

Premier Institute or The hub of Caste Discrimination



Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore

“If the Sudra intentionally listens for committing to memory the Veda, then his ears should be filled with (molten) lead; if he utters the Veda, then his tongue should be cut off.” – Manusmriti

Above verse is from the Manusmriti, the law book of Hindu religion. It undoubtedly states how lower caste should be treated if they try to learn from the texts. In the modern India the religious scriptures are no-more the source of knowledge. But the modern education is used as the mean to break the caste barriers and attain development by the Dalits in India. The reservation of the seats for Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes in educational institutions including technical, engineering and medical colleges played crucial role in bringing the Dalits in modern occupations.

The traditional Bramhminical knowledge system has become increasingly irrelevant and useless but traditional laws even though become un-

constitutional but it seems they have been internalized by society.

On 26th August 2007 V.Ajay Sree Chandra PhD scholar from Indian Institute Of Sciences forced to commit suicide by the two of his faculties.



Late. V. Ajay Sree Chandra: A Promising Dalit Scientist Silenced by Dominated Brahminic Society

He hanged himself in his hostel room. He belongs to scheduled caste and comes from the Andhra Pradesh. He had been repeatedly abused, humiliated, insulted being a Dalit by two of his

faculty, one is Dr. Ajit Kumar who was supervisor to him and another is Prof. Raghavendra Gadkar who is co-supervisor to him. Ajay left seven page suicide notes, as confirmed by one of his friend, which has been surprisingly missing and deliberately suppressed by the police during investigation. Institute authorities also destroyed some pages from the personal diary of the Ajay which might have used as the evidence to expose the inhuman treatment Ajay was subjected to by the faculties.



Picture of Late Ajay Sree Chandra's sealed room, where he Committed Suicide

On the Sunday night Ajay was watching TV with his hostel-mates Diptaroop Nandi and Sumantra Roy among others. According to Deeptaroop Nandi, Ajay looked depressed on the Sunday. Nandi got phone call from Prof. Raghvendra Gadkar to enquiring the whereabouts of Ajay On Monday morning (26 Th August 2007). When Ajay didn't arrive

for break fast in the mess-hall, Nandi called up on Ajay's mobile, but when there was no response from him, he went to Ajay's room. As room was closed from inside they knocked door and shouted many times, but when there was no response from inside, they peeped through the window. He saw Ajay's body hanging to the ceiling. With the help of security guards, they broke the lock and opened the room. Nandhi saw seven page suicide-note in the room. He has informed that to Prof. Gadkar. But surprisingly suicide note was not produced for police report. All the batch mates of Ajay were forced by Institute authority to go home after this incidence happened.

Ajay's father V. Ravindra Kumar was informed by the Institute on the same day by 10:30 AM. He rushed to Bangalore and reached to M.S. Ramaiah Hospital by 6:45 PM where post mortem was done. Death body handed over to V. Ravindra Kumar on next day. After that he reached to Institute campus. One police sub-inspector along with Institute official asked him to sign some papers, as those papers were written in Kannada, he couldn't read it. He was so sad and

had to take son's body to native place, he signed on those papers. Later he came to know that police stated the reasons of suicide are personal and family problems.

Ajay was eldest among the three siblings of the V. Ravindra Kumar. His academic credentials were proven. In S.S.C. he got 81%, in H.S.C. he got 94% and in B.Sc. he got 80%. He was one among the top twelve in India who got into the Ph.D. course in Biological sciences at Indian Institute of Sciences, Bangalore. The above record speaks volumes about his capability and potential that is enough to cope with the academic requirements to manage and deal his Ph.D. course. He was in first year of his Ph.D programme. He shared his problems with many of his friends that how Prof. Raghvendra Gadkar and Prof. Ajit Kumar used to humiliate him on the basis of caste.

Many of the Dalit students told reporter that they also had been abused and humiliated by the Dr. Gadkar and Dr. Ajit Kumar on the basis of caste. The fear of being harassed by faculties is so immense that these students asked the

author of this report not to mention their names in the report.

Harassment in the laboratory:

Ajay must have mentioned harassment from his faculties in that missing suicide note. Ajay used to write diary. When Police along with the institute authority came to Ajay's room, they took away his diary also. The diary was with institute security and after three days it was handed over to local police station. Many pages from the diary were torn. Presently the diary is with police but they gave photocopies of the few pages to Ajay's father. One page of it clearly mentions that Ajay was scared with some one in the laboratory. He mentions it six times in eight line paragraph.

I am in the lab now. Time: 11:45 AM
Well I have no work to do, but to setup
the away "study time" tomorrow morning
before boy comes. The labnet is @ 9:30 AM tomorrow.
I don't know what to do. Maybe I am
in the wrong lab or this lab is not for me.
→ "These eyes, they scare me, they look with
such inferiority (superiority complex) @ you. They tell
everything (and) of the time. Those eyes scare me."
* Those eyes make me a fool everytime, but
I'll be come to know that I was being fooled
@ the end of the act. Those eyes scare me a lot.
My legs are paining, I am sleepy. I should
go home, that's it for d day. (-.-)

Original text extract from Ajay's Personal Diary

Diary reads *“those eyes, they scare me, they look with such inferiority*

/superiority complex @ you. They tell everything (most of the time). Those eyes scare me.....those eyes scares me a lot. My legs are paining...”

It clearly proves that he was terrorized by some one in the laboratory. The persons who used to terrorize can not be any student or non-teaching staff, if it was so he would have complained or shared it with his research supervisor or someone else. But he shared with his friends that Prof. Gadkar and Prof. Ajit Kumar used humiliated him, so it is clear that the person mentions in the diary were Prof. Gadkar and Prof. Ajit Kumar.

Indian institute of Sciences, Bangalore, deemed university and premier institute in the research of science and technology. Each year around 350 research candidates enroll in the institute and around 300 Ph. D. and M.Sc. (Engg) students passed out each year. Institute claims they have largest library in the field of science and technology in the country.

This maximum of the teaching and non-teaching staffs comes from the caste- Hindu. Dalit research students are being discriminated by them on the basis of caste. Many Dalit students spoke with

the reporter that their guides used harsh and derogatory language. Dalit Research scholars are always discouraged by their guides. Research students who are working on the research projects are not evaluated properly. The non-contributor upper caste students are always appreciated by the upper caste supervisors and the hard working Dalit students are commented as incompetent in the group.

Dalit employees also being discriminated, they are not given promotion. There are very few Dalit faculties in the institute. Their research projects are many times not given permission by the concern authorities.

Atrocities on Dalits is no more the rural phenomenon but is now perpetuated in the modern and secular places like educational institutions, governmental and non-governmental establishments etc. The difference between the two is former is more visible like physical attacks, destroying private properties, social boycott and in the modern institutions it is more subtle, discrimination is practiced in the institutions through decision making processes. Another form of atrocity is verbal attack, using derogatory words

and making comments. This has been observed and experienced by many Dalit students on the campuses. They are being commented by the non-dalit counterparts as well their teachers.

It is clear that Ajay was subjected to a brutal form of harassment by his two upper caste faculties, one is Dr. Ajit Kumar who was supervisor to him and another is Prof.Raghavendra Gadkar that forced him to commit suicide. This is only a pick of iceberg that has come out to our notice. There were many volumes of unwritten and unspoken harassment stories in the institute that are being submerged in the institute history.

*This report is prepared by Bahujan Students Network (BSN) with the help of students of IISc Bangalore
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