

The Death of Rohit Vemula is a Murder Committed by the Hindu Communal Forces

Friends,

Rohith Vemula was one of the active leaders of ASA (Ambedkar Students Association) in Hyderabad Central University (HCU). It was recorded that he committed suicide by hanging on 17th January 2016. He was from Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh. It is a fact that Hindutva forces have been trying to get a hold in HCU for a long time. It is crystal clear that these forces have been threatening the students belonging to oppressed castes and classes and also are indulging in cheap and undemocratic tactics. With a nexus between the university administration and Hindutva forces many Dalit students and students with progressive views were targeted. After BJP came to power in the centre, HRD Ministry started to intervene directly and enhance the oppression by favouring their allies and influencing the administration in decision making.

Rohith was a voracious reader, writer and student leader. He was a bright student and JRF scholar. Not only HCU but Public Universities are supporting and encouraging the bright and meritorious students especially from poor and backward classes. Students enter the 'varsities with great hope and big dreams. As students acquire to some extent democratic and progressive ideology naturally they respond to the social injustice in their own way. They are also trying to understand the developments and crises in the world, by smelling beforehand the crisis in the society. On the other hand the self-centred professors in the university are rousing emotions of the students by their policies. The communal forces especially in this Central University naturally did not like the democratic aspirations of the students. They demand the students to support their orthodox ideology and threaten those with different types of punishment if they defy them. Rohith was one of the many who received such a threat.

Oppression in HUC is not a novel feature. Back in 2002, 10 Dalit students were rusticated in a similar fashion and the present VC Prof. Apparao then as a hostel warden played a crucial role in it too. Many such incidents of oppression and discrimination took place in the last 15 years. Along with ASA several progressive student organisations have organised several struggles, expressed solidarity to many democratic and progressive movements and many lectures and literary meetings were arranged by inviting intellectuals and writers. In the recent times, protests and demonstrations were organised against the ban on Periyar Study Circle of IIT-M, against the beef ban, against capital punishment, against Muzzafarnagar riots and against the attacks on Lakshmimpeta Dalits. Rohith and his friends have actively participated in all these agitations. They participated in the programmes of joint action committees. All the students are very familiar with the slogans and comments posted by Rohith in his face book. This may be one of the reasons for the anger of communalists against Rohith. The audios and videos installed in the internet by ABVP bear witness to this.

ABVP leader Susheel posted obscene comments in the face book on the occasion of the screening of the documentary, 'Mujaffarnagar Baakhi Hai' in HCU. In the presence of the security guard, he gave a written apology to those students who approached him for the same. This is represented wrongly as an attack on Susheel. The communalists used Susheel as a tool in foisting a false case against five students, including Rohith. They also created cinematic scenes in the hospital and released them through media. All this is a planned strategy of the communal forces. These forces used to incite their students, sometimes directly and some other times indirectly by holding rallies in HCU. As it is not possible nowadays to pour led in their ears as imposed by Manu, they implicated the students in false cases. Even before the Enquiry committee had not come to a final conclusion these forces were successful in getting a VC of their own choice, and form a new committee, and expel the students etc. They forced the VC not to include any democratic member in the committee and to enhance the punishment to the students.

They further forced through Central Ministers and through series of letters from Human Resource Department and those letters bear witness to all this. These forces were not satisfied even though the university authorities had declared social boycott of the five students. Though those students had erected a make shift tent and named it ' Dalit ghetto '(veliwada'), and continued their protest no university official responded to their demands.

As the students tried to gather solidarity and to explain the injustice caused to them instead of trying for a solution, the people at the helm with their feudal dictatorial mind have continued their harassments and pressures. They tried to get judgments at court in their favour. Unable to bear all this Rohith had written a letter 10 days back to the V C. The essence of the letter was requesting him to "provide a bottle of poison to Dalit students at the time of admission itself so that they may use it whenever they face a helpless condition. " The death of Rohith who supported and who had led many agitations and struggles is definitely to be treated as the murder committed by Hindutva fanatic forces.

In fact this is the second case on Rohith by ABVP. In September 2013 Rohith has posted a poem of Sri Sri, "Tom Tom" in his face book. The Hindutva forces filed a complaint in police station against Rohit that he had offended Lord Ganesha by posting that poem of Sri Sri and put him behind the bars. Rohith was in forefront in condemning discrimination in the name of religion and caste .He was objecting, questioning, and reacting to many issues and incidents around him and this appeared as extremist politics to the ruling class. These fascist forces want to impose their views on what to eat , what to wear , how to wear, what to talk, what book to read, what poem to be posted on face book , how to walk etc. Anyone who disobeys their orders was indirectly threatened. The spirit of democratic solidarity that is slowly budding again in the university had become an obstacle and the HRD is resolved to pluck it off. In this background the death of Rohith has thrown a challenge to the student community.

Is it not the duty of the student community to express solidarity to the agitations of different classes of people who are waging struggles against oppression, exploitation and against the worldwide crisis of exploiting classes and crisis in India as a part of it? When the oppressive acts are being continued by discriminating people in new forms based on caste, religion, food habits is it not necessary to move forward collectively instead of becoming victims of intolerance and hopelessness? This is the challenge before the student world. The history of student movement did not entertain hopelessness. In the past the student world had the history of extending solidarity to the struggles against the exploiting class. So PDSO wishes and desires to move forward by imbibing that fighting spirit.

Let us oppose the Private Universities which are for money, and which revolve round money. Let us oppose and fight against the conspiracy of destroying the Govt Universities. Let us stay away from wrong ideals and wrong thoughts. Let us fight against the exploitative policies of the ruling classes which are converting our universities in to the heaps of dust bins. Let us fight against the exploitative policies which degrade our universities into centers of outdated, useless and dirty ideologies and centers of manufacturing imperialistic agents. We have to fight back the ideology of communal forces who give slogans of pseudo patriotism and who do not believe that a country means its people. These communal forces should be defeated. Though the imperialists and MNC s are looting away our resources these communal forces keep silent. They are working as watch dogs to the exploitation. They cannot act for a long time showing the pseudo love towards the people of the country. We have to expose them. In the guise of nation's unity they cannot deceive people for a long time. We have to explain in detail to the students and people how much patriotism is there among these forces who cannot tolerate even a slight improvement in the lives of people who are being suppressed under the MNC s and exploiting forces. To stand for nation means standing for the people, working for the enlightenment of oppressed classes, walking shoulder to shoulder with forces fighting for the people. Continuation of consistent progressive student movements and dedication for the people will be the real tribute to Rohit.

Progressive Democratic Students Organisation (PDSO)