executive Council of the University. Records of testimony by the Security Officer and the Doctor of the University, that speak of a verbal argument and no external signs of trauma and the fact that the concerned had been consulted by it belie this assertion of Smt. Irani at the outset.

The view of the Proctoral committee was rejected and the matter was referred to the Executive Council by the VC under direct pressure from the HRD Ministry, so that the whims of the ABVP President in the University could be fulfilled by invoking stringent punishment on the Dalit students.

Smt. Irani again misled the nation by asserting another blatant lie that the sub-committee of the Executive council was headed by a Dalit faculty member. The same has been proved to be patently false by none other than the University's SC/ST Teachers and Officers Forum, who have not only put the truth of the committee being headed by an upper caste man, but have also decided to resign from all administrative positions in protest against the Ministers "fabricated" statement.

As an alibi to her open act of pressure on the VC to give unjustified stringent punishment to Dalit students, Smt. Irani cited that the warden of the hostel was a Dalit. Doesn't she know that a warden is bound to implement the decision of the Executive council? Isn't she openly hodd winking the country?

For all the theatrical performance and alibi put forth by the HRD Minister, she could not answer plain and simple questions as to whether,

1. The students were expelled from the University and then the Hostel- rendering their academic pursuit fractured- for simply arguing with her party's student wing, ABVP's representative in the Hyderabad Central University?
2. Was the quantum and nature of punishment justified? Does she, as the HRD Minister and a mother, as she underlined, feel that they deserved to be ex party'd for

standing up to an organization- the ABVP- for having a particular point of view of view regarding a hanging or terrorism?

3. Does the HRD Minister believe- like her colleague Bandaru Dattatreya, that any body or organization, who does not have views similar to them are anti-national?

4. She invoked the castes of various people in her media briefing. Does she want to ignite an OBC- Dalit confrontation in the typical BJP/RSS convoluted fashion?

5. Did she, as such custodian and as a mother did not deem it fit to go and visit the grieving mother of Rohith?

6. Does she agree with the demand of her ally Shri Ramvilas Paswan and many of her party's MPs for a high level inquiry into the tragic incident?

7. Leave apart removing the VC, pending inquiry, hasn't she by coming out with a stout defense of the procedures followed by the University, already prejudiced any investigation into his role in the incident?

The obvious answers to these questions and the facts available in public domain have shorn the HRD Minister of even an iota of credibility. She has openly and blatantly lied to the nation. With her in the chair, no student can expect to get basic natural justice, leave apart getting a decent education and dignified life. Her pressure on the Director of IIT, Chennai in May last year to ban the Ambedkar-Periyar Study circle at whims of the local RSS affiliates was another example of blatant demolition of views and rights of dalit students. She is a habitual offender.

The Congress Party demands that Smt. Smriti Irani steps down immediately for misleading the nation and to ensure fair play and justice in the matter of Rohith Vemula, else the Prime Minister should sack her and apologise to the Nation.