

Ambedkar King Study Circle



4th General Body Report

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1. Introduction

Ambedkar King Study Circle (AKSC) was started in October 2016. AKSC's a multi-caste and multi-religious organization led by the socially oppressed caste people. Our aim is to challenge caste, class, race, gender and religious oppression and oppressors on ideological, political and social fronts.

This report has details of programs organized and co-sponsored between Oct 2019 and 2020 by AKSC.

2. Programs Organized

2.1. The Oppressed Class Student's Right to Study and Organize in Indian Universities

Sep 27, 2019

AKSC organized an audio conference call with Mr. Kiruba Mohan, a post graduate student of Madras University on the topic 'Higher Education Institutions, Harassment of Dalit Students'. Kiruba, a former student of Madras University, an activist, who was recently terminated from University as he had involved in social activism. Kiruba started out with a quote from Dr.Ambedkar, "Ours is a battle not for wealth; not for power, ours is a battle for freedom; for reclamation of human Personality". He said that students had been involved in protest since the age of freedom struggle. This program was attended by 30+ people.

2.2 End Violence Against Women & Girls: Ms. U.Vasuki

Dec 12, 2019

AKSC organized an audio conference call with Com. U.Vasuki, She talked about the recent rise in atrocities and violence against women in Tamil Nadu, most of them due to alcoholism. One of the main sources of income for the TN Government comes through the sale of alcohol. This is making mostly poor families dysfunctional and economically burdened. As president of AIDWA, she organized a 10 day long women's rally walking 200 km towards Chennai. 2000+ women joined the march to ban Government sale of alcohol. Though the Government gave permission for the rally, at the end police dispersed participants using whipping sticks (Lathi charge).

2.3 The Brahmanical Campuses Speaker: Ms. Arulmozhi

Nov 22, 2019

AKSC organized a audio conference call with Ms Arulmozhi, Propaganda Secretary of Dravida Kalagam, a practicing lawyer in Chennai High Court, on the topic of 'Brahminical Campus' after the institutional murder (suicide) of student Ms.Fatima Latheef. She spoke about how India's premier institutions are organized, how faculties are employed and who are getting educated. This isn't the first suicide, in the last 10 years IIT Madras alone had 79 deaths by suicide. None of all the investigations explained about how upper caste manages and how non-uppercaste struggle in the hands of professors which leads to any student dropping classes or even suicides. This program was attended by 45+ people.

Audio program available here:

<https://youtu.be/fsxhM4Kdtvk>

2.4 Hall Meeting with Arappor Iyakkam (non-violent war movement) Convener

Nov 2, 2019

AKSC joined with AID (Association of India Development) in November 2019, organized a meeting with speaker Mr. Jayaram Venkatesan, the convener of Arappor Iyakkam (non-violent war movement), Tamil Nadu. He shared information about his organization's interventions in guaranteeing transparency and accountability in governance through mass participation of the citizens. Several dozen students, professionals, and academics from the California region attended this presentation.

Mr Jayaram shared how Arappor operates within the existing legal framework to petition the various government departments and agencies such as Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption(DVAC). He added that his organization utilized the Right to Information Act, 2005 and the Tamil Nadu Transparency in Tenders Act 1998 to gather documents to expose corruption.

2.5 Justice for Fathima: Memorandum to the management of IIT

Nov 22, 2019

Ms. Fathima Lateef, a 19-year-old girl, who was pursuing a master's degree in the Indian Institute of Technology - Madras (IIT-M) in Humanities and Social Sciences department allegedly committed suicide on November 9th, 2019 in her hostel room on the campus. It's another institutional murder inside so-called upper caste faculty dominated IIT-M. Ms. Fathima left a suicide note that Sudarsan Padmanabhan, an associate professor of Philosophy from the very

department is the cause of her death. She also mentioned other professors Milind Brahme and Hemachandran Karah as the cause for her death.

AKSC submitted a [memorandum](#) to Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt of India and to IIT-Madras, having two essential demands:

Demand 1: There should be an institution-level inquiry in IIT-M against all three persons, Sudarsan Padmanabhan, Milind Brahme and Hemachandran Karah named by Ms. Fathima and inquiry committee should consist of at least 50% with people from Other Backward Castes (OBC), Scheduled Castes (SC), and Scheduled Tribes(ST) and Muslims to ensure a fair inquiry.

