

Thane Cyclone and Brutal Caste Atrocity against Dalits in Pondicherry and Tamil Nadu states

A fact Finding Report

Sathamangalam is a village Panchayat consists of Mel Sathamangalam, Keezh Sathamangalam and Sathamangalam villages located in Villiyannur commune in the Pondicherry union territory where there are 1500 families are residing among 70 families are belonging into Dalit community and the remains are belonging into Vanniyar (Most Backward class). The Dalits are numerically minority in this village, primarily engaging in the menial jobs has resulted weaker socio, economic, political status and facing caste discrimination as routine in their day to day life which has been prevalent in the other places but here the situation is very worse apart from other geographical locations in these two places.

Keezh Sathamangalam is one of the affected Dalit villages in the Thane cyclone occurred in Pondicherry and Tamil Nadu. This village is severely affected through the Thane cyclone struck on 30-12-2011. The 70 Dalit homes roofs were fly off during the cyclone, damaged house hold articles , it was severely affected their day to day life including food, water, electricity, asylum and etc.

The Sathamangalam Village Panchayat has a drinking water tank for the villages including Keezh Sathamangalm village Dalit people. A few Dalit people from Keezh Sathamangalam village has approached the village panchayat leader Mr.Paramasivam belonging into Vanniyar community on 31-12-2011 at around morning 6.00 a.m to supply drinking water though these Dalit community has no drinking water on the day since they have affected through Thane cyclone occurred on 30-12-2011.

The Panchayat leader Mr.Paramasivam has stated that the water tank gate key is not with him and it was with one of the tank operator Mr.Varadharajan belonging into Vanniyar community. Hence he could not supply water immediately and asked the villagers to wait till the in charge has come. The Dalit villagers were awaiting but the in-charge has not come and there was no effort took by Panchayat leader to resolve the problem. The Dalit community has suffered lot due to no water supply and not able to prepare food for their kids and the family.

Hence the Dalit villagers took water from the water tank by jumping over the compound wall and took water from the water tap erected inside the water tank campus. It was noticed by the Panchayat leader and he reached the spot and opened the water tank gate. The Dalit people had asked him that “now you brought a key then why don’t you bring it before when we requested you”. He replied them that this is another key which I am keeping, but I don’t know whether it’s open the lock, that is what I have brought this to check, but it works. Then he locked it immediately and went away.

On the same day evening around 06.30p.m water tank operator Mr.Varadharajan and group of dominant caste persons belonging into Vanniyar community had come to Keezh Sathamangalm Dalit village and tried to attack few Dalit youths were suspected took water from the tank in the morning. At that time one of Dalit village leader Mr.Ezhumalai had come to the spot and started negotiation with this group of dominant caste persons to prevent the attack against Dalit youths. But Mr.Varadharajan and group of dominant caste persons got angry and scolded Mr.Ezhumalai and suddenly beaten him saying “*you bloody Paraiyah how dare are you speak right to me you stupid’s took water from the tank without our permission, if you repeat it then we will kill you*”. Then they left the spot.

Mr.Ezhumali along with few Dalit villagers went to the Mangalam Police station to lodge a complaint against these perpetrators. But the police was denied to file the FIR and not even given a complaint receipt.

A ferocious group of dominant caste fanatic mobs around 300 of Mel Sathamangalam of Villianur Commune, Pondicherry had entered Keezh Sathamangalam Dalit village and unleashed a barbarian caste atrocities against Dalit community on 01.01.2012 at around 7.00 am and it sustained till 8.00 a.m. The Houses and household articles of Dalit community were ransacked and looted, 4 two-wheelers and 2 four-wheelers were fully damaged by the group of dominant caste mobs.

1 two wheeler was set ablaze by the group of dominant caste community mobs. The Dalit women , a pregnant woman and old people were severely beaten up, scolded , verbally abused using with filthy words , humiliated by derogatory mentioned their caste name “*Para Naaigale Ozhinji Ponga*” (You Paraiyah dogs die now) and “*Ungala Kollaama Vidamaattom , Oora vittu ellam odi ponga*” (We will not let you free until we kill you and vacate the village) threatened and

chased them to run away from their village by severely warned them by showing weapons like knife, iron rods, wooden sticks etc . And above all a Dalit child was thrown to the winds by these uncivilized unruly mobs.

