

**Caste, Eviction and Social Exclusion:
Institutionalized Dalit Atrocity in Central University of Kerala (CUK)**NOUFAL CK
Dept. of English,
MANUU, Hyderabad**Abstract**

The seeds of Anti Dalit and Pro fascist attitudes have been sown since Central University of Kerala (CUK) was established according to Parliament Act 25 of 2009. The University was founded in Periya Panchayath of Kasarkode, Endosulfan-affected land and educationally background place, in hope of Upliftment of Northern Kerala. The prescribed land of University was in Plantation Corporation Estate, where a Dalit Colony –including 16 Dalit families and their tribe chief, were struggling for their means of life.

By manifestation of rally of promises, University authority brainwashed minds of educated youth of Dalit families. There after occurred a preplanned drama of Rastriya Swyam Sevaka Sangam (RSS) in favor of central Government as part of atrocities happened against Dalit, Muslim and Communist students of all Central universities of the nation.

This paper is an attempt to invite a public attention towards naked injustice faced by Dalit community in so called secularist politically-aware society of Kerala as the desolated Dalit families are still hunger strike in front of the University gate. The proposed paper intends to analyze the following questions:

What are the problems arise in social and economic spheres of Dalit Community in varsity premises? How do the main stream political parties try to ignore these kinds of social injustice? How the right wing Hinduvta parties implement their agenda exploiting this turbulent situation?

Caste, Dalit and Social Exclusion

In caste system of India, a Dalit is a person outside of the four varnas, and considered below of all and polluting. Dalit includes people as leather workers, scavengers, tanners, flayers, cobblers, folk musicians and street handicraft persons. Dalits are a very distinct social group while belonging to a broad class of have-nots they suffer an additional disability of social oppression. Economically, most of them are still the poorest of poor. In social terms however, all Dalits, irrespective of their economic standing, still suffer oppression. This social oppression varies from the crudest variety of untouchability, still being practiced in rural areas, to the sophisticated forms of discrimination and disparity encountered even in modern sectors of urban areas. Although the statistics indicates that Dalits have made a significant progress on almost all parameters during the five post-independence decades, the relative distance between them and non-dalits seems to have remained the same or increased.

Social Exclusion is a process in which one section of society looks down upon the other, and alienates and excludes the other from all opportunities of development on an arbitrary basis. The dominant section uses not only religion, tradition and culture but also political and bureaucratic

powers. Social exclusion reflects the multiple and overlapping nature of the disadvantages experienced by certain groups and categories of the population, with social identity as the central axis of their exclusion.

The shameless practice of untouchability and caste oppression unfortunately continues in India despite 70 years of independence. Marginality, in another hand Hierarchy is the worst form of human subjugation and it is intolerable and unacceptable in any civilized society. Without a resolution of the land question, breaking up land monopoly and redistributing land to the rural poor including Dalits, caste oppression cannot be eliminated. An ideological offensive against feudal values is inevitable for the success of the struggle against social exclusion of Dalit.

Dalit and Landownership in Modern Kerala

Kerala is widely acclaimed for its achievements in social development as it boasts a near total literacy, comparatively higher life expectancy and land reforms. Even though its per capita income has remained low, this phenomenon has famously become known as the “kerala Model of Development”. However, the exclusion of Dalits, who constitute 9.8 % of the state’s total population, has gone relatively unacknowledged. More recently, scholars have drawn attention to the landlessness of Dalits and Adivasis that has rendered large segments of these social groups incapable of participating in the developmental process, and to the land struggles that have ensued as a result over the past decade.

In the case of Kerala Dalits, although they were integral to agrarian production, they were prevented from owning land in the traditional caste society. This situation did not change in any substantial manner with the introduction of land reforms in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These reforms made former tenants land owners, as they could prove their status as tenants by presenting rent receipts. Dalits, as laborers, could not stake such claims on land. As a result, Dalits were given ownership of tiny plots of land that housed their huts. The total area of land that they could own under the rules of land reforms varied from 0.04 hectares in villages to 0.02 hectares in urban areas. This legal denial of ownership and access to land meant that Dalits would never evolve as land-owning peasants despite their continued role in agrarian society. Since 1980, intergenerational fragmentation of Dalits’ tiny plots of land gave way to autonomous movements demanding cultivable lands to landless Dalits, thereby causing confrontation with established political parties. In particular, Communist parties that were behind the historic programme of land reforms felt threatened by the gradual development of these autonomous movements that demanded the reopening of the “settled problem” of land reforms in Kerala. Although certain leaders of the Communist Party of India(Marxist) even openly expressed their interest in a second land reform that would benefit Dalits and other marginalized social groups, they had to recant due to opposition from the party.

