



सत्यमेव जयते

CONSUL GENERAL OF INDIA

No.SANF/CGO/551/2/2020

January 16, 2020

Dear Councilmember Sawant,

Greetings from San Francisco!

I refer to the meeting of the Seattle City Council on January 13, 2020 when you made a presentation flagging your intent to table a resolution on January 21 against the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 (CAA 2019) recently enacted by the Parliament of India.

Without commenting on the appropriateness of tabling such a resolution at the Seattle City Council purportedly at the behest of the City's South Asian community, I would like to express my strong reservations at the gross misrepresentation of facts, which, I am sure could be due to either ignorance or falling prey to the misinformation campaign launched by certain vested interests. I feel it is extremely important to distinguish facts from fiction, and hence, I consider it my duty to set the record straight.

The facts are as follows:-

- Citizenship (Amendment) Act does not take away the citizenship of any Indian Citizen, including Muslim citizens.
- No statute or law passed by Parliament, including the CAA, can abridge or take away citizenship status from a national of India.
- All Indian citizens, irrespective of the faith that they profess or the language that they speak, enjoy the same fundamental rights conferred on them by the Constitution of India;
- CAA aims to provide rights and government services that are available to all Indian citizens, to those stateless persons who have been living in India for decades, and who have entered India to flee religious persecution before 31 December 2014.
- Those who have come illegally after December 31, 2014, are not eligible. CAA is retrospective in effect.
- Migrants from the three countries who are also minorities in Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan, are eligible under the CAA for citizenship after a total residence period of six years.

- CAA does not prevent other foreigners from any other country or belonging to any faith, from applying for Indian citizenship under the Citizenship Act 1955.
- All other foreign migrants will also be eligible to apply for Indian citizenship after a total residency period of 12 years, if they fulfill the qualifications laid down in the Citizenship Act 1955.
- The CAA has nothing to do with the deportation of any foreigner from India.
- The deportation process is laid down in existing law - Foreigners Act 1946 and/or the Passport (entry into India) Act 1920. This is irrespective of religion or country of origin.

As is evident from the above, there is absolutely no intent of stripping citizenship of "200 million Muslims in India" as contended by you in your presentation at the City Council Meeting. Nothing could be farther from the truth. I reiterate, CAA has no implication on the existing citizens of India, irrespective of their religious faith and belief. Any attempt to portray otherwise is not only factually incorrect but is potentially dangerous as it may fragment the community on communal lines. For a diverse and cosmopolitan city like Seattle, which has a history of communal harmony and brotherhood, the resolution may act as a major divisive force. Such resolutions also have detrimental effect in the overall context of the India-US relations, particularly our bilateral strategic partnership.

In the circumstances, I would urge you to withdraw the resolution, the contents of which are both factually incorrect and holds the potential of disturbing the peace and harmony within the Indian community residing in Seattle. I seek your understanding.

With the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sincerely,



(Sanjay Panda)

Hon'ble Ms. Kshama Sawant
Councilmember, Seattle City Council
District 3// Central Seattle
(email: kshama.sawant@seattle.gov)