

ON KERALA PARLIAMENT ELECTION RESULT

In Kerala, in the just concluded parliament election, out of the 20 seats the Congress-led UDF had won 19. Even the UDF leadership did not expect such a victory. In the Idukki parliament seat, before the election the UDF leadership had predicted a lead of 15,000 votes. But when the results came, the lead was 1.75 lakh. Factors such as weakened organizational position, inability even to perform the duties of an opposition etc. had created an unfavourable situation for the UDF. Even then in 10 seats, the UDF won with margins of over 1 lakh votes and in two seats, the margins even crossed 2 lakhs. In the lone seat won by the CPI (M)-led LDF, the lead was less than 10,000. How did the UDF achieve such a dazzling victory? Does it mean that the UDF has become a pro-people political force overnight? No right thinking person in Kerala would think that way. In fact, victory was dropped on the head of an almost dead UDF.

After all, the UDF is not a pro-people front that could inspire the people to give such a verdict in its favour. Its history is of running governments to protect the interest of the capitalist forces leaving behind the people in misery and penury. There were occasions when the Congress and its UDF partners had greatly lost people's faith due to their self-seeking politics of going to any extent to fulfil selfish interests. Being known for its anti-people politics, the people did not have any expectation from the UDF. But still the people voted for the UDF in a big way. It was not because of the faith in the UDF politics, but it was the anger, hatred and fear for the opponents of UDF that compelled the people, particularly the minorities to vote for the UDF. It was not a vote in favour of the UDF, but an anti BJP-LDF vote.

There has been large scale vote loss for the LDF. The vote share of the LDF declined from 43% in the 2016 assembly election to 35% now. That is a loss of 8%. In the case of BJP, the vote share increased by 5% from the 2014 parliament election and only by 0.6% from the 2016 assembly election. But for the UDF, it was an increase of 8.65% over the votes it polled in the last assembly election and an increase of 5.26% from the last parliament election. In Kerala, the usual difference in vote shares between the LDF and the UDF, the two contesting combinations and sharing power alternatively, has so far been around 2 to 3%. But this time the difference has been quite big. In 2004 when the UDF was reduced to just one seat, the vote difference was only 5.62%. But this time, the UDF has got 12.16% more votes than the LDF. Usually the winning front used to get about 4 lakhs votes more than its principal rival. But this time the UDF got 24 lakhs more than the LDF. It is necessary to objectively examine how could the UDF achieve such a huge victory.

The violent communalism and hatred for other religions practised by the BJP has created much fear among the minorities. In the name of cow vigilantism, poor people are being lynched throughout the country. During the last 5 years of Modi Government, a fearful situation has been created in the country where any criticism of the ruling party or the government policy is equated with anti-national activity. A condition has arisen where the minorities can save their life only if they can prove every minute their patriotism on the yardstick prescribed by the arch Hindu communal

RSS-BJP and Sangh Parivar. Many of those including well-known rationalists who raised their voice for democracy and freedom of expression have been shot dead. India has become a country where there is no place for dissent. No time in the history of the country, the minorities have been alienated so much. The only way before the toiling people, particularly the minorities to lead a fearless and decent life was to somehow throw the BJP out of power. So a big section of the people in the state of Kerala chose the common sense political logic of providing the Congress the maximum number of MPs to fulfil this objective at the national level. This led to the highest level of minority polarization in the history of the state. This was one of the major reasons for the victory of the UDF.

Next is that seeing the CPI(M) and CPI aligning with the Congress and the Muslim League in the neighbouring Tamil Nadu, the ordinary people felt that the anti-Congress stance of the CPI(M) was a hypocrisy. This created a situation where the ordinary people who do not generally make any deep political analysis did not feel the necessity of a strong anti-Congress stand and did not feel anything immoral about supporting the Congress. Added to this, when a clear and distinct left politics was not established, the way was cleared for a UDF victory.

