

Dear Sir,

Sub – Plea for not caving in to motivated protests and denting the UPSC civil services exam

This is with respect to the ongoing protest by some bunch of disgruntled candidates about CSAT in UPSC Civil Services Exam. At the outset I would like to highlight that their grievance is farcical and is motivated because of some coaching centres in Mukherjee Nagar. These centres have realized that their incomes have fallen to oceanic depths after the introduction of CSAT, so they are instigating these protests.

It's unfortunate that Hindi Language is being misused to garner sympathy and get their sinister demands fulfilled. They are deliberately trying to link the insult of national language (which is not so) with their inefficiency, incompetency and lack of intelligent hard work. Truth of the matter is laid bare in subsequent points:

a) Lies 1 - They have based their protest on only 1 piece of information which says that share of Hindi medium candidates has fallen drastically after CSAT. However this is cunningly playing with the facts without elaborating on the underlying causes for this trend. Before 2011, most of these candidates used to score in their optional paper in prelims and used to give GS paper a cursory look. In this process, mugging their subjects for years and years & reproducing it in exam was the mantra to clear the exam. After CSAT, which requires analytical thinking was introduced their so called strategy failed.

b) Lies 2 – They have been saying that other languages like Marathi, Tamil etc (schedule 8 languages) are also at the receiving end. Again this is nothing but lies because in prelims, paper is provided in only 2 languages – English and Hindi. It is natural that candidate hailing from southern states, Odisha and other states will attempt the paper in English only and NOT Hindi. So, how does CSAT end up discriminating against them? In fact, candidates hailing from Hindi medium have an added advantage that they are getting the papers in their language which other regional language candidates don't have. But they are not the ones who are protesting.

c) Lies 3 – As an extension of lies 2, they claim to speak on behalf of civil services aspirants. This is incorrect & even illegal. The number of people appearing in exam is near about 4 lakhs (assuming 50% turn out for the prelims exam). How can 500 people convey the sentiment and thoughts of 4 lakh people? Just because others are not running on streets and protesting doesn't mean that they agree with whatever frivolous reasons are being projected.

d) Lies 4 – They say that the cut-off in mains have gone down to very low levels. Yet again there is a reason for that. After 2011 the standard/difficulty of questions has gone sky high. The earlier streak of questions which were picked up from some books is over. Today's questions require in-depth knowledge assimilated from different sources requiring tremendous efforts and analysis.

Above all how can we put a premium on quality of candidates being selected solely on the basis of level of cut-off? And if it so, then we are sure, Hindi medium candidates must be scoring extremely high even in present pattern of exam because they are the trend setters and they are the ones who set the bar high. But reality speaks otherwise. You are familiar with the results. We need not dwell on this aspect.

Few days back it was in the newspapers that how son of a group D employee (working in Honourable PM's office) has aced the exam with Rank 578. Sir, our question is, what special facilities were at his disposal to clear this exam? If he is capable enough to clear it, why can't others? It's the outlook and the attitude which decides where will the pendulum swing between selection and rejection.

Moot point is, today they are saying English is the culprit. Tomorrow it will be maths, reasoning. Day after it will be Ethics so on and so forth. Are we going to remove all these things just because some miniscule minority of candidates have made up their mind that they won't learn anything and will run the exam as per "what fits their definition and convenience of exam and not"

Every individual is born with skills and limitations in terms of social, economic, educational, physical realm. Some decide to tide over their limitations with their effort and some choose to linger on blaming everything else but themselves. Even if they haven't learnt these things in their childhood, what is stopping them from preparing it now? It's not as if it will take eternity to grasp such bare essentials.

- Premier services which carry immense responsibility on their shoulders don't need people like this who harbor such a rigid mindset & are not willing to change themselves (in this case to work on minimum knowledge in elementary English and maths) but would try every tactics to dilute the quality of selection process. Can India afford to have such officers?
- Do we want officers who would rather indulge in self pity rather than taking up the challenges?
- What if the expectations of citizens are not as per their convenience, will they relinquish their duties and start protesting on the pretext that they are ill equipped to handle them?
- Will the govt allow itself to be arm twisted and yield to such pressure tactics every time a motley group of students decides to ratchet up . Are we heading towards a state of anarchy?

Above questions have larger ramifications and go much beyond the issue of CSAT and will chart out the course of civil services in near future. There is a very thick line between genuine grouse and vested interest. We hope the above mentioned points shed some light in that direction.

Kindly do not entertain such pleas which apparently claim to preserve our national language but in reality are nothing short of shameless mockery of selection process on which the foundation of Indian bureaucracy is laid and intend to paralyze it. This is not the question between English and Hindi. It is the question between "I can" and "I won't".

Thanking you