

**Prima facie report of the Fact Finding Team of
The Independent Peoples Tribunal on Human Rights and the Environment
26th January 2016
Hyderabad | Telangana**

The Joint Action Committee for Social Justice had requested the Indian Peoples Tribunal to send a fact finding team to investigate into the death of Rohith Vemula on 17th January 2016 on the Campus of the University of Hyderabad.

A team of Justice (Retd) Justice Suresh H, Sujata Surepalli Editor Desi Disa, US Rao-Chairman CBC Federation, Meena Menon - Researcher and Senior Advocate Gayatri Singh visited the University of Hyderabad on 25th and 26th of January 2015 and met with students, faculty, friends and family of Rohith Vemula and some of the administration authorities who were available.

The observations of the Fact Finding Team are as below;

1. The death of Rohit Vemula was caused by the acts of Omission and Commission of the authorities.
2. On 18th December 2015, Rohit along with other members of ASA met the VC and requested to revoke the Order of suspension and raised the humiliating issue of social boycott. He was sad to know that the VC was adamant and refused to resolve the issue on the spot. Rohit wrote the letter dated 18th December 2015 which indicates his assessment that the Students would not get any justice from the Vice Chancellor.
3. That the Office of the Vice Chancellor suppressed letter dated 18th December 2015, refusing to invoke even basic protocols in such situations is not only dereliction of duty cast on University Authorities but also constitutes grave contempt of the Orders of the High Court of Andhra Pradesh & Telangana, particularly in the conduct of the composition of the Committees, procedure mandated for incidents that may lead to expulsion, and appellate provisions thereto.
4. That the Office of the Vice Chancellor allowed the incident of 3 / 4 August 2015 to spiral out of control is shocking. It is evident from the documents on record that Vice

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Chancellor allowed his office to be played by the Minister of Human Resource and Development to advance their own political agenda.

5. Recommendations of the Proctoral Committee are shocking to say the least. Prohibition of the Committee to associate in groups transgresses on fundamental protection of association provided within the Constitution. That the Committee could prescribe such a punishment reflects their lack of understanding of the Constitution, and is a matter of concern.
6. That the extended members of the Proctoral Committee were not allowed to deliberate and influence the outcome of the Extended Proctoral Committee shows the sham it was.
7. The call of the Proctoral Committee to ban all associations on the basis of ideology, Caste, Religion reflects a deep rooted prejudice against politically active students and their associations and goes to root of the matter that ails this university. That the administration can echo a position that is contrary to the fundamental rights guaranteed in the Constitution is a matter of deep concern.
8. That the Executive Sub Committee constituted by the Vice Chancellor did not take umbrage to the aforesaid observations of the Proctoral Committee casts doubt over the competency of a prima facie extremely prejudiced Executive Sub Committee.
9. The dereliction of duty exhibited by the Office of the Vice Chancellor to even engage with protesting students is a clear abdication of his foremost duty to act in the best interest of Students is clear.
10. That the University of Hyderabad , failed to take cognisance of recurring suicides by Students from Rural and Marginalised Communities is horrifying. That

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comprehensive investigations were taken up only in some cases is disturbing. That the recommendations of these investigations were ignored strengthens our resolve that the disregard for Students from Rural and Marginalised Communities seems to be a concern that will require systemic correction.

11. That Rohit Vemula was folded into the alleged incident of 3rd August 2015, when he was not even present at the said incident or referred too reflects a preset agenda to target him. This is further borne out by the sequence of events which shows the taking cognisance on a complaint by a rank outsider, manipulation of facts, tampering with evidence. That these events followed the intervention of Bandaru Dattaray and the Minister of HRD strengthen our view that the University was not concerned about an impartial investigation but was only keen to bend over backwards to please the Minister of HRD.
12. That students from Rural and Marginalised Communities are denied timely payment of their Fellowships, runs contrary to the purpose and objective of the fellowships. That there is no effective administrative oversight to ensure timely payments to Students from Rural and Marginalised Communities has allowed systemic bias to be perpetuated without any redress. It is obvious that this system enjoys tacit approval of the administration.
13. The continuing and growing incidence of tragic suicides of students belonging to marginalised sections of society makes it imperative that a “Rohith Law” be enacted, which is the demand of both students of the Joint Action Committee and Rohith’s family. This should ensure punitive action against university administrations guilty of encouragement, abetting or even inaction in the case of the persistence of exclusionary practices in Universities.

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PRESS RELEASE