

News clippings on Pathanamthitta land struggle Chandanappally , Chengara



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Compilation : Ahammed Rafeek J

Contents

1. **ITUC condemns encroachment on Chandanappally estate** – The Hindu, June 22 2006
2. **Plantation workers' stir tomorrow** – The Hindu, June, 23, 2006
3. **Withdraws agitation** - The Hindu, June 25, 2006
4. **Tribal people encroach on land at Olikallu** – The Hindu, Sunday, Feb 25, 2007
5. **Vedi activists enroaches Chengara estate** - One India News, August 05, 2007
6. **Vedi alleges attack on Dalits over land acquisition** – One India News, August 06, 2007
7. **Encroachers get Adivasi group's support** - The Hindu, August 07, 2007
8. **Fever grips estate encroachers** - The Hindu, Aug 10, 2007
9. **Janu backs estate encroachers** - The Hindu, Wednesday, Aug 15, 2007
10. **More people pitch tents in estate** - The Hindu, Aug 15, 2007
11. **Fever takes its toll on encroachers** - The Hindu, Aug 23, 2007
12. **Back Ground of the Land Struggle Situatation in Kerala-** R.prakash, in ZestCast ,Sep ,06 , 07
13. **THE CHENGARA LAND STRUGGLE IN KERALA AND THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF LAND STRUGGLES** – Green youth, AV, 14 Sep 2007
14. **Dalit Struggle for Land Right in Kerala, One World South Asia-** One World South Asia, 14 September,2007.
15. **Police block roads to encroached estate** - The Hindu, September 25, 2007
16. **Encroachment: police keep vigil at Athumbamkulam** - The Hindu, September 26, 2007,
17. **Dalit organisations join hands** - The Hindu, October 09, 2007
18. **CPI(ML) seeks withdrawal of police** - The Hindu, October 10, 2007
19. **Continuing Dalits Adivasi Land Struggle: a field report from Kerala** -One World South Asia, 30 October 2007.
20. **Landless encroach on Harrisons Malayalam estate, put up tents** - Livemint.com NOV12, 2007
21. **Dalit's Struggle Demanding Land in Kerala** -NCDHR

AITUC condemns encroachment on Chandanappally estate

June 22, 2006, The Hindu, Staff Reporter

<http://www.hindu.com/2006/06/22/stories/2006062214670300.htm>

PATHANAMTHITTA: The All-India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) has strongly condemned the encroachment of the Chandanappally rubber estate of the State Plantation Corporation, near Konni, by the Sadhu Jana Vimochana Samyukta Vedi on Tuesday night.

In a statement issued here on Wednesday, AITUC district secretary M.V.Vidyadharan has alleged that the Vedi workers had encroached upon the rubber plantation, which has been the bread-donor for the families of thousands of poor plantation workers in the locality.

Mr Vidyadharan has alleged that the encroachment of the Chandanappally Estate within a month of the Left Democratic Front (LDF) assuming power in the State was a challenge against the working class.

He has alleged that the Vedi's act was aimed at destroying a public sector unit, which has been the bread-provider for thousands of plantation workers.

It was ironical that the Vedi that has made loud proclamation of protecting the interests of the downtrodden sections of society had consciously spared hundreds of acres of "revenue-forest land which was brought under the illegal possession of certain private entrepreneurs during the previous UDF rule" while prompting its followers to encroach into the rubber estate of the Plantation Corporation, the AITUC leader alleged.

The AITUC leader has alleged a big conspiracy behind the encroachment of the Plantation Corporation land and the trade union would organise agitation to expose the Vedi's evil designs.

The AITUC district council has also called upon the workers to fight against any move that threatens the job security of the plantation workers. AITUC district president Mundappally Thomas presided the meeting. Trade union leaders Vilangupara Sukumaran, K.N.Purushothaman, among others spoke.

Plantation workers' stir tomorrow

June, 23, 2006, The Hindu, Staff Reporter, Kerala - Pathanamthitta

CITU, AITUC, BMS, INTUC condemn Chandanappally estate encroachment

<http://www.hindu.com/2006/06/23/stories/2006062310290300.htm>

PATHANAMTHITTA: Workers belonging to different trade unions attached to the Chandanappally rubber estate of the State Plantation Corporation will strike work on Saturday, protesting against the encroachment on the estate by the Sadhu Jana Samyukta Vimochana Vedi activists on Tuesday night.

Leaders of the CITU, AITUC, BMS and INTUC have called for a day-long strike on Saturday.

The trade union have called upon the State Government to take immediate steps to ensure job protection to the plantation workers in the backdrop of the large-scale encroachment and the tension that followed in the locality.

The workers attached to different trade unions would jointly stage a protest march from Vakayar to Elappupara on Saturday forenoon.

A protest meeting would also be held at Elappupara, later.

Meanwhile, the Kerala Dalit Panthers (KDP) district unit here has welcomed the encroachment by the Vimochana Vedi workers against the "official indifference towards their just demands."