Under such circumstances, Dalits and Adivasi activists from various parts of Kerala such as M.Geethanandan from Kannur, CK Janu from Wayanad, Sunny M.Kapikkad and M.D. Thomas from Kottayam led the movement in 2000 in claiming land for the landless Adivasis. These mobilisations, which began in the late 1990s, were new to Kerala’s polity as they were organized by Dalit and Adivasi activists and not controlled by political parties. This is a major

difference from other regions of India, such as Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, where Maoists had armed men in their struggles against exploitation and oppression. The mobilizations in Kerala, however, were aimed at securing the rights and enabling Dalits to acquire lands. In 2002, the political agitation received tremendous civil society support and the Government was forced to recognize the oppressive situation under which Dalits and Adivasis have been living in Kerala. In 2003, under the leadership of Adivasi Gotra Maha Sabha (AGMS) the people laid siege to the wild life sanctuary at Muthanga in Wayanad District and police firing on February 19, 2003 led to the death of an activist and a policeman. In 2007, another Dalit activist, Laha Gopalan, launched another land struggle at Chengara (Pathanamthitta District of Kerala) that occupied a rubber plantation leased by Harrison-Malayalam Plantations from the former native ruler of the princely state of Travancore. The leadership of the movement had brought in landless people, mostly from Dalit Communities from various parts of the state, to occupy the plantation and start living there. This led to confrontations with the state government, political parties, and trade unions. The government thought of it as illegal occupation while the trade unions felt that the occupiers were denying the legitimate rights of the workers of the plantations. Over 150 landless families in Arippa (Kollam District) under the leadership of ADMS, occupied the land and set up temporary shelters made of plastic sheets in the revenue land of Arippa and started living there.

Institutionalized Dalit Atrocities in Central University of Kerala: Eviction, job promise and Injustice

“The Central University of Kerala is founded on the noble vision of a ‘caring wisdom’ and is guided by the lofty ideals of academic and social commitment, moral steadfastness and intellectual and spiritual enlightenment, as reflected in its vision statement. Located in a region characterized by linguistic and ethnic diversity and cultural richness, the University seeks to harness the local resources-human, intellectual, social, artistic and cultural- while bringing in the best that is globally available, thus maintaining a fruitful, symbolic relationship with a region that badly needs an educational uplift.” This is how the official website of University picturizes the cultural linguistic and historical diversity of Kasargod District and it mentioned about importance of a University in this area. The prime factors behind the establishing the campus in Endosulfan effected land, are educational backwardness of the area, need of a Medical college in the standard of AIIMS, and a remedial benefit to local people who are suffering on bad effect of Endosulfan which caused to mass death of children People of Kasargod had observed the upcoming University will end up all anti-Endosulfan agitation. Sang parivar’s newly planned schemes were rushing through this gap of trauma and dilemma.

The Central University of Kerala was established as part of the newly created 15 Central Universities by an Act passed by Parliament in 2007. The reason to choose Kasargod as headquarter of University was clear. Among 14 districts of Kerala, Kasargod lays in Northern part of the state. It is one of the backward districts in the state especially in terms of education, health, and infrastructure. So central Government identified Kasargod as best place to start with and sufficient landed area was also available. Government of Kerala had donated altogether 360 acres in Kerala Plantation Corporation Estate in Manathum para Colony in Pullur periya Panjayath just beside of National Highway. During land taking up process, 16 Dalit families and their Tribe chief became a problematic issue. They had been living there for more than One

Hundred and Fifty years under the sacred puja of Gulikan, a tribal idol they used to worship and it is an icon of marginalized culture and life of the under privileged Dalit families.