Demand 2: In order to redress the social, cultural, personal and structural discrimination overtly and covertly faced by the students of the marginalized and the minority communities, the student organization Ambedkar Periyar Study Circle (APSC) inside the campus which represents these students interests and aspirations should be allowed to operate freely, and deserves treatment and support from the IIT-M as enjoyed by Vivekananda Study Circle (VSC) inside the campus.

2.6 Reclaiming the Real Legacy of Dr.Martin Luther King Jr. 91st Birthday Commemoration

Jan 18,2020

AKSC partnered with SJPJC (SanJose Peace and Justice Center) and celebrated Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's 91st birthday. The commemoration was celebrated with great enthusiasm and zeal on Jan 18th at MLK Library in San Jose, California. Around 200 people from various racial and ethnic identities, blacks, whites, Asian Indians, Chinese, Africans and Palestines were part of the gathering. More than 30 organizations across the USA co-sponsored this event.

Mr. Karthikeyan, AKSC argued that it's Dr. B.R. Ambedkar who is the Indian counterpart of Dr. Martin Luther King. Jr. He pointed out how Dr. Ambedkar saw the position of Dalits in India as the same as the blacks in America based on a letter he wrote to Prof. W.E.B. Du Bois in 1946. He added that the Dalits subjected to caste oppression in India and the blacks subjected to racial oppression in America are natural allies and hence they have to strengthen their bond organically and organizationally.

Rev. Jethroe Moore, President, San Jose / Silicon Valley from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) moved the audience with his powerful speech. He added that Dr King's legacy goes beyond his 'dream'. He talked about Dr King's vision for economic equality and how we are failing America's poor. He mentioned the importance of fighting injustice locally to affect global change. He ended with a call to all of us to bring about a fundamental change in how the systems and institutions are set up to systematically discriminate.

2.7 Social Science Workshop for Activists

Feb 1, 2020

AKSC organized a Social Science Workshop On February 1, 2020. Around forty people attended. Most of the participants were either volunteers or members of various social, philanthropic or cultural organizations in the California area and a few were academics and students. The workshop was divided into four sessions with topics covering Dialectical Materialism, Historical Materialism, Capitalism, the State, and Philanthropy and Neoliberalism, Fascism and Imperialism.

Ms. Jazmín Delgado from the Center for Political Education(CPE) gave a detailed introduction on dialectical materialism and historical materialism. They covered the three laws of dialectical materialism.

Mr. Sandy Perry, from the organization Affordable Housing Network, taught a class on Capitalism, the State and Philanthropy. He started his talk by explaining the need to develop and apply Marxism to current social problems. .

Dr. Sharat Lin, board member of SJPJC, took a session on Neoliberalism, Fascism and Imperialism. He defined neoliberalism as the outcome of capitalism's obsession for incessant growth and increasing profits in the face of periodic crises, competition, and the tendency of the rate of profit to decline.

Mr. Jacob Hinton of Tech Workers Coalition (TWC)-San Jose introduced the TWC to the audience and talked about how the TWC is organizing the workers from tech companies in the South Bay. Tech workers who attended the workshop expressed their interests to participate in TWC activities in future.

The full report can be found here: <https://twocircles.net/2020feb06/434296.html>

2.8 Abolishing the Caste Untouchability Walls

Feb 6, 2020

AKSC organized an audio conference call with Mr. Thiruvalluvan, President of Tamil Puligal Katchi, a political party. The talk was about a wall built between communities living in the same neighborhood, that is, a wall between two castes. He talked in detail about the walls built between two Dalit castes as well. He elaborated on the history of these walls and people's complaints about the imminent danger of it to the State authorities that disdained their pleas. The audience were briefed on a horrific incident that buried alive 15 people in the debris of a collapsed untouchability wall.

The audio program is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSGYMmsrsQ4>

2.9 Why I Left Hinduism? A Journey towards Self-Respect

Feb 20, 2020

AKSC organized an audio conference call with Dr. Raees Mohammad, who is the founder of YouTube channel Dalit Camera. He did his PhD in English at “English and Foreign Languages University”, in Hyderabad. He comes from a scavenging background as his father and mother worked as sanitary workers in town panchayat and home school in Kotagiri, Tamil Nadu. His research focused on the “Identity of Arunthathiyars” and documented the debates surrounding their identity. He found that similar conditions of such castes are present across India, which says that the problem lies not with the language they speak but the social and cultural aspect of the work they do. While doing the research he found neither the people who cleans the toilet nor the toilet itself are considered part of the house. Through his research he found an interesting fact that toilets in masjids are revolutionary and inclusive.