Generally, when there was no visible wave in favour of any of these two fronts, the small percentage of voters who alternated their support between the two, decided the electoral fate. It is true that this section voted for the UDF this time. But the kind of victory margin that we have seen cannot be created by this vacillating section. So it is clear that some bigger change has taken place this time. This serious change is that a not so small section of the people who traditionally vote for the LDF has deserted the LDF. This is a reflection of the weakening of leftist thinking in the society. Today, if this section alienated from leftist mindset has supported the Congress, we cannot say tomorrow it will not go to the far more rightist camp!

Why did the LDF suffer this much loss of the vote share? If the CPI(M)-led left front does not truthfully evaluate and rectify the limitations, the left-democratic movement will suffer great setbacks. West Bengal has given that lesson. The LDF rule in Kerala rejecting leftist values and politics is a major factor that influenced the people in giving such a verdict. Imposing the central government's GST more heavily on the people in the state; increasing the state tax on petrol and thereby causing unbearable price rise, giving free hand to the private managements of education institutions violating norms, the aggressive land acquisition in the name of road development, the shameless support given to the big capitalists in annexing publicly owned land and forest as well as even helping them out in court cases while on the other hand paying no heed to the genuine demands of adivasis and poor people for a piece of land for their living space, throwing the contractual workers onto the street, continuing the contributory pension scheme implemented by the UDF government, brazenness and rude behaviour of the leaders, undemocratic politics of physical attacks on opponents – all these anti-people steps and approaches of the LDF had become factors

that influenced the people in giving a verdict against it.

When the Sabarimala issue cropped up, we had shown at that time itself that the way the CPI(M) handled it was with a narrow parliamentary aim. By giving an opportunity for the BJP to make maximum gain, thereby presenting the BJP as a force, the CPI(M) aimed at weakening the vote share of the Congress. But that actually backfired. It is true that the BJP could get the support of a small aggressive section of the ordinary believers. This is one of the reasons for the BJP to get more votes than in the last parliament election. The extent of the damage to the secular mindset of the people in the state due to the stand taken by the CPI(M) on the Sabarimala issue is clear from the 16% vote share that the BJP got in spite of the strong anti-Modi government mood of the people. But a section of the religious minded people, who understood that the BJP was trying to make political gain out of religious belief, supported the UDF. That this included a good number of traditional left voters is clear from the vote loss for the LDF. The ultimate result was the creation of a harmful situation that influenced a big section of the people to vote on the basis of religious belief. The CPI(M) had a big role in creating this situation, but the Congress leadership also had a no less role.

The Kerala election result is of great concern to the people who are serious about social progress and to the people who are left-minded. Kerala is going back to reaction and backwardness. The forces trying to ignite religious blindness and communalism are spreading darkness in the society by misleading the common people. The left parties like the CPI (M), CPI who are expected to struggle for social progress and secular-democratic values have thrown away all those lofty ideals for the sake of narrow parliamentary interest and power. In this situation, there is no time to wait for building up people's democratic movements and creating a counter current of cultivation of higher values and culture in the society. However difficult it may be, if the democratic minded people and humanists can come forward to take up this task, the darkness can be removed. It is heartening to see that in recent times many a people's struggle, built up on their own strength that did not have the backing of established political parties and was above caste and religion, had become victorious. If the left-democratic forces who have abandoned the path of movement for self and power come back to the path of people's struggle, the progressive movements will be strengthened and the social environment will brighten up with higher values. The unity of the people will become so firm that nobody will be able to break it. The secular outlook will become a strong social factor in cementing the unity of the people. It is only this way that a situation will arise where people would not be isolated, persecuted and attacked in the name of religion. The minorities should realize that social security is not something that can be gifted by any political party. Dignified life is possible only in a society where secular - democratic values are firmly established. The SUCI (Communist) appeals to one and all for taking up this task with dedication and determination.

