

Mahatma Gandhi University

KR Narayanan Chair for Human Rights and Social Justice



ICSSR Sponsored Three Day National Seminar on

'Economic Lives and Dalit Colonies in Kerala'

to be organized by KR Narayanan Chair for Human Rights and Social Justice, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, Kerala

@ Seminar Hall, School of Gandhian Thought, University Campus

December 5-7, 2017

Concept Note

Spatial segregation is the process by which a population is forced to cluster in a defined spatial area. It is the process of formation and maintenance of slums/ghettos/cheris/colonies. The proposed seminar intends to look at the lives of Dalits in the colonies of Kerala. The origins of government built Dalit colonies in Kerala can be traced back to 1938, when, Travancore Government started a model colony for the scheduled castes, settling 40 households in Kuruchi, Kottayam. The colony built up in Kuruchy was, considered as a follow up programme of the Travancore Temple Entry Proclamation of 1936. The government then might have had a view that settling lower castes in a segregated spatial area, will give them economic independence and there will be less violation of caste rules.

Even today, 60 per cent of Kerala's Dalit population lives in the colonies without having much social and economic capital to lead a decent life compared to rest of the population. It is roughly estimated that around 24, 000 colonies spread across Kerala. The progressive state of Kerala claim that Dalits are not excluded and public actions has accommodated them in the well known 'model of development'. The subordinate inclusion which Dalit gets in Kerala has brought out number of economic and social barriers to these sections of castes who were socially and politically silenced. This is a pertinent question that we try to address in this seminar. The social and cultural notion of people in colony has resulted invisible barriers to Dalits to enter into the multiple fields of social life such as educational intuitions, marriage market, leading to stereotyped notion of Dalit character or culture area and subsequent exclusion from public domain. This seminar also concerns the questions such as how Dalit colonies have been shaped from outside (notions of the non-Dalits) and how it has been formed within it?

The proposed bilingual (English and Malayalam) conference aims to contextualize Dalit life's in colonies through an inter-disciplinary framework. It will raise certain pertinent questions such as, what are the social and historical conditions led to the formation of Dalit colonies in Kerala? In what ways the lives in a Dalit colony differ from the lives outside it? How does the colony as a *habitus*, personal histories and social positioning within a community, form a social world of barriers that curtails various domains of freedom? How does the people outside and inside the colony value their lives? What are the economic activities they are engaged in? Although the chief concern will be the economic lives in Dalit colonies, scholarly contributions from all domains on Dalit issues are invited. The innovative, exciting, and intellectual discussion by the scholars of all domains will help in promoting a meaningful research in this area. Broadly, the seminar will try to unravel a snapshot of relations between the social lives and economic behaviour in Dalit colonies in the context of Kerala.

Major Themes

- * **History of Dalit colonies in Kerala and India.**
- * **Economic lives in Dalit colonies, Case studies.**
- * **Intersection of economic lives and culture**
- * **Caste and economic opportunity; Caste and political freedom**
- * **Social exclusion processes of Dalits in India and Kerala.**
- * **Social inclusion, strategies and policies of accommodation**
- * **Political lives in Dalit colonies; political parties and Dalits in Colonies**
- * **Women and gender issues in Dalit Colonies**

- * **Schooling of Children; elderly in the Colonies**
- * **Social infrastructure, education of Dalits in Colonies**
- * **Labour, work and working conditions of Dalits in colonies**
- * **Economic lives of Dalit households; Self-Help Groups and Women enterprising**
- * **Youths in Dalit Colonies**

Guidance to paper submission

The abstract/paper should be submitted to **Dr. Rajesh Komath**, Coordinator, KR Narayanan Chair for Human Rights and Social Justice, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam. Abstract/paper of up to 500/3000 words may be submitted electronically to krnchair@gmail.com or rajesh@mgu.ac.in, Cell: 9961402105; 9744806534

Important Dates

Last date for submission of abstract: 27 November, 2017

Date of National Seminar: **December 5-7, 2017**

**No registration fee. No travel allowance and accommodation will be provided.
Paper presentation dates of each selected candidates will be informed after December 1, 2017**