

After SC order, state to discuss internal quota

A J Sadashiva Commission report on SC reservation could be revived

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The Karnataka government said it will explore providing internal reservation among SC, ST and OBCs after the Supreme Court allowed states to make sub-categories among these social groups.

The issue of providing internal reservation is a political hot potato, with groups within the SC, ST and OBCs vying for restructuring their quota.

"My personal view on this is very clear. Reservation was brought into force to ensure justice to oppressed communities. The benefit has to be available to all members of these communities. We will discuss it in the Cabinet," Deputy Chief Minister Govind Karjol, the social welfare minister, told DH.

"The Supreme Court has cited an example of how a basket of fruits cannot be given only to the mighty. This is an apt observation. The government is in favour of ensuring justice to all," Karjol added.

At present, Karnataka has 15% reservation for SCs, 3% for STs and 32% for OBCs. Reservation is provided for 101 Scheduled Castes, 50 Scheduled Tribes and 207 OBCs.

The state government's intent to move towards internal reservation could revive the 2012 report by the A J Sadashiva Commission, which recommended that the 15% SC quota be divided into 6% for



Deputy Chief Minister Govind Karjol.

SC (Left), 5% for SC (Right), 3% for 'touchables' and 1% for other SCs.

Dalits in Karnataka are largely divided into two groups: left-hand and right-hand castes. The left is said to be angry because most of the benefits are going to the right-hand castes.

Also, there is a perception that the Congress has neglected the Dalit left. The BJP has cashed in on this by promoting Karjol, MPs Hamesh Jigajinagi and A Narayanaswamy, who are Dalit left.

Political analyst D Umapathy said the BJP had a lot to

gain from internal reservation. "Moreover, it's only fair that the left community gets its share of reservation," he said, adding that the debate at this juncture makes one cautious about the political machination at play.

Also, there is a clamour for higher reservation for Valmikis within the STs.

But former Backward Classes Commission chairperson C SDwarkanath pointed out that the Supreme Court had only made an "observation". "It has to be referred to a larger bench," he said.

Former Congress minister Priyank Kharge said there was a need for a "deep dive" on the issue.

"On the one hand, the government is talking about 10% reservation for EWS. On the other hand, we are also exploring the possibility of expanding the existing reservation for the SC and ST communities," he said.

Justice Sadashiva lamented that his report had seen no progress.

"The government should've placed it before the Assembly and referred it to the Centre long back," he said.