Threatening Water Crisis in India

The World Bank predicted about 10 years back that the future wars would be water wars. This prediction, corroborated also by researches and surveys, appears to be coming true, even though water is abundantly available and there ought not be any scarcity. Globally we are using six times more water than we used 100 years ago, driven by population growth and changes in diets and consumer habits. Yet, a large part of the world population has been suffering from acute shortage of water. India is no exception. In India alone, 1 billion people live with water scarcity during at least one part of the year. "Over 96 million people in India have no access to a safe water supply, and the situation is only getting more serious. The general forecast is that around 20 Indian cities would run out of groundwater by 2020 affecting almost 100 million people." ³ As per NITI Aayog report 2018, 54 per cent of India's groundwater wells are declining. Depletion of groundwater is the main worry today. As per the 'Water Aid Report March 2019', India's use of groundwater is about 24% of what is used globally - more than that of China and US combined. That is the reason the rate of groundwater depletion has increased by 23% between 2000 and 2010. India is the third largest exporter of groundwater- 12% of the global total. India is currently ranked 120 among 122 countries in the water quality index, with 75% of households that lack drinking water supply in their premises. ² This is how excessive use of ground water has led to today's drinking water problem in most of the Indian cities. Further 'Water Aid Report March 2019' says that 70% of groundwater is contaminated, poisoned, with harmful chemicals seeping from pesticides used in agricultural purpose, causing all types of cancers among the people. As per another study, the sudden increase in cancer cases in India is because of the contamination of ground water caused by these chemicals, pesticides used in agriculture and the effluents released by the industries entering water bodies - rivers, streams and ponds. "As much as 55% of India's total water supply comes from groundwater resources. 60% water for irrigation, 30% urban water supply, and 70% of rural water supply comes from groundwater. In urban areas, where the demand of 135 liters per capita daily (lpcd) is more than three times the rural demand of 40 lpcd, the scarcity assumes menacing proportions. The rapid growth of population and its growing needs has meant that per capita availability of fresh water has declined sharply from 3,000 cubic meter to 1,123 cubic meter over the past 50 years. The global average is 6,000 cubic meter" (Live Mint:28April 2015). One in nine people do not have access to clean water close to home, and just under two thirds of the world's population - 4 billion - live in areas of physical water scarcity, where for at least part of the year demand exceeds supply. Water scarcity exists for two reasons. Physical scarcity means there is not enough water to go around. Socio-economic scarcity means there is water present, but it is not available to all because of lack of investment and political will. Not only the villages, even the sprawling metropolis like Chennai, Bangalore, Delhi, Mumbai, Jaipur, Nagpur and States like Gujarat,

Bihar, UP, MP, Rajasthan, and Punjab are facing severe drinking water crises. Already 80% of Karnataka and 72% off Maharashtra have been declared drought-affected besides traditionally drought-prone states like Gujarat and Rajasthan. Even after 72 years of independence, many villagers have to travel 13-14 km to fetch a pot of potable water. 14 of 24 states score below 50% on water management imperilling food security. Of late, besides Rajasthan and southern Haryana, the entire Vidarbha area of Maharashtra is reported to be turning into desert. Underground water level is so depleted that it can hardly be replenished in near future if positive measures are not adopted by the government agencies.

Water scarcity is being driven by two converging phenomena: growing freshwater use and depletion of usable freshwater resources. What are the measures taken by the government to tackle the intensifying water crisis? It is decided by lottery as to who would fetch water from the well. Many hotels, restaurants, students' hostels have been shut down in Chennai. School vacation in Karnataka has been extended. Many people in Maharashtra have left home and are staying in relief camps. Government is claiming to be sending water-tanks to supply drinking water to drought-affected areas. Then what would happen to other households? The government has of course not declared any area as drought-affected. There is now a newly constituted Ministry of Jal Shakti. All water-related departments including those of the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development, Ganga Rejuvenation, Drinking water and Sanitation have been merged and brought under one umbrella claiming that it would remedy the problem. But the union BJP irrigation minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat sitting in the capital city claims that there is no scarcity of water or drought in the country.