He spoke about why he left Hinduism and embraced Islam.

The program is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lbxrOXwbUy8>

2.10 Let's Read Ambedkar - 10 Lecture Series by V. Geetha

Mar 30 - Apr 29, 2020

It's not only that most of us are interested to know and understand Dr.Ambedkar's position on social, political, economic, cultural and religion but also imperative for the activists on the ground to get the edge of Ambedkar to build a society to be based on Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. AKSC saw the lockdown as a result of COVID-19 as an opportunity to learn and debate Dr. Ambedkar's works and organized 10 lecture series with social activist and author V.Geetha.

The lecture series is grouped under the below titles.

Ambedkar in His Time and Ours: An Introduction

Caste: A New Vocabulary

Caste, Untouchability and Democracy

Ambedkar's Critique of Brahmanism and Nationalism

The Question of the Economy: Untouchables, Labour, Socialism

Buddhism and the Annihilation of Caste

The lectures were conducted twice a week for 5 weeks. On average, 100 people attended each lecture. The students were issued acknowledgement of participation at the end of the lecture series.

Complete recording of the lectures and reading materials are uploaded here.

<https://akscusa.org/lets-read-ambedkar-10-lectures-series>

2.11 Lenin's 150th Birth Anniversary Celebration

Apr 21-22, 2020

AKSC partnered with SJPJC (SanJose Peace and Justice Center) to celebrate Lenin's 150th Birth Anniversary.

Lenin is one of the most admired and respected leaders of the working class. His life is an inspiration for working people. Not only did he and his comrades show that tyrannical and repressive governments could be overthrown by the oppressed, but also demonstrated how to employ the right strategies and tactics to achieve it. More importantly he gave them hope, and envisioned a marvelous future and manifested their golden world to be won by mobilizing them in great numbers.

Lenin said, "Politics begin where the masses are, not where there are thousands, but where there are millions, that is where serious politics begin."

Com. V. Shankar. All-India Central Council of Trade Unions, delivered a speech on "Lenin and B.R. Ambedkar: Their Ideas and Times". Com. Shankar made a powerpoint presentation explaining Lenin's contribution to the revolutionary movement. He quoted Lenin from What is to Be Done, "to guide every manifestation of the proletarian struggle against all forms of political, economic, and social oppression" to emphasize that the aim of the working class revolution is broad and inclusive. ([youtube video of this talk](#))

Mr. Raj Sahai, Institute for the Critical Study of Society spoke on "Lenin and Martin Luther King, Jr.: Their Ideas and Times" spoke on the relevance of Lenin's teaching in contemporary conditions. He touched upon the roles of Dr. King, MalcolmX and other black revolutionaries in the struggle for the Black emancipation. ([youtube video of this talk](#))

2.12 Dr. B.R Ambedkar's 129th Birth Anniversary Commemoration

April 16, 2020

We commemorated the 129th birthday of Babasaheb Dr. B.R Ambedkar. Due to the COVID-19 virus outbreak and the nationwide shelter-in-place order to prevent the spread, AKSC decided to commemorate the event through an online video conference call. Dr.Surepally addressed the gathering on the topic "Indian Contradiction: Socially Feudal and Economically Digital, What

needs to be done". She started with socio-economic feudalism and its presence in every aspect of life in India. She explained the long history of production systems in India and the current system where bossing around and beating Dalit peasants was the norm.

The feudalism present in modern day functions in subtle ways. Dalits neither own land nor get access to good education. As a result, they end up becoming dependent on lords and feuds to sustain themselves. Furthermore, she explained her studies and analysis of the caste system in this era of rapid development, and has found that a few dominant castes own everything from industry and agriculture to real estate businesses and politics. It's that in all levels of businesses that are controlled by these dominant castes, they employ people of their own caste. Caste gets consolidated, empowered and adapted to the modern way of production system.

