

'Reservation is No Solution For Every Social Ill'

As Union Law Minister, also in charge of Minority Affairs, **Salman Khurshid** laments that surging influence of private sector is checking benefits of reservation from reaching Dalits and lower strata. In an interview on **Sachchi Baat** with Editorial Director **Prabhu Chawla**, he reiterates the government's commitment to work for the poor, says court directions have ensured reservations are carried out not on economic basis, but as a solution to backwardness.

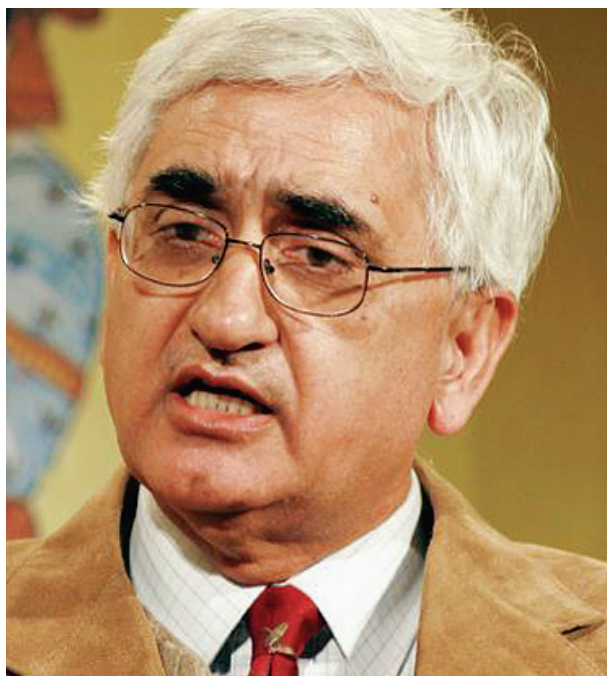
There's talk of a Criminal Violence Bill, and of reservation for communities. But parties have reservation in office-bearer posts already.

Reservation is a traditional instrument for social justice. This has been very important and successful upto the point where we made efforts to assimilate people from Dalit *samaj* and Harijans in the growth story. But now, because the influence and the scope of private sector are increasing, reservations have not reached (the needy).

Why don't you have economic reservation?

The definition of Dalits is different, as till now the creamy layer does not apply to them; even the court has not vetted it. As far as OBCs or backward classes in minorities are concerned, creamy layer will apply to them. Reservations and the constructive work we are doing will be for the poor.

'The court has told us we can reserve on backwardness, not on economic basis, which can be achieved by state policies.'



Why reservations are not on economic basis is because, the court has told us time and again that you can do reservations on backwardness; not on economic basis, which can be achieved by economic policies. Now, this is part of our Constitutional thought, we cannot oppose this part.

But there can be a Constitutional amendment. If it has been done 120 times, then it can also happen the 121st time.

Yes, why can't that happen? They have been happening. In promotions, we have done Constitutional amendments, they were denied and said to be void. Then we tried again. Hence where all we can get a window for Constitutional

amendment, we can work.

You agree that financial criteria should be used, because, as census figures show, the number of poor has increased in the past 20 years.

We have tried many times to give reservations on economic basis. This proposal has come from Rajasthan. It has also come from other states, there have been efforts, yet we have not been successful in any of the courts to get it vetted—that this is right as per the Constitution.

Why can't a Muslim become a CM? There have been only six.

Why not? As you say, there have been six.

That's six among 300.

There have been six among 300; if you want there to be more, we should put more effort for this. But the solution for everything is not reservation.