People are rising into protest. For long, the hapless peasants starved of adequate irrigation facility were first resenting and then burst into protest. But the authorities remained unfazed save and except making certain hollow promises and customary assurances of taking remedial steps. Now, the urban dwellers have come out on the streets. Millions of people are running out of usable water in the southern Indian city of Chennai, which is experiencing major droughts and a rapidly worsening water crisis. At least 550 people were arrested in the city of Coimbatore for protesting with empty water containers in front of the municipal government's headquarters, accusing officials of negligence and mismanagement. Meanwhile, four reservoirs that supply Chennai, the state capital and India's sixth largest city, have run nearly dry.

The BJP Prime Minister has talked of providing piped water for all by 2024. But the government did not spell out how it would plan to protect the sources of water, stop the overconsumption, wastage and intense overexploitation of groundwater and strengthen (and in many cases re-establish) the link between groundwater and surface water. The BJP Finance Minister in her recent budget speech also reiterated the customary promise

that water for all would be provided by 2024 and the government would focus on integrated management of piped water, including focus on creating local infrastructure (rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge and so on). But, she did not elaborate on the details nor did she talk about how much funding this would get. Also "Indian government is committed to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 6 — which promises that by 2030 everyone will have access to clean water — decent sanitation and good hygiene" ². But this could be a dream like any other failed schemes of the government.

Hence the obvious question is, why this crisis? Is it a natural calamity or man-made? To any discerning person, it would be obvious that this crisis is indeed man-made. Many projects were announced to tackle drought, problems of irrigation and ensure supply of potable water. But facts show that all these projects have either been defective or not implemented because of rampant corruption and pilferage, faulty planning, engagement of incompetent persons. These question the intent itself. Dams were created using public money to store water during rains and release them when there is drought or shortfall of monsoon or for irrigation purpose. But we find when it rains, the dam reservoirs overflow and water is released to cause flood. On the other hand, when there is scarcity, dam water is not made available. Why so? Because there is no proper maintenance, cleaning of accumulated silt in the reservoir. Because of faulty irrigation projects by the governments as also forced change of the path of the rivers, natural flow of rivers and accumulation of underground water through seepage has been disturbed. So, people have not got water but huge public money has been drained out. Mega-irrigation projects have failed to meet the needs of irrigation. Rather, these have disturbed, if not destroyed ecological balance.

Secondly, the so called modernized agriculture of cash-crops which the government has been stressing upon for the sake of fabulous benefits for multi-nationals and monopoly houses who have virtually taken over entire control of producing and distributing essential agricultural inputs and compelling the peasants to go for cash crop cultivation on contract, are using excess water. Reckless use of groundwater for such purposes as well as mushrooming of realty business and urbanization are among the major factors behind the water crisis. Even desalination plants are miserably less in number. Giant multi-nationals like Pepsi and Coca Cola who found a lucrative area in bottled water and soft drink business for minting huge profit are pumping groundwater at will. Privatization of water resources is another main problem in the cities. When the Government does not provide drinking water, people are forced to buy it at an abnormal cost. Bottled water has become the main stay in city life, offices and social functions and demand for it is increasing every day due to the growing population. It has become another way of making super profit by water companies. In most of the cities drinking water suppliers are doing lucrative business. It is interesting to note that most of municipalities

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AIDSO opposes inclusion of RSS history in university syllabus

In a statement issued on 19 July 2019, AIDSO strongly criticized inclusion of the history and role of RSS in nation-building in the Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University (RTMNU) syllabus. The RSS which not only opposed the anti-British freedom struggle of India branding it as reactionary but also supported and helped the British imperialist rulers to crush the movement, labelled the revered leaders and martyrs of the movement as 'traitors'.