Dr. Surepally added that from her ground experience fighting during COVID-19 "The ruling class is communalizing the coronavirus in an attempt to polarize the people on religious lines and brew hatred. They have filed cases against me to threaten and stifle the voices of the voiceless. The present regime ruthlessly crushes democratic voices and has thrown the many social activists behind the bars. Critics are labeled as urban-naxals and anti-nationals". Dr.Surepally concluded, "At the very least, we are able to take our struggle to the mainstream media because of modern technologies." For further detail, checkout [roundtable India](#) for detailed report (YouTube video of the event: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YphtpUfiFuQ>)

2.13 Global Solidarity Campaign for Dr. Teltumbde and other activists arrested in Bhima Koregaon case

May 30, 2020

On Saturday May 30, 2020, people from the United States of America, Canada, United Kingdom, Japan and India made a video statement to demand the immediate release of Dr. Anand Teltumbde and 10 other human rights activists who have been arrested in fabricated cases by the RSS/BJP. It attracted a good number of people within 2 days of the announcement. Mrs Rama Teltumbde, wife of Dr.Anand and Ms. Rashmi Teltumbde, daughter of Dr.Anand too joined the call. As a result of good response, one more session was organized on Sunday May 31 as well.

Mrs.Teltumbde, besides thanking the organizers, said, "It's not only a fight for justice but now for the fight for the right to live".

Com.V. Shankar, politburo member of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation said that the arrest of a stellar personality Dr.Anand on the birth anniversary of Dr B.R Ambedkar is a shame on Indian democracy. He added that when the Supreme Court of India advised the government to release the prisoners and send them on parole as a result of COVID pandemic, the arrest of elderly persons like Dr.Anand and Mr.Gautam Navlakha is life-threatening.

Ms.Rashmi said that It's not about her father but anyone who speaks against the government is getting arrested. She added the RSS/BJP government is vindictive and encroaching upon the right to life.

The organizers said that Covid-19 is not just a challenge for medical science; it is a test for political science. Taking advantage of COVID-19 lockdown and the restricted movement many governments brazenly attempt to make democracy not only nonfunctional but dysfunctional. The organizers said that we the international communities that oppose fascism will never cease to fight for the release of people who have been denied their basic Constitutional rights, booked under fabricated cases such as Bhima-Koregaon, aided by laws such as the UAPA - now widely recognized by a vast cross section of Indian public and international scholarly and legal community – as inherently draconian.

2.14 Killing of George Floyd and AKSC's response

Jun 2, 2020

AKSC strongly condemns the killing of George Floyd and appreciates the courage of the people who demand Justice on the streets. We issued a [statement](#) on this in the immediate aftermath of this murder.

Dr Martin Luther King Jr writes that White America was ready to demand that the Blacks should be spared the lash of brutality and coarse degradation, but it had never been truly committed to helping him out of poverty, exploitation and all forms of discrimination.

AKSC is named after Dr. King and Dr B.R Ambedkar, an Indian revolutionary who fought for the emancipation of the most oppressed castes in India. Dr B.R Ambedkar is the counterpart of Dr.King. The horrific and often fatal brutalities faced by the Dalits, the most oppressed caste in India at the hands of the feudal castes and the privileged-caste Brahminical Indian state, parallels the fatal violence faced by the Black people in the United States. AKSC is resolute in standing in solidarity with Black Americans in this tough time of their struggle.

2.15 Practice of Caste in USA: Discussion Series

Jul 10 - Sep 12, 2020

The **State of California Department of Fair Employment and Housing** (DFEH)'s lawsuit against **Cisco Systems** for caste discrimination recognizes a long-hidden malaise in the Indian diaspora. Even after complaints by the victim in November 2016 to the Cisco HR about 'the discriminatory behavior' of his so-called upper caste managers and subsequent inquiry and discussions, Cisco failed to take action, arguing that '*caste discrimination is not unlawful*'. It is clear that caste conceited Indians who practice caste in their day-to-day life – having learned

and brought it to America – carefully conceal their practices of caste discrimination and bigotry. Such devious concealment is accomplished partly by portraying Indians in the USA as a monolithic entity. It also shows that American corporations are unaware of the endemic practice of caste among Indians – in India and the diaspora.

The aim of this series is to encourage anti-caste Indians to openly discuss the practice of caste in the USA and to ***educate the broader American public about the caste system and the discriminatory practices that surreptitiously continue***, especially among those working in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fields.

Recordings of the [discussion series on the practice of caste in the USA](#) is available in AKSC's website.

2.16 AKSC's Campaign and Intervention in Cisco Caste Discrimination Case

Jul - Sep, 2020

On **June 30th 2020**, when the news of the Department of Fair Employment and Housing filed a lawsuit against Cisco, Sundar and Ramana has been made available to us, AKSC's immediate assessment was that Cisco caste discrimination case is nothing but the manifestation of Practice of Caste(PoC) by the dominant caste Indians in the USA. Based on this assessment, on **July 2nd 2020**, we designed and circulated a [google form to record the experience of PoC in the USA](#).

