

## WHY I AM DOING WHAT I AM: THE INDEFINITE HUNGER STRIKE CONTINUES

### ***DEFEAT THE BRAHMANICAL LEFT TO ESTABLISH MARXISM WITH AN AMBEDKARITE VISION***

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Friends, I Jitendra Kumar have been sitting on an indefinite hunger strike since the last 7 days under the JNUSU's call. However on the night of 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016, the JNUSU citing certain spurious logic withdrew its call of the hunger strike, to which I dissented. I dissented and I continued with the indefinite hunger strike.

Friends, we all are well aware of the situation of an undeclared emergency prevalent in this country since the ascendance of the Modi govt to power. There is a clamp down upon all our fundamental rights, the right to expression; right to dissent & protest; right to rationality all have been tossed out of the window. In such a fascist regime the everyday lives of the marginalized communities has become even more traumatized. The dalits, adivasis, women, religious & sexual minorities are being branded, hunted and jailed. However, one should not mistake this as a new phenomenon. The horrifying and de-dignifying existence of these communities has been the violent reality of the state and society for ages. In recent times these contradictions are exposing their venomous fangs with complete impunity. The exclusion and discrimination that used to occur implicitly and explicitly in the society are now firmly set in the most unabashed manner. Horrifyingly this violence of the powers to be is aggressively being re-encoded in an institutionalized manner. The brahmanical arrogance has infiltrated the state and society equally. Spaces that we earlier thought of as being democratic and progressive are the new breeding grounds of these fascist forces. The crudest incident that occurred in close proximity to us has been the witch-hunting and subsequent murder of our fellow student Vemula Rohith in HCU.

In solidarity with the ongoing protests in HCU by the evicted comrades who were for days sitting in dharna and sleeping under the open sky, I gave a call for a 'night vigil' here in JNU, in whose solidarity many organizations, political activists and students participated. Similar calls were taken up in many many more campuses in places like Mumbai, Bangalore, Kolkata and so on. Unfortunately while these struggles were shaping up, we got the unfortunate news of the 'suicide' of Rohith. Most of us who rationally analysed the situation immediately understood that this was not a case of suicide rather it is a case of well orchestrated murder in which the HCU administration as well as the state apparatus is equally implicated. The hindutva criminals killed Rohith. However I do not see Comrade Rohith's death as a defeat rather I see it as the seed of resistance sowed by him who visualized a beautiful dream for humanity. This incidence is not just the question of one student, one campus, one Dalit, one Rohith, it raises questions of this society in which we, the marginalized struggle to exist. And the movement against this brutality is not a struggle of HCU alone. The anger incited by his murder took form of a nation-wide movement where a large section of the student community was out on the streets in protest.

Joint-Action Committees (JAC) was formed across the country to build a movement to challenge the brahmanical powers that killed Rohith with complete impunity. Various protest calls were taken up across the country. Here in Delhi, we had protests within our campus, protest marches to MHRD. The JAC in Hyderabad gave a call for hunger strike in HCU with the demands that Appa Rao, Dattareya and Smriti Irani must immediately resign from their posts and criminal proceedings should be initiated against them. In solidarity with this call hunger strikes began in many places across the country. Here in Delhi, in the JAC there was a proposal to initiate a hunger strike. There was no agreement on this in the JAC. The JNUSU however thought it was important to begin the hunger strike and therefore went ahead with it under its own banner. I joined the call of the JNUSU, since I thought that we already have had a series of protests in Delhi and now it was time to escalate our resistance and move forward in another mode of struggle. Organizations like the AISA, DSF and SFI too joined in at the call of the JNUSU. The JNUSU gave the call for indefinite hunger strike in solidarity with comrades in HCU. Though there was an initial agreement that the site of the hunger strike will be some place other than the university campus and Jantar Mantar, somehow a 'new consensus' emerged that the hunger strike should continue within JNU itself. Despite my reservations about this move I placed my trust in the JNUSU a legitimate body elected by us all, it channelizing the movement in a positive direction. However on the night of 1<sup>st</sup> February the JNUSU called off the hunger strike citing a very spurious and false logic that the hunger strike in HCU has been called off therefore hunger strike here too would be called off. When the fact of the matter remains that this was a false reporting, hunger strike continues in the HCU, comrades are sitting in relay hunger strike continuously.

In solidarity with my dissent, Comrade Anubhuthi and Comrade Birendra have joined in for the indefinite hunger strike; they are now in the third day of it. I appeal to the wider student community too, to come in solidarity and join in mass relay hunger strike. While being part of the movement to ensure justice for Rohith, we also must attempt to re-claim our tools of struggle. The hunger strike which is an important tool in struggles has been reduced to a joke on this campus. It is time that this neutralized tool is re-energized and culled out from its passive framework in such a manner that these will add-on in our struggles.

*"The value of a man was reduced to his immediate identity and nearest possibility. To a vote. To a number. To a thing. Never was a man treated as a mind. As a glorious thing made up of stardust. In very field, in studies, in streets, in politics, and in dying and living"*  
--- Vemula Rohith

**Sd/- Jitendra Kumar**