However, after ascending to power, the BJP is trying to modify the syllabus on the lines of arch Hindu communal RSS, its mentor thereby saffronising education stripping it from its desired scientific, democratic and secular content. AIDSO urged upon the people of the country in general and the students in particular to protest against this vile act.

Martyr Chandrasekhar Azad Day in Mathura

On 20 July, AIDSO organized Martyr Chandrasekhar Azad Birth anniversary observance programme in Mathura. UP. Dr Lokesh Palival, Principal, N S K Easter College, Chandpur Kalan, presided over and Comrade Dinesh Mohanta, Council Member, AIDSO was the main speaker.



AIUTUC volunteers organized protest demonstration on 25 July in front of Governor's House in Kolkata against privatization of Bengal Chemical and other state enterprises and courted arrest

Protest demonstration in Hyderabad on 5 July last organized by AIDSO, AIDYO, AIMSS against the most ghastly incident of raping a nine month old girl child in Warangal, AP as well as growing crime against women and children

SUCI(C) strongly condemns ghastly killing of ten poor tribals in Sonebhadra district of Uttar Pradesh

Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI(C) issued the following statement on 18 July 2019 :

We strongly condemn the ghastly killing of ten poor tribal villagers including three women at Ubha village of Sonebhadra district in the BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh when the organized goons of local Gram Pradhan (village Head) resorted to indiscriminate firing on them to forcibly occupy lands of the Tribal people. Fact is that the local police administration was informed that such murderous attack would take place but no preventive action was taken. Besides the reported deaths, many more people have sustained serious bullet injuries and as such the death toll is likely to increase.

We demand immediate exemplary punishment to the culprits involved in this heinous crime and adequate compensation to the family members of the deceased persons. We also demand of the State Government to bear all expenses of proper medical treatment of the injured.

It is pertinent to mention here that wanton eviction of poor tribal people from their age old home and hearths as well as ruthless exploitation and suppression of theirs are growing unabated throughout the country with overt and covert patronization of police and administration of the various governments irrespective of hues.

We therefore call upon all concerned to build up democratic mass movements to effectively resist such attacks on the poor tribal people and observe all India protest day on 20th July, 2019 to protest against the barbaric killing that occurred in Ubha village.

All India Protest Day on 20th July, 2019

Delhi

Madhya Pradesh

Haryana

UP

Odisha

Tamil Nadu

MEDIA SAY SO

Beti Padao Beti Bachao

The Supreme Court has registered a *suo motu* PIL (Public Interest Litigation) on the rise in child rape cases and a corresponding lack of infrastructure and delay in the probe and trial of these cases. A Bench led by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi said the Supreme Court had prepared a list of child rape cases in the past six months, from January to June 2019, and found that out of the 24,000 cases lodged in this period, only 900 had completed trial and been disposed of. The states ranking next to UP in sequence are Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and West Bengal. Overall, only 911 cases have been heard in the court. But in Uttar Pradesh, only 3% of the cases of child rape filed has been settled. After Unao and Kathua incidents, it came to light that 106 rape cases are reported per day. [The Hindu dated 12 July 2019 and Hindustan (Hindi) and Ei Somoy (Bengali) 13 July 2019]

Social evils such as dowry system are the bane of Indian society. Despite having a law prohibiting the giving or taking of dowry in any form (Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961) the practice flourishes amongst all sections of the society irrespective of their caste or class. Thus, going by the latest data, India loses 21 lives to dowry every day. Studies reveal that out of total number of cases registered, 93 per cent of the accused were charge sheeted but only one third resulted in conviction. This is despite having special provisions against the crime of dowry deaths. This raises pertinent questions regarding the effective enforcement of existing laws and the desirability of looking at legal solutions for social problems without first tackling them at the ground level. (Times of India-03-04-19)