Educated young of Dalit families were brain washed by University authority by promise of ensured job for each family member instead of eviction and displacement from the colony. This Mavilar community became first prey of promises by throwing out their tribe Moorthy. This happened in a state where National Highway expansion process trapped in red tapism afraid of mass protest against shifting of thousands of shrines and temples from highway-premises. Again Dalit identity became a question mark under Hinduvta power and the word 'Dalit' itself was downtrodden under the word 'Hindu'. History has witnessed for repetition of injustice when the same victim comes in opposite of Hierarchy, varna and social status. Gulikan is an underlying idol worshipped by primitive tribes like Malyan, Mavilan, Malavettum and Nalkadayan. When Shivan was undergone for Aryanism of varna system, Gulikan was given to Dalit as their Moorthy. The history of marginalization or desolation was been retrieved in case of evicted Dalit incarnation of Kasargod Dalits. They were otherized and alienated from Cultural representation of traditional art forms of Hindu Kovilakams (family home). It produces Anti-Dalit and Pro Fascist temperament behind the curtain of Higher education in Central University of Kerala (CUK). But politically cautious Keralites who habituated with Anti-fascist slogans following the institutionalized murder of Rohit Vemula and ante-national allegation on Kanhayya Kumar, are not still vigilant about injustice happens beneath their nose Back-door appointment, Nepotism and Malpractice were plenty in number. Appointment files of Backward Communities were thrown in dustbin. Promised Law Academy disappeared from the picture. Curtain pulling to shift University Headquarters to Pathanamthitta District and dropping Medical College are revealed among the public. When BJP-led NDA came in power at centre, untouchability was replaced as Hindu Communalism. Former 'pracharak pramukh' of RSS has been appointed as financial officer in University. Then Academic and non-academic affairs were interpreted under the particular context of 'Bharatiya Vichar Kendra'. The first research conducted in University was on how to evict 16 Dalit families in support of mere some job promises. Dr. Jayaprasad still carries title of 'Director of Bharatiya Vichar Kendra' along with position of University Financial Officer. Very soon he came with a strange statement saying that University is not responsible for jobless young of the region. Mentality of hatred and animosity towards Dalit is very obvious and shows its depth when one asks about 240 vacancies of Office Assistants. The recruiting institution under Security and Services have not found out any kind of vent or space to appoint Dalits even in posts of attenders and sweepers.

HCU-JNU Model Saffronisation and Anti-national Labelling

Recently, Central University of Hyderabad and Jawaharlal University for Anti-national allegation and Terrorist-labelling of students by Sang Parivar. This is the intolerant measurement RSS fractions use against Dalit, Communist and Muslim students Politics of Central Universities of the nation. Rohit Vemula, Kanhayya Kumar, Umer Khalid and Najeeb are lively preys of brutal assault and atrocity targeted down-trodden Politics.

In same way, Communist, Dalit and Minority Students Associations are prominent in Kerala campus. Ambedkar Students Association (ASA) is really a fly in the eyes of University

authority. They began to claim for chair of Ayyankali in the campus. Claim of chair for various Dalit leaders in higher education Institutions became a collective voice. The main reason behind this claim is excess number of admission of Intellectual students from Dalit communities. They observe that to get rid of backwardness of Dalit, intellectual research or opportunity is more inevitable in higher educational institutions. Then research will be a set back to caste system and it will hurt saffron varna polity of sang parivar.

University was directly labeling ASA students as anti-national and stamping as 'dangerous' of tomorrow. Allegation of North Indian model was put in experimentation. University handed over a list of students to Intelligence Department of police. Now students regularly get phone calls from IB and they have to prove their patriotism and nationalism. This is how so called patriots treat its own citizens as other and stamp as traitors. Through other issues like Denial of scholarship, Registration delay, Rejection of guides, Discrimination to Dalit students is implicit in the campus. Even though public attention or mainstream support of political parties is limited, a collective strike is going on in front of the University gate which uncovers sanctimonious and dishonest face of some academicians with the sign of history will take revenge from them.

References:

- Dalits, Tribals and Human Rights, Savitha Bhatt, Adhyayan Publishers (2011)
Dalit and Human Rights in Modern India, Dr.Satnam Singh, RBSA Publishers (2011)
Dalits and Social Marginalization, J.Bheemaiah, Aavishkar Publishers (2012)
Round Table India Online, 2013
The Hindu News Paper, January 26, 2016
Dalit kudiyozhippikkalum kavibharanavum, Madhyamam Weekly, January (2017)