



Should there be a ban on Bandhs?

Description

Theme :-

- Bharath Bandh in April 2018 caused the death of 9 people and many people were injured due to violent protests.
- The reason behind this bandh is the order of Supreme Court that prohibited immediate arrests under SC/ST act as it is the one of the most abused act. Till now, many innocent people were falsely accused of abusing dalits and were immediately sent to jail on a mere complaint without any enquiry.

What is Bandh :-

- Bandh is a form of protest. It is a kind of civil-disobedience. When bandh is called, people are expected to stay at homes and do not go to work or school. Bandh may be called for a place, city, state or to the entire nation.

Motive behind Bandhs :-

- If people do not like the step taken by government, any organization or political parties of opposition call for a bandh to express their protest against the move. Bandh also attracts the attention of media and public. This attention is used to make them aware of the consequences of the move by government.

Points to support ban on Bandhs :-

- Though right to protest is a fundamental right, people do not have right to take away the fundamental rights of others such as going to their work, doing their personal works etc. Not everyone is against the changes by government. Some people may support it and may not support the ban. Forcing them to stay at home is undemocratic.

- Bandhs causes a lot of inconvenience to common people especially who have medical and personal emergencies at that time. Daily wage laborers will be at more loss as most of them do not even have money to buy food for that day.
- Many times, bandhs are called for even the silliest reasons.
- Halting everything for a day results in a huge loss to Indian economy.
- Industries are also one of the worst hits. Investors may lose interest to invest in manufacturing sector as bandh by anyone results in the loss to them.
- Most of the bandhs results in violence. Some political parties and organizations intentionally causes violence by setting public properties on fire, by destroying vehicles and by injuring the common people.
- In 1998, Kerala government banned political parties from calling for a bandh. Supreme Court also held the decision. But the phenomenon of bandhs did not stop.
- In 2012, parents of school children of Andhra Pradesh protested against the bandhs and demanded to add schools into ESMA (Essential Services and Management Act). institutions that come under ESMA should work irrespective of the bandh. Medical services is also under this act.

Points to oppose ban on Bandhs :-

- When India is under British rule, Indians do not have right to protest. Several freedom fighters were arrested under sedition act when they protested against the ruthless rule of the government. Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi were also among those who got arrested for protesting. And hence while drafting our constitution, right to protest was specifically discussed. Right to protest is a hard earned fundamental right.
- Some organizations and political parties are not in support of the ban on bandhs because they opine that banning bandhs may be followed by banning protests altogether.
- In 2017, Supreme court rejected a petition to ban bandhs and said right to protest is a valubale right.
- Without calling for bandh, opposition parties may not able to put pressure on government, if their actions are undemocratic.

Conclusion :-

Bandh is only one form of protest. There are many other ways to protest. Political parties and organizations can silently protest at one particular place such as public park and can avoid causing inconvenience to common public.

Especially in this modern era, where there is social media and 24/7 news coverage, there is no need to call for bandhs to make public aware of the issue. If people agree with the protest, they do join in pressuring the government to review its decision.

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