Apart from the rising number of female foeticide cases in India, gender bias kills more than 200,000 girls under the age of five in India each year. The figure is around 2.4 million in a decade. Numbers are particularly higher in northern states of UP, Bihar, MP, Rajasthan, of which in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, it is mostly due to unwanted child-bearing and subsequent neglect. Excess female child mortality is also found in 90 per cent of the districts in the country. As many as 132 villages in the Uttarkashi district of the BJP-ruled Uttarakhand saw no female births in the last three months. Social workers alleged that zero girl child-birth clearly indicated the prevalence of female foeticide. (India Today-15-05-18 and India TV and ANI dated 23-07-19)

Gujarat Model

A study conducted by the Gujarat state government says that 81.47 percent of students between class III and VIII of state government-run schools cannot read or write Gujarati fluently. This inadequate knowledge of Gujarati has been detrimental in learning subjects like mathematics and science. The same study reveals that in November 2018, 93.73 per cent students between class VI and VIII scored less than 50 per cent marks in science. The Gujarat government has been vigorously promoting the Shala Praveshotsav (school enrolment) and Gunotsav (quality education) programmes for several

years now, but figures of the study reflect a rather dismal situation in government schools. (Times of India 08-07-19)

Jobless or Jobloss Economic “Growth”?

So far, 6.8 lakh establishments have closed down in the country. On 1 July 2019, this was stated in the Parliament in reply to a question. According to Registrar of Companies, this is 36.07% of the total registered companies.

The decline in growth in the auto industry over the past 11 months has affected the components industry as well. It has resulted in the laying off of 8-10 lakh contract employees in recent months in the auto parts sector. According to a senior official at the Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India (ACMA), the job losses are happening largely because of the slowdown in the auto industry and in the major hubs including the Gurugram-Manesar belt of Haryana, Pune, Jamshedpur (Jharkhand) and some parts of Pithampur (Madhya Pradesh). Without giving details about the major companies that are cutting jobs, ACMA Director General Vinnie Mehta told: “The job cuts are happening around the hubs and by at least 10-15 per cent in each of the companies. The entire Haryana belt is suffering. There are around 50 lakh workers in the auto components industry and around 70 per cent of them are on contract.”

Before election, the railway ministry talked of recruiting 1.20 lakh employees. But now, it is learnt that the Railways would retrench 3 lakh employees. Similar instructions for shedding number of employees have also been issued by other ministries. (Hindu Business Line—24-07-19 and Ananda Bazar Patrika—30-07-19)

Data Discrepancy in Budget and Economic Survey

Most of the numbers stated in the budget 2019 as the “Revised Estimates” for 2018-19 do not tally with the government’s own estimates of actual revenues and expenditure in that year, as shown in the Economic Survey. When finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman’s Budget speech omitted numbers relating to the government’s overall revenue and expenditure, for both the previous and current years, this was widely commented on. After all, these numbers are the reason for having a Budget speech in the first place – to provide parliament and the general public a quick overview of the state of the Central government’s finances. Her response to this criticism was that all these numbers are available in the supplementary material provided in the Budget documents, so there is no need to go into them in the speech. The proof of this comes in the finance ministry’s own Economic Survey of 2018-19. Volume II contains a statistical

appendix, in which Table 2.5 on Page A59 provides the receipts and expenditure of the Central government. The last column of this table provides the ‘provisional actuals’ – that is to say, the real amounts as per the finance ministry’s own calculations – for the year 2018-19. (Since this Survey was brought out in July, rather than in February or March, it gave ample time for the ministry to record the actual receipts and spending of the fiscal year that ended on March 31, 2019.) In other words, most of the numbers stated as the “Revised Estimates” for 2018-19 do not tally with the government’s own estimates of actual revenues and expenditure in that year, as shown in the Economic Survey. The biggest discrepancy – and shortfall – is in the tax revenues retained by the Centre, which were actually lower than the revised estimates by a whopping Rs 1,65,176 crore, or as much as 13.5% of the revised estimates of total tax revenues. (The Wire 09-07-19)

Honouring electoral promise—the BJP way

In its 45-page manifesto for the 2019 elections, the BJP mentioned women 37 times, expressly promising to give women’s security greater priority. “We have constituted the Women’s Security Division in the Home Ministry and have made strict provisions for transferring the laws in order to commit crimes against women, in particular in a time-bound investigation and trial for rape,” the document said. “In such cases, forensic facilities and fast track courts will be expanded to bring convicts to justice.”