On **July 5th**, we convened a special general body (SGB) to make some important decisions on how to fight the Practice of Caste in the USA and to execute these decisions.

On **July 13th**, Monday, we started another campaign to collect signatures from the people of all walks of life to urge the Companies in America for the immediate implementation of June 30th statement which appealed to the companies to include 'caste' as one of the birth based discrimination categories. It is being signed by the progressive, working class and community organizations with academics and individuals. So far it has attracted 400 signatures and aims for 1000 within another week and it will be sent to the HRs to urge them to implement the order.

Aim of the solidarity statement is to speed up the implementation and enforcement of the historical CA state order. The companies have to be educated about the practice of caste which is mostly subtle and covert. Without such education and introduction it is NOT possible for them to frame policies to implement the regulation. As part of the process of such education, we began publishing the testimonies and organized a [discussion series on the practice of caste in the USA](#) with eminent academics, legal practitioners and activists.

On **July 18th**, AKSC published its [first round of testimonies collected](#). This is a first set of testimonies and more are to be published. We will publish in multiple rounds owing to resources required to edit and format the testimonies.

2.17 Periyar's 142nd Birth Anniversary Commemoration

Sep 17, 2020

AKSC commemorated Social Revolutionist Periyar's 142nd Birthday anniversary. The president of Aathi Thamizhar Party Mr. Jakkaiyan spoke on the topic Caste and Economics.

The following is an outline of his talk:

We all know that all around the world discrimination, oppression and exploitation prevail in one form or the other. But caste discrimination is the worst form that does not even regard the fellow human - the so called lower caste people - as human beings. Caste pervades in all spheres of life such as economic, cultural and political in societies where it has taken root across south asia

Land continues to be a primary means and source of wealth both before and after India's Independence. But Vedic scriptures not only deny land rights to the oppressed but also deny them rights to raise and rear animals that could have been a source of livelihood. Throughout Indian brahminical history, Dalits were denied land and land rights. M.K. Gandhi and Vinoba Bhava, through the Land Ceiling Act, could not redress this historical injustice done to the vast majority of landless Dalit laborers.

Land, Education, Employment are inextricably coupled. In communist ruled states like West Bengal and Kerala, land was distributed to the Dalits to some extent. But where Capitalism has thrived, only the historically land owning class have had access to capital and therefore enjoyed the benefits of capitalism. The economic disparities between the land owning castes and the landless castes have only continued to grow.

Though Dalits have achieved some economic independence through reservation (affirmative action) despite all the social odds stacked against them, only a very small section of them have been allowed to advance socially.

Reservation is made meaningless through privatization: Railways is being privatized in front of our eyes - the ruling class is very clear that any emancipatory measure which helps the Dalits should not be allowed.

In Madurai where I live, Dalits can't even open a small shop to sustain their livelihood. My hometown is Sivakasi which is known for Crackers (fireworks) manufacturing, the workers in the

cracker industry are mostly Dalits and Arunthathiyar in particular. However they can't open cracker factories themselves.

This is yet another example of how Caste and Economic realities are inextricably coupled. We all are in illusion that Tamil Nadu is a progressive state and boast that it is the land of Periyar but the reality is Tamil Nadu tops the list in caste arrogance killings (honor killing).

Caste has made extreme exploitation possible. A person born in the Washerman caste has to perform his task irrespective of whether he is paid or not. That is how caste exploitation is perpetrated in villages. The Caste location determines one's occupation and that determines the economic and social life. So, it's caste that determines both the social and economical outcome of one's life.

Indian Marxists failed to understand caste but now they have started to realize it. For example, the Kilvenmani incident is not just a class issue, predominantly a caste issue.

Even the section of the Dalits who were raised politically are unable to help the oppressed castes because of their dependency on caste hindu's votes. The caste Hindus will never allow such independence as denying such independence is necessary to maintain the caste order and exploitation.

The speaker rightfully concluded that "without economic liberation, caste liberation is not possible."

3. Books read and discussed

Sl.No	Book	Date
2	Annihilation of Caste Author: Dr.B.R.Ambedkar	
3	BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation by Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor	June 2018 - Sep 2019
4	Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents by Isabel Wilkerson	

Between Nov 2019 and Sep 2020, we have 5 book discussions and covered 3 books.

Newsletters

AKSC sent 3 quarterly newsletters to its members and supporters.