KDP district president Jayanandan Kulanada has called upon the Government to provide land to all the landless Dalits in the State without any further delay. In another statement here on Thursday, Kerala Karshaka Thozhilali Union (KKTU) State president, P.K. Vijayan extended moral support to the Sadhu Jana Samyukta Vimochana Vedi in its fight for the cause of the landless Dalits and Scheduled Caste people.

(See also Page 4)

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Withdraws agitation

The Hindu, June 25, 2006. Kerala, Briefly

<http://www.thehindu.com/2006/06/25/stories/2006062507180400.htm>

PATHANAMTHITTA: The Sadhu Jana Vimochana Samyukta Vedi has decided to withdraw the ongoing agitation seeking five acres of agriculture land each for landless Scheduled Caste families and Rs.50,000 in cash towards their rehabilitation following the talks between Vedi leaders and Additional District Magistrate (ADM) B. Mohanan at the Collectorate conference hall on Saturday evening. Nearly 500 families of Vedi supporters encroached upon the Chandanappally rubber estate of the State Plantation Corporation at Vakayar-Elappupara, near Konni, on Tuesday night to press their demands. — Staff Reporter

Tribal people encroach on land at Olikallu

The Hindu, Sunday, Feb 25, 2007

<http://www.hindu.com/2007/02/25/stories/2007022501900500.htm>

PATHANAMTHITTA: About 50 people, including women and children, belonging to 11 families of the Malavedar tribe encroached on 10.87 acres of government land adjoining Thamarappally Estate at Olikallu near Vadasserikkara on Friday night.

The encroachment was reportedly led by the local units of the Adivasi Malavedan Mahasabha and the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist).

The land has already been earmarked for allotment to 14 tribal families by the Government at a `pattaya mela' held at the Collectorate recently. The beneficiaries were selected from among 40 applicants through a draw of lots held in the presence of Revenue Minister K.P. Rajendran on the occasion. However, none of the 14 tribal families has occupied the land so far.

The encroachers alleged that many of the tribal people who figured in the list of landless families prepared by the district administration were not eligible for land as they possessed land of their own. They demanded that the land at Olikallu be allotted to local landless tribal people belonging to the Malavedar community.

The encroachers demanded a meeting with the District Collector when Additional District Magistrate B. Mohanan visited the spot in the forenoon. The

Collector held discussions with the leaders of the encroachers in the afternoon. The Mahasabha leaders (Kesavan, Gopalan, Manoj) and CPI(ML) leaders (Pappachan ad Krishnankutty) with whom Collector Ashok Kumar Singh held discussions said there was no question of vacating the land without getting an assurance that the land would be allotted to the local Malavedar families.

The said the administration would inquire into the complaints filed by the Mahasabha and CPI(ML) leaders. The Collector asked the Mahasabha leaders to submit a list of landless tribal people in the locality so that he could take appropriate action at the earliest.

Vedi activists enroaches Chengara estate

August 05, 2007

<http://news.oneindia.mobi/2007/08/05/407362.html>

Pathanamthitta, Aug 5 (UNI) Around two thousand activists belonging to "Sadhu Jana Vimochana Vedi" encroached upon the Kurumpatty Division of Chengara estate owned by the Harisson Malayalam Plantation last night.

The activists of the "Vedi" threatened to commit suicide, if any move occurred to evict them from their quarters, and have set up more than 500 huts.

In the altercations between the Vedi workers and Harrison Plantation labourers, the atmosphere became tense.

A plantation labourer, who was taken as hostage by the encroachers, was freed by the police. Last year, a similar agitation was staged by the activists in the Chandanapally estate.

Leaders of the Vedi Thattayil Saraswathy and T S Achuthan said the struggle would continue till August 15.

The land occupied by the Vedi' followers had been taken on lease for 99 years from Chengannur Mundankavu Vanjipuzha Matom. On expiry of the lease period, the Matom had issued eviction notice to the Harisson Plantation.

Vedi alleges attack on Dalits over land acquisition

August 06, 2007

<http://news.oneindia.mobi/2007/08/06/408118.html>

Pathanamthitta, Aug 6 (UNI) Sadhu Jana Vimochana Samyuktha Vedi President Laha Gopalan today alleged that more than 3,000 families of Dalits and tribals, who took possession of Harrison Estate, have been attacked by the 'goondas of certain political parties.' Ten people were admitted to various hospitals with serious injuries, he said in a statement here and alleged that the police were 'mute spectators.' He said thousands of acres of land, the lease of which had expired long ago, were still under the possession of companies like Harrison. In contrast to that, landless Adivasis and Dalits were denied land. The promise made by the government to provide one hectare of land to each Dalit family had not been fulfilled so far.

Stating that the Dalits did not benefit from the much-trumpeted land reforms, he charged the Left parties with suppressing the "land struggles" launched by the Dalits and the tribals.

The Vedi warned the government that the "life and death struggle" of the have-nots would go ahead.