But, accusations of rape and murder against BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar hint at a chilling abuse of power and it is surprising that the BJP has continued to support him despite the chilling sequence of rape and murder allegations. In 2017, Kuldeep Singh Sengar, the Bharatiya Janata Party MLA from Uttar Pradesh allegedly raped a teenager. Afterwards, the teenager’s father died in police custody, allegedly after being beaten up by Sengar’s brother. Sengar was also accused of framing the girl’s father in a false case in order to get him into police custody. In April, during the election campaign, Chief Minister Adityanath shared a stage with Sengar’s wife. After the results were declared, BJP MP Sakshi Maharaj visited Sengar in jail and publicly thanked the accused for helping ensure the BJP’s victory. As the Sengar episode shows, the BJP is yet to come good on its promises. (scroll.in-30-07-19)

AIDSO Strongly Condemns the Hooliganism of ABVP in Delhi University

In a statement dated 17 July 2019, Comrade Ashok Mishra, General Secretary, AIDSO strongly condemned hooliganism of ABVP, students’ wing of RSS-BJP, in Delhi University on 16 July with the support of administration and NDTF, the teachers’ front of Sangh Parivar. The ABVP goons threatened those opposed to planned saffronization of syllabus of dire consequences and thus has been using terror as a weapon to bully everyone to submit to them. Calling it a blow to the democratic principles of educational institutions, Comrade Mishra appealed to the common students and education-loving people to launch a militant movement to save the democratic fabric of academic arena.

SUCI(C) vehemently protests demanding forthwith annulment of undemocratic amendment to RTI Act, and calls upon right-thinking people to unleash a powerful movement against this butchering of democracy

Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI(C) issued the following statement on 24 July 2019 :

How despotically and flagrantly the BJP-led central government is butchering democracy is once more exemplified in the way the RTI Act has been arbitrarily and suddenly amended to turn the statutory Central and State Information Commissions into an appendage of the central government and reduced the RTI body to a puppet organization of the government. The amendments hurriedly passed in the Parliament on 22 July ignoring the countrywide voice of dissent and without any proper debate in the Parliament. These amendments involve granting absolute right to the government to nominate as well as fix the salaries, tenures and other terms of service of the Information Commissioners at the states and Centre. Thus the right to information is being virtually reduced to elimination of the right to information and making a mockery of whatever little scope the people at large so far had been enjoying to know certain facts and data regarding deeds and misdeeds of the government as citizens of the country whose rulers boast it to be the 'largest democracy of the world'.

Alongside registering vehement protest against this most atrocious amendment and demanding immediate annulment of the same, we call upon all right-thinking democratic-minded people who are outraged by such repeated instances of slaughtering of whatever little relics of democracy are still in existence, to close their rank, come out in the open and unite on the platform of an organized, powerful and sustained protest movement throughout the country so that the autocratic government is forced to mend its ways, retrace from the path of adopting one after another anti-people policies and we urge upon the people to feel and understand the importance of the pressure of rightful assertion of people's power.

AIDSO protests SFI hooliganism in Kerala

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campus as their own 'Red Fort', SFI captured the control of University College. No other organisations, are either allowed to enter there or to file nominations in students union elections. Students are supposed to follow the orders of SFI unit. Otherwise, they are locked up in Union Office, which is notoriously termed as 'torture room' and are attacked physically and mentally. A couple of months ago, a first year degree student had attempted suicide leaving a note detailing the tortures she had to undergo at the hands of SFI leaders of the College Unit. But no action was taken from anywhere. The girl was forced to withdraw the case and so transferred from the college. Now, a third year degree student, Akhil Chandran was attacked and stabbed by SFI for humming in college premises without permission of the unit leaders. This time students burst out like a volcano and marched to Secretariat demanding freedom from SFI who have been indulging in a slew of malpractices keeping university answer sheets and seal of vice principal in union office apart from liquor bottles, weapons and so on. The police also recovered four bundles of university answer sheets and a seal of Physical Education Director from the house of the unit president of SFI.