The Deputy Collector (Revenue) Ms. Muthamma had visited the occurrence place and met the Dalit victims at Keezh Sathamangalam village and probed in presence of the Revenue and Police officials on 01st January 2012 and instructed them to take necessary action on this regard forthwith.

Again Mr. S. Ezhumalai S/o Subramani belonging into Dalit community residing at Keezh Sathamangalam village had lodged a complaint at Mangalam Police Station on 01.01.2012 against the perpetrators who are belonging into dominant caste namely 1.Siva @ Paramasiavam S/o Rangasamy, 2. Varadaraasou (40) S/o Naraayansaamy, 3. Patchamuthu (39), 4. Arikrishnan (50), 5.Panneer S/o Kaliyaperumaaal 6.Sathyamoorthy, 7.Sankaradoss S/o Paanapattar, 8. Devu S/o Selvaraassou, 9. Karunaamoorthy, 10.Kumar and others who had directly invoked and involved in these brutal caste atrocities. But, the police officials of Mangalam police station had registered a case against the perpetrators only under section 147,148,427,435,324,294,506 (ii) of IPC and under section 11(i) D of PCR Act r/w 149 IPC.

The Fact finding team has found that there are many conflicts and caste atrocities have been occurred at the Thane Cyclone affected villages/towns due to inadequate relief responses by the state and with caste magnitude maintained in the society.

The Fact finding team has found that It is eventually witnessed that the police are willfully neglected their duties under SC/ST PoA Act 1989 and not filed the case with appropriate sections under the Act with intention to escape the perpetrators from the punishments and justice to the victims of caste atrocities.

The Fact finding team has found that it is a clear genuine and deserves bona fide case for the proper enforcement of SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act 1989 and its rules 1995. But the fact that the Tamil Nadu police and the Pondicherry enforcement officials are not concerned and respond to the incident in accordance to the SC/ST PoA Act 1989 in order to protect the perpetrators from punishment.

The fact finding team has found that the police investigation is biased, suppressed all the facts and trying to abate the case by collapsing and omitting evidences. The police try to simplify the case, treated as a petty case and not considered as a mass brutal caste atrocity against Dalits considered the facts under the SC/ST POA Act 1989 frame.

The fact finding team has found that Mr. S. Baskaran Police Inspector of Villiyannur had willfully neglected his duty under sec 4 of SC/ST POA Act 1989 by not registering the case under SC/ST PoA Act 1989 intentionally to protect the perpetrators from punishments prescribed under the SC/ST PoA Act 1989 and adequate compensation to the victims of caste atrocities by filed the case only under Protection of Civil Rights Act 1954 and some simple sections of IPC.

The Fact finding team has found that the Keezh Sathamangalam atrocities on Dalit people could be averted if the local Police had acted on time in accordance with previous complaint made by Mr. Ezhumali on 31-12-2011. But the biased attitude of the local Police headed by Inspector Mr. Baskaran had lead to the present piquant situation and his lethargic attitude had encouraged the dominant caste mobs accomplished such mass brutal attack on Dalits on 01-01-2012.

As the provisions of the Protection of Civil Rights Act 1955 and Indian Penal Code have been found inadequate to check the atrocities, humiliations and offences against Scheduled Castes and Tribes, the Parliament had passed The 'Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act' 1989 & Rules 1995. The statement of objects and reasons appended to the Bill while moving the same in the Parliament reads as:

"Despite various measures to improve the socioeconomic conditions of SCs & STs, they remain vulnerable. They are denied a number of civil rights; they are subjected to various offences, indignities, humiliations and harassment. They have, in several brutal incidents, been deprived of their life and property. Serious atrocities are committed against them for various historical, social and economic reasons."

The preamble of the Act also states that the Act is

"to prevent the commission of offences of atrocities against the members of Scheduled Castes and Tribes, to provide for Special Courts for the trial of such offences and for the relief and

rehabilitation of the victims of such offenses and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.”

Thus objectives of the Act clearly emphasize the intention of the Government to deliver justice to these communities through proactive efforts to enable them to live in society with dignity and self-esteem on par with others. But, the police officers like Mr. Baskaran have scant regard and respect to this Act and its Rules. Every time they are giving their own interpretations in accordance with their whims and fancies to safe guard their brethrens from the clutches of law and to instill and protect the vicious ideology of casteism.

Therefore we submit the given below ‘sine qua non’ demands to end the ordeals and scourge of relentlessly and inconsistently continuing atrocities on Dalit people of Pondicherry and to render justice to Keezh Sathamangalam Dalit people and request the respected authorities to be pleased to

1. Register two separate cases under the sections 3 (1)(ii) 3(1)(viii), 3(1)(ix), 3(1)(x), 3(1)(xi), 3(1)(xiv), 3(1)(xv), 3(2)(ii), 3(2)(iii), 3(2)(iv) of The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 against the above mentioned perpetrators of Sathamangalam village who had unleashed inhuman and barbarian caste atrocities against the Keezh Sathamangalam Dalit community on 31.12.2011 evening and on 01.01.2012 forenoon instead of redundant Protection of Civil Rights Act,1954.
2. Initiate punitive legal actions forthwith against the Villianur Police Inspector Mr.S.Baskaran who had compounded and obfuscated the Keezh Sathamangalam incident under the Section 4 of the above mentioned SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 for his willful negligence of his duties required to be performed by him under this Act, for the lack of his early action which could have prevented the above atrocities on Dalits, for his shoddy investigation and for the obfuscating actions taken by him in favor of the above anti-Dalit caste
3. Withdraw the false cases fabricated by the Mangalam Police against Keezh Sathamangalam Dalit people as the counter cases to cow down Dalit people to abandon their demands for the arrest and legal actions against the Mel Sathamangalam dominant caste mobs.

4. Render adequate compensation to the victims of caste atrocities of the Keezh Sathamangalam Dalit village under the Rule 12(4) of the 'The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Rules 1995'
5. Order for a judicial probe to this incident to reveal the unraveled facts to the social light to ensure justice and adequate compensation to the victims of caste atrocities occurred against Dalits on 31-12-2011 and 01-01-2012 at Keezh Sathamangalam village.

A Brutal Caste Atrocity and Foisted False case Against a Dalit in Palur Village

Similarly another caste atrocity incident took place in a village called Palur fall within Panrutti town in Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu. Palur is one of the Thane Cyclone affected Dalit village where the Dalit community basic life have been affected at large scale.

The Dalit community is struggling every day for food, electricity and other basic needs after the Thane Cyclone struck in this village. The state government has sanctioned some of relief packages to the affected villages and these can be distributed through the Panchayat leaders in the villages. In these circumstances Mr. Saravanan who is a village Panchayat president belonging into Vanniyar community was intentionally ignored and neglected the Dalits people who are residing at Nadu Colony during the distribution of relief materials and the financial assistance given by the state government.

He denied these reliefs material to the Dalit community by alleged that they have not cast their votes for him in the Panchayat election, hence he openly denied distributing any relief materials to the Dalit colonies including water supply.

In this background on 07-01-2012 Mr.Saravanan H/o Ms.Mahalakshmi a Panchayat ward member (2nd Ward) and Mr.Jeya Chandran belonging to the Dalit community of Nadu Colony have gone to the Panchayat Office where they have pleaded to Mr. Saravanan for their grievances. But Mr.Saravanan was questioned him saying "*why are you here*", and "*what is your job to do here*" he was humbly replied him saying "*we don't have water supply in our village, so I have come here to bring into your kind notice for necessary action*". But Mr.Saravanan was not listened to him and asked him to get out from the office, by saying this he moved towards

Mr.Murugan, caught his shirt choler, brutally beaten him and also he beaten Mr.Jeyachandarn and others who had come to stop this attack.

On next day 08-01-2012 around 09.00 a.m 50 Dalit people have gathered and went to the Nellikuppam police station to lodge a complaint against Mr.saravanan. But Mr.Anbarasu who is the sub inspector of NelliKuppam police station was denied to receive the complaint and asked them to give a complaint to the Inspector of police. He delayed the whole day by repeatedly said the same to the villagers and make them to wait at the police station entrance in the whole day.

But the next day 09-01-12 Mr.Murugan was arrested in the morning when he was at home by Mr.Kumar Inspector of Police, Nellikuppam. The Police Inspector was foisted the false case instigated by Mr.Saravanan, Village Panchayat President against Mr.Murugan (Victims of caste atrocity) under the sections of 307,506 (i) IPC and PPD Act.