He sought the intervention of Chief Minister V S Achuthanandan to resolve the stand off.

UNI XR-CGV MSJ RAI2114

Encroachers get Adivasi group's support

August 07, 2007, Staff Reporter, The Hindu,

<http://www.thehindu.com/2007/08/07/stories/2007080770900500.htm>



On the warpath: The tents pitched by Sadhu Jana Vimochana Samyukta Vedi activists in an estate of Harrisons Malayalam Limited at Chengara, near Konni, on Monday.

PATHANAMTHITTA: The illegal occupation of about three acres of rubber plantation in the Karumbatti division of Kumbazha Estate, belonging to Harrisons Malayalam Limited, by Sadhu Jana Vimochana Samyukta Vedi (SJVSV) activists continued for the second day on Monday.

The Adivasi Gotra Jana Sabha, the breakaway group from C.K. Janu's Adivasi Gotra Mahasabha, has come out in the open, extending support to the Vedi. In a statement here on Monday, its leader Sreeraman Koyyon demanded that the Government retrieve the estate from private parties, as their lease period had already expired, and distribute it among the landless tribals and plantation workers.

Wants VS' intervention

Vedi State committee member T.S. Achuthan said that its activists would not vacate the land unless the Government allotted the land promised to them a year ago. He said the Vedi did not favour any dialogue with the district administration in this regard, adding that Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan should intervene and settle the issue without delay.

With more Vedi activists joining the encroachers, the number of tents in the rubber estate too has up considerably, to about 200. A majority of the encroachers are women. There are many senior citizens too. The Vedi has reportedly stocked food grains and grocery in a tent to meet the daily food requirements. The local people as well as plantation workers appeared to be in

an agitated mood. A company of the police has been posted outside the plantation.

Weapons stocked?

The Vedi's demand includes allotment of five acres of land and Rs. 50,000 in cash for each landless family among them. Mr. Acuthan warned of retaliation if any attempt is made to forcibly evict them from the land. A 50-member squad has been constituted to meet any eventuality. Intelligence reports hint that the encroachers have stocked lethal weapons. Harrisons Malayalam Limited has also filed a complaint with the police and the District Collector, seeking eviction of encroachers from Kumbazha Estate.

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Fever grips estate encroachers

Radhakrishnan Kuttoor

Aug 10, 2007, The Hindu

<http://www.hindu.com/2007/08/10/stories/2007081051340300.htm>

Not to leave until their demands are met

Trade unions to encroach upon Vedi leaders' property

Vedi leaders ignore Collector's offer of conciliatory talks

PATHANAMTHITTA: Torrential rain and chill in the hilly tracts have been plaguing the encroachers of Kumbazha estate of Harrison Malayalam Limited at Chengara near Konni.

There are reports of fever spreading among the illegal occupants, owing allegiance to the Sadhu Jana Vimochana Samyukta Vedi (SJVSV). They have been camping in about 250 tents pitched in the rubber estate.

"We have taken Paracetamol tablets supplied by the Vedi. There is no question of leaving the place without getting the five-acre land promised to us by the Government a year ago," said Thankamma, an agitator.

About 1,100 encroachers are camping at the private property in the hope that the Government would soon concede to their main demand of allotting five

<http://groups.google.com/group/greenyouth>

acres of land to each landless family.

The locality has been in the grip of viral fever with symptoms akin to chikungunya for five months. The continuous rainfall has made it difficult for them to prepare food. SJVSV sources say that stocking foodgrains too is difficult in such an adverse weather condition. They have also been facing problems in purchasing grocery and vegetables from the market as the local people and plantation workers have already demanded eviction of the illegal occupants at the earliest.

A meeting of various trade union leaders at Kumbazha estate held on Wednesday evening has resolved to counter the illegal occupation of rubber plantation by encroaching upon the property of Vedi leaders, especially its president, Laha Gopalan who reportedly owns 1.5 acres of land.

Meanwhile, the Vedi leaders have refused the offer for conciliatory talks from district Collector Ashok Kumar Singh on Thursday. They have demanded immediate intervention of Chief Minister V.S. Achuthandan in the issue.

The activists encroached upon the plantation in the early hours of Sunday, demanding five acres of land and Rs. 50,000 for each landless family. Most of them are from Scheduled Caste colonies at Athumbamkulam, Thekkuthode, Thannithode, Thonyamala, Chittar, Seethathode, Ranni and Vechoochira.

Earlier case

SJVSV had encroached upon the State-owned Chandanappally Estate for about a week, with the same demands, in July 2006. Many Vedi leaders, who were in the forefront of that agitation, have reportedly parted ways with the organisation.

Janu backs estate encroachers

Wednesday, Aug 15, 2007 , The Hindu , Staff Reporter, Kerala - Pathanamthitta
<http://www.thehindu.com/2007/08/15/stories/2007081553140500.htm>

PATHANAMTHITTA: The Adivasi Gothra Maha Sabha (AGMS) and Rashtriya Maha Sabha (RMS) have extended support to the encroachers at the Kumbazha estate of the Harrison Malayalam Limited at Chengara near Konni. About 1,200 people attached to the Sadhu Jana Vimochana Samyukta Vedi (SJVSV) had

encroached upon the rubber plantation a week ago.

Addressing a press conference here on Monday, C.K. Janu, AGMS president and M. Geethanandan, RMS general secretary, warned the Government that the agitation for land by the landless poor would be extended to more areas, if the encroachers of the Kumbazha estate were forcibly evicted.

The AGMS State presidium, to be held at Kannur on August 16, would discuss the issue, they said.

They alleged that the lease period of many private plantations in the State, including Kumbazha estate, had expired. So, the Government should distribute the land among the landless poor, they demanded.

Ms. Janu alleged that the Government was sidelining the plight of landless tribals, dalits, plantation workers and other poor sections of the society.

“It would be unfair on the part of Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan, who had promised to distribute the land recovered from illegal occupants of Government land among the landless poor, to evict the encroachers from Kumbazha estate.’ Instead, the Chief Minister should take the initiative to issue title deeds to the landless people who have encroached upon the estate, she said. Mr. Geethanandan said the Government should prepare a long-term rehabilitation plan for the plantation workers

More people pitch tents in estate

Aug 15, 2007, The Hindu, Kerala, Radhakrishnan Kuttoor

<http://www.hindu.com/2007/08/15/stories/2007081554371100.htm>



In stir mode: Encroachers have pitched about 4,000 tents in the occupied rubber plantation.

Sadhu Jana Vimochana Samyukta Vedi to intensify stir

In stir mode: Encroachers have pitched about 4,000 tents in the occupied rubber plantation.

PATHANAMTHITTA: The 10-day-old agitation for land by the Sadhu Jana Vimochana Samyukta Vedi (SJVSV) activists took a new turn with more people pitching tents on the encroached land in the Kumbazha Estate of the Harrison Malayalam Limited at Chengara near Konni in the past 12 hours.

Nearly 1,200 Vedi activists, many of them women, encroached upon the private plantation in the early hours of August 5, demanding five acres of arable land and Rs.50,000 in cash for each landless family.

The encroachers pitched about 150 to 200 tents at the occupied rubber plantation in the initial days. However, the number of tents went up to 4,075 till Tuesday forenoon, according to SJVSV president Laha Gopalan.

Talking to The Hindu here on Tuesday, the Vedi leader said the agitation was “by the landless poor belonging to all sections of society for the land promised to them by the Government in September last and there was no other motive behind it.”

Mr. Gopalan said the Vedi had no political colour or sectarian interest - there were Nairs, Christians, Muslims and

Ezhavas among the landless encroachers. He said the Vedi’s agitation was strictly non-violent and aimed at pressing the Government to fulfil its promise given to the landless poor ten months ago. He claimed that Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan had given written assurance to Vedi leaders at a meeting held in Thiruvananthapuram on September 27, 2006, that land would be allotted to the maximum possible landless families by December 31 and to the remaining families in the list provided by the Vedi, by August 1, 2007.

Mr. Gopalan said nearly 5,000 landless families were camping at the Kumbazha

Estate and they would vacate the encroached land only after the Government allotted them alternative land.

Rejects Janu's support

He rejected the support extended to the Vedi workers' agitation by Adivasi Gothra Maha Sabha leader C.K. Janu and Rashtriya Maha Sabha leader M. Geethanandan. He alleged that Ms. Janu's organisation had been degenerated into a "paper organisation" and it had no credibility at all.

"It was a sad truth that Ms. Janu acknowledged neither Dr. B.R. Ambedkar nor Ayyankali for reasons best known to her. Moreover, her organisation believed in violent struggle which the Vedi could never accept."

Mr. Gopalan said the Vedi decided to work in tandem with the Adivasi Gothra Jana Sabha, the breakaway faction of the Adivasi Gothra Maha Sabha led by Sreeraman Koyyon. Mr. Koyyon was camping in Pathanamthitta.

BJP support

Meanwhile, Bharatiya Janata Party district leaders visited the encroachers and their leaders on Tuesday to extend support to the agitation.

He said Vedi workers from all the 14 districts in the State had come to the Kumbazha Estate and more workers would join the agitators in the coming days. They would stage a dharna before the Collectorate here on the Independence Day, he added.

Fever takes its toll on encroachers

Radhakrishnan Kuttoor

Thursday, Aug 23, 2007, The Hindu

<http://www.hindu.com/2007/08/23/stories/2007082353100300.htm>



LIVING ON THE EDGE: An elderly couple who have been afflicted with symptoms of chikungunya at a tent pitched by the Sadhu Jana Vimochana Samyukta Vedi at the Kumbazha Estate of Harrison Malayalam Limited at Chengara near Konni.