In this backdrop, AIDSO organised Secretariat March demanding restoration of democracy in University College, immediate arrest of all culprits. Police blocked the march meters before the University College. While leading the march, Comrades Binu Baby and P K Pabhash, President and Secretary of state AIDSO respectively asked student community not to allow any attempts that tarnish the integrity of students politics and accused police of blocking democratic students protests instead of arresting goons. They announced that AIDSO volunteers would march to Secretariat even defying barricades.

Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thought illumines the path

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helping all the good aspects in a man to bloom further — that is his qualities like courage, valour, compassion, broadness of mind and sense of obligation to people — can his failings and shortcomings be eliminated. Simply asking them to shun their vices will not help them to get rid of their vices; simply asking them to be good and honest will not automatically make them good and honest. But giving advice to people to be good and honest on the one hand, and simultaneously inciting the base instincts in them on the other, on the plea of practical politics — whichever party it may be, whatever may be its vocabulary, and it is immaterial whether their leaders are personally honest or not — they are, in reality, knowingly or not, helping the game of the bourgeois conspiracy to pollute the ethical-cultural atmosphere in the country and to destroy the moral character of the nation... Only those workers can change the world who have been able to give birth to the quality of revolutionary leadership, and that not in political battle alone or in slogans, but in behaviour and lifestyle, in ethical-moral standard, cultural tone and taste, by freeing themselves from the narrow confines of vile bourgeois culture. So long as the workers are not freed from the influence and impact of bourgeois individualism, bourgeois ideology and its

decadent culture acquired from the bourgeois society, they cannot organize revolution however much their economic distress may aggravate. The evil influence of the bourgeois decadent culture reflected by the workers can by no means be called the proletarian culture simply because workers are carrying it. At one time some people who joined the working class movement with philanthropic ideas thought that whatever the workers do and reflect is revolutionary. That is why all, from Marx to Lenin, gave a good dressing down to this idea, reminding that proletarian culture could never mean that the culture itself was proletariat! They showed that picking up the language and habits of the illiterate and backward sections of the workers who are victim of decadence of bourgeois culture which once grew on the edifice of humanist and bourgeois liberal values conducive to the bourgeois revolution should not be mistaken for the assimilation and practice of proletarian culture based on proletarian ideology in this era of proletarian revolution. Proletarian culture is for freeing the workers, who are crushed under the burden of a wretched existence and rotten bourgeois culture, who, having slipped into fatalism, have taken for granted their miserable life as inevitable, who have fallen victim to the vicious circle of economism-opportunism, and proletarian culture

is to inculcate in them a new ideology, make them stand erect with indomitable spirit of defiance, transforming them into communists... So, unless the workers can change themselves first they cannot change the world — such is the principal condition for the success of the Marxist or working class movement. That is why, the question of establishing the correct revolutionary leadership on a correct base political line as also on the edifice of proletarian culture is intimately connected with the success of revolution. Workers will have to grasp the inner law and character of class struggle and will have to correctly analyse the socio-political-economic condition of the country with the help of the only weapon or science at their disposal, i.e., Marxism-Leninism. The struggles that are constantly developing within the society centring round deprivations, miseries, repressions and exploitations — to what ultimate goal they are to be led, who are the exploiters against whom the struggle is to be directed — to know and realize all these is the fundamental question before the workers' movement. You want struggle and, for this, an organization too. And you are happy when you get both the organization and struggle."

(Carry Proletarian Culture and Ethics to the Workers, SW Vol. III, pp. 340, 350-51)

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