PATHANAMTHITTA: Viral fever akin to chikungunya is reportedly spreading among the people owing allegiance to the Sadhu Jana Vimochana Samyukta Vedi (SJVSV) who have encroached on the rubber plantations of Harrison Malayalam Limited at Chengara near Konni 18 days ago.

Sixteen encroachers, including women, have already been admitted to the primary health centre at Konni and at General Hospital in Pathanamthitta with viral fever, according to Vedi sources.

Vedi president Laha Gopalan said that four persons were shifted to General Hospital with symptoms of chikungunya. Barring a visit by a Health Department medical team, the district health authority had not taken any effort to extend medical care to the landless people camping at Kumbazha.

According to reports received here on Wednesday, the number of encroachers at the estate has gone up considerably and the Vedi chief put it at 25,000.

Mr. Gopalan said over 4,500 landless families attached to the Vedi occupied about 120 acres in the Kurumbatti division of Kumbazha Estate demanding immediate allotment of five acres each to them as promised by the Government 10 months ago. The living condition at the rubber plantation was unhygienic due to lack of basic facilities, posing threat of an epidemic. "The encroachers are taking water from a stream passing through the estate for their domestic chores. It is said that the stream water is highly polluted with pesticides flowing into it in the rain from the pineapple plantations on either

banks in the immediate upper reaches of the estate," he said.

Mr. Gopalan said that the Vedi would stage a 12-hour fast on the occupied land on the Thiruonam day on August 27 protesting against the "indifferent attitude" of the Government to its "peaceful agitation". He said the Vedi would chalk out its course of action after the day-long fast.

Meanwhile, the plantation workers belonging to different trade unions decided to jointly stage a march to the Collectorate on Friday demanding immediate eviction of the encroachers. The trade unions threatened to counter the encroachment on the plantation by encroaching upon the property of various vedi leaders in different parts of the State.

Back Ground of the Land Struggle Situatiaion in Kerala

R.prakash, kerala

06 Sep 2007 11:21:43 -0700, in Zest Caste

<http://www.mail-archive.com/zestcaste@yahoogroups.com/msg07301.html>

In Kerala, last thirty days the Dalits and adivasis in the state under the Leadership of Sadhujana Vimochana Samyuktha vedi. The Agitation is going on last thirty days. Even the civil society, other dalit or Adivasi organizations are not so far given the solidarity and support except a few. The agitation is going at Pathanamthitta, district at chengara village by grabbing the land nearly around 2500 hectres of land.

About the Grabbing land

The land is now under the Possession of Harissons Malayalam Plantations. Harrisons Malayalam Plantations are one of the leading MNC and produce cash cropes and they have an acessibility of nearly about 35000 hectares in Kerala. The land owned by the Harrisons Malayalam is a lease land and the agreement between the then Travancore Kingdom. The laease agreement actually expired, That means the land is now owned in iterally by the Governemnt of Kerala.

The back ground of the agitation.

The Sadhujana vimochana Samyuktha vedi is mass organization, and comprised of Dalits and adivasis in the state. They are nearly around five

<http://groups.google.com/group/greenyouth>

thousand families and in number around 15 000 members. The SVSV is in the last five years fighting for their land rights. In 2006 they grabbed the 3000 hectares of land under the Kerala government owned Plantation corporation owned land in last August 2006. At that time the then government and the agitators come to agreement that all the agitators, who are land less get minimum of 1 acre of land by the government. This agreement between the then UDF government and the agitators. On the basis of that agreement, they evacuated the place on 2006. For practicing the agreement the government need a year time from 2006 August 10th. On the one year expiry of the agreement and the non-practicing of the agreement between the government and the agitators, again on the leadership on the agitation

SJVSV now started the agitation with this background. Now they grabbed the land nearly around 2500 hectares of land in the Harrison's Malayalam plantation. Last one month they all in this land. Except very few of the organizations and the Dalit organizations are not give even the solidarity and support to this agitation. Sixty percent of the agitators are women. The movement leader is Mr. Laha Gopalan and its General secretary is Ms. Thattayil Saraswathi.

There are children from 21 days aged to 18 years. Totally around 700 children in the agitation. The age varies from 21 days to 91 year old participants are there.

The situation is still danger, due to regular threat from the Trade unions like CITU, AITUC, INTUC and BMS. And the main stream Political parties and News papers are totally black out this agitations. And the Main stream Political parties blamed that the Agitators have a relation with Naxal movements and antinationalists.

We fear that this type of a propaganda lead a Police intervention, that is what the political leadership is indeed.

Except NCDHR and IDADS no other organizations so far give the solidarity and support to the agitators. NCDHR give greater support like public conference, Press conference, Notice and Posters in solidarity to the agitation. And more over the EIDHR in the state, (Pathanamthitta come under EIDHR) support them in Legal.

IDADS give one month raw food materials to the agitation. Now the situation of the Agitation is more vulnerable. The women members of the agitation is facing another kind of threat like sexual harassment. They really for the water and their primary needs they depend a near by stream. After 5.30 pm the trade union people

In a daily basis stone at them, threaten them and harass them. So the women in the agitation group facing another kind of vulnerability. Epidemics like chikungunya and viral fever is very common among them. Now nearly around 700 people is undergoing treatment in near by primary health centres.

So I request to every group in the country, kindly give our all possible support and solidarity to the agitators, and we welcome the Teams from other states so as to learn about the situation and the agitation. We understand that, among the members of the agitation Team, there is strong commitment and fire in their mind to keep the struggle forward. So Again I request you all to express our solidarity and support to them

Ernakulam R.Prakash 04/09/2007
Convenor, NCDHR.

THE CHENGARA LAND STRUGGLE IN KERALA AND THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF LAND STRUGGLES

Posted by Anil Tharayath Varghese Fri, 14 Sep 2007

<http://www.mail-archive.com/greenyouth@googlegroups.com/msg02413.html>

Sadhujana Vimochana Samyuktha Vedi (SJVSV), Chengara, Pathanamthitta, Kerala

The hilly terrains at the southern plantation belt of the Pathanamthitta district in Kerala reverberates with a major land struggle of an unprecedented nature involving more than 5000 families of the most deprived sections of the population. They demand land to live and labour on it. These are the people

<http://groups.google.com/group/greenyouth>

17of36

left-out in the once lauded land reforms of Kerala as a grand success. By tradition and practice, they have the creative potential to lead a highly productive life in relation to land and nature. But, they do not possess it. The mainstream society of Kerala either ignores this struggle or pretends that nothing seriously happens except for a bit of law and order problem. Some even perceive this as a violent and militant struggle, thereby indirectly even indicating that they are supported by 'Naxals'. So goes the behavior of the media too.

This struggle by landless Dalits and Adviasis to gain ownership of land, which began on 4th August 2007 has completed one month now. They have been labelled as 'encroachers' and attacked by the Goonds of the rubber plantations of Harrison Malayalam Limited at Chengara near Konni in Pathanamthitta District. Ten of them including women were admitted in the hospitals in Pathanamthitta. According to the President of the SJVSV, Laha Gopalan, about 4500 landless families involving 29000 odd people from different parts have moved on to the struggle front building tents with poles and plastic sheets. The Chickungunia epidemic is also taking its toll on these poor people. Several people are lying in the sheds. Sixteen people have been admitted in hospitals in Pathanamthitta.

With the rains continuing, the fever tightening its grip and the food stock drying up; the people are facing a dire situation. But their spirits are high even after 33 days. They affirm that they will not go back. "Give us land or bullets", their lips read.

This is actually the second phase of the struggle. 10 months back the SJVSV launched a struggle that was on very much similar lines. It was in Kumbazha Estate of the same management. The struggle was called-off after getting assurance from the Government that their demand would be looked into. Since there was no indication of any positive move from the state Govt, the SJVSV moved into the present struggle by occupying new land. To begin with, they occupied about 125 acres. After Onam Festival they have spread on to a larger area covering four hills - each family occupying one acre of land. This has two advantages. One, the earlier area was covered with Rubber trees which were yielding. The present spot is having old trees, non-yielding. The

Trade unions were against the landless poor who occupied the land, saying that

the 'encroachers' were not allowing them to continue their plantation related work. But, now since there is no hindrance for rubber tapping, the workers are more friendly. Secondly the Management and TUs had approached the court and the court advised the authorities that the encroachers be evicted without using force. Now, as they are out of that particular locale, the management may need fresh advice from the court.

The estate under purview has trespassed its lease period. Their claim is that even if the land is not theirs, the trees are theirs. Basically this is land which has to be taken back from the planters and given to the landless. The Left Front Government by its one year old promise is bound to do that.. The Ghost of Muthanga, where the police shot at the Advasis who claimed their ancestral land, should continue to haunt the authorities. The government had given in writing that the Advasis will be allotted land. The governments of whichever shade; right of left have not fulfilled the promise of providing land to the landless except in a very very nominal way. Muthanga is a landmark in peoples struggle for land and it challenges people to go on with struggles claiming land for the dalits and adivasi.

By the least standards, 56% of dalits and advasis in Kerala have no land. One of the women in the huts in Chengara was narrating her experience of having to bury her husband a pit in the kitchen of her hut. The Advasis, dalits and dalit Christians (all these communities are among the 4500 occupiers in Chengara) constitute about 65 lakhs in Kerala's population - 5 lakhs of Adivasis and the rest Dalits. These people if they posses 2 cents, 4 cents or at best 10 cents of land, they are considered as landowners while there are corporate houses that get thousands and thousands of acres on lease. And there are estate owners such as 'Harrisons Malayalam' who have no legal right over thousands of acres that they hold on to. They have 33 estates (Tea & Rubber) holding not less than fifty thousand acres in six districts of Kerala. How do we reconcile with such injustice? The reality which is the reason for hope is that these communities who are denied basic rights are becoming conscious and they are rising up.

The present agitation is an indication of the intense nature of the struggle. It is not easy for 4000 odd families (which keeps on increasing by a minimum of 20 families a day) to come away to an area surrounded by "enemies" and to stay

on for weeks and months fighting the most horrid situations of rain, epidemics and hunger. The families at the Kurumbatti division of the Chengara estate were asked what if the court gives the verdict to oust the encoachers; the women were the most vocal in declaring: "We have fiive liters of Kerosin Oil and the moment the authorities turn us out we will burn ourselves. No question of retreating without getting land".

The management, Trade Unions and the media were most unfriendly to the land struggle at Chengara. The Political Parties including the CPI-M and CPI who led the land struggle in Khammam in Andhra Pradesh in August, who are collecting money to help the families of the deceased in Khammam; are sparing no effort to drive away the poor dalits and adivasis struggling for land in Kerala. The media except for one or two Malayalam dailies are adopting an anti- struggle position.

The important thing to note is that common people are not aware of the developments; the life and death struggle going on in the neighbourhood in Chengara involving thousands of landless poor. The ruling coalition is showing total apathy to the struggle of a major section of people.

These Communities are coming to a new awareness that they have to posses land. They realize that land is the symbol of power and authority. So far they have been kept out of that. Land, which was the life-blood of these communities, was plucked away from them. The same land is in the hands of Corporations like Harrisons and real estate mafia. It is no more a life-providing, God given resource, but a commodity to make profit. The communities near to the natural resources like land and water are realising that they have to reain ownership of the natural resources their ancestors collectively owned. They have to posses the life-producing and life-sustaining resources.

The present trend is leading to a negation of life of humans and nature. Unless they retrieve the land, the future of human and nature are in danger.

The land struggles that go on in Kerala in Chengara and in some other parts also are a symbol of people coming to deeper conciopusness of their relation with land and nature and its politics. They are symptomatic of the land struggles in Mudigonda Kammam (Andra Pradesh), Sonbhadra (UP), Rewa (MP), Orissa and in other parts of India. There are land struggles trying to posses land and then land struggles to affirm the right over land, not prepared to yield

their land to the corporations as in the case of Singur and Nandigram.

Land struggles of such nature represent a new era of peoples awakening. They point to a bright horizon where we see people asserting their right to life; to create and preserve life. The Chengara struggle of the Sadhujana Vimochana Samyukta Vedi deserves support and encouragement from all sections of people who look for a new order. The people have to get land. They have to win. They need your support.

Dalit Struggle for Land Right in Kerala, One World South Asia

14 September, 2007, One World South Asia

http://socialjustice.ekduniya.net/ThematicArea/Dalits/news_item.2007-09-14.7353240588

The hilly terrains at the southern plantation belt of the Pathanamthitta district in Kerala reverberates with a major land struggle of an unprecedented nature involving more than 5000 families of the most deprived sections of the population.Land struggles of such nature represent a new era of peoples awakening. They point to a bright horizon where we see people asserting their right to life; to create and preserve life. The Chengara struggle of the Sadhujana Vimochana Samyukta Vedi deserves support and encouragement from all sections of people who look for a new order. The people have to get land. They have to win. They need your support.

Please contact the following for further information relating to this -

Thattayil Saraswathy ,
General Secretary,
Sadhu Jana Vimochana SamyuthaVedi.,
Shreenilayam , Parakkara -PO, Thattayil ,Pathanamthitta-691525.

Laha Gopalan,
State President, SVSV,
Pathanamthita-PO,
Pathanamthita, Kerala
Phone - 09249101709.

<http://groups.google.com/group/greenyouth>

Police block roads to encroached estate

September 25, 2007 Staff Reporter , The Hindu, Kerala - Pathanamthitta

<http://www.hindu.com/2007/09/25/stories/2007092554530400.htm>



Police action: A Sadhu Jana Vimochana Samyukta Vedi worker taken into police custody while on his way to the Kumbazha Estate at Chengara, near Konni, in Pathanamthitta on Monday.

PATHANAMTHITTA: In a tactful move to evict the Sadhu Jana Vimochana Samyukta Vedi (SJVSV) activists from the Kumbazha Estate of the Harrison Malayalam Limited at Chengara near Konni, the police blocked road access to the encroached property from 10 a.m. on Monday.

A 100-strong police force blocked the two roads leading to the estate from Athumbumkulam junction, to cut off supplies to the illegal occupants.

The police have taken into custody 100 people, including the SJVSV general secretary, Thattayil Saraswathi, when they reached Athumbumkulam on their way to the encroached land. The police action was part of coercive tactics aimed at forcing the encroachers to vacate the land. District Collector Ashok Kumar Singh said the police action was in the backdrop of a High Court direction to clear the encroachment of the private property within a month. He said the Government could not permit people to take law into their hands and encroach upon other people's property.

Mr. Singh said the district administration had to initiate action as the talks held twice with the Vedi leaders to resolve the issue failed.

Nearly 1,200 SJVSV activists encroached upon the private plantation on August 5, demanding five acres of land suitable for agriculture and Rs. 50,000 in cash for each landless family.

More families joined the illegal occupants, expanding their area of occupation, in the weeks that followed. Many of them started vegetable cultivation at the encroached land.

The number of tents pitched in the encroached land by the Vedi activists has gone up to 4000, according to SJVSV president Laha Gopalan.

Encroachment: police keep vigil at Athumbamkulam

Vedi activists stage dharna; 20 permitted to enter occupied land

Sep 26, 2007, The Hindu, Staff Reporter

<http://www.thehindu.com/2007/09/26/stories/2007092654490400.htm>



ON GUARD: The police keeping vigil at the Athumbamkulam junction, near Konni, on Tuesday to check the entry of Sadhu Jana Vimochana Samyukta Vedi activists into the Kumbazha Estate of Harrisons Malayalam Limited.

PATHANAMTHITTA: The police blockade at the entry points of the roads leading to the encroached portions of the Kumbazha Estate of Harrisons Malayalam Limited continued for the second day on Tuesday.

A large posse of police had been deployed at Athumbamkulam junction near Konni from Monday and they blocked entry to the estate division occupied by the Sadhu Jana Vimochana Samyukta Vedi (SJVSV) activists, literally cutting all their supplies, including food and fuel, from outside.

Meanwhile, a group of Vedi activists staged a march and dharna in front of the Collectorate here on Tuesday, protesting against the police action. Inaugurating the dharna, SJVSV president Laha Gopalan, said there was no question of the landless families vacating the occupied portion of the estate.

Mr. Gopalan alleged that the police action, denying even food and free movement of the landless people, including children and elderly people, was in gross violation of the High Court directive not to put the hapless Vedi activists to any sort of hardship.

He said the Vedi would move court against the police action. The Vedi activists were removed by the police from the road, later.

Meanwhile, District Collector Ashok Kumar Singh permitted 20 Vedi activists to

<http://groups.google.com/group/greenyouth>

enter the encroached land on their plea to take their belongings from there, later in the afternoon.

The SJVSV activists encroached upon the private plantation on August 5, demanding five acres of land suitable for agriculture and Rs.50,000 in cash for each landless family among them. The illegal occupation continued all these days as the talks initiated by the Collector with the Vedi leaders failed.

The number of illegal occupants at the estate too grew up in the course of time. At present, as many as 2,000 people were reportedly camping at the encroached land and they even started cultivation of vegetables there.

The Collector said the encroachers were given enough time to vacate from the private property. The High Court too issued a directive to clear the estate in a period of one month.

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Dalit organisations join hands

October 09, 2007, The Hindu , Kerala, Kottayam, Staff Reporter.

<http://www.hindu.com/2007/10/09/stories/2007100952310300.htm>

To add muscle to the land stir in Pathanamthitta district

Land Agitation Campaign Committee formed

Call to bring in comprehensive land reform Bill

KOTTAYAM: Various Dalit organisations have decided to join hands in an effort to add muscle to the ongoing land agitation by the Sadhujana Vimochana Samyuktha Vedi in Pathanamthitta district.

A new forum, Land Agitation Campaign Committee, was formed at a joint meeting of the leaders of National Dalit Liberation Front (NDLF), Dalit Vimochana Sanghatana (DVS) and the Dalit Democratic Movement (DDM) here on Sunday.

K.K.S. Das is chairman and K.K. Moni general convener of the committee. The

<http://groups.google.com/group/greenyouth>

committee will launch the campaign with a dharna and a public meeting here on Saturday.

The committee called upon the government to resume the leased land whose lease period had expired and also those leased lands which had been unauthorisedly sold when under lease. This land should be distributed among the landless.

They also wanted the government to bring a comprehensive land reform Bill which would ensure land to the 'puramboke' dwellers, residents of the SC/ST and 'lakshamveedu' colonies, landless Dalit Christians, fishermen, and adivasi people.

They also wanted the authorities to bring the plantations under land ceiling regulations and also steps to put an end to absentee landlordism. The leaders said that a sharp polarisation on the basis of land ownership was emerging in the State and called upon the working class, the Left and class organisations to come forward in support of the struggle going on at the Harrison Malayalam Plantation at Chengara in Pathanamthitta district.

They called upon the Chief Minister and the State and district administrations to take steps to ensure that there would not be any bloodshed or highhandedness against the agitating adivasis.

CPI(ML) seeks withdrawal of police

October 10, 2007, The Hindu, Kerala - Pathanamthitta, Staff Reporter
<http://www.hindu.com/2007/10/10/stories/2007101053530400.htm>

'Says people at Kumbazha Estate being harassed'



Volatile situation: A group of people have encroached upon Kumbazha Estate of Harrisons Malayalam Ltd at Chengara near Konni in Pathanamthitta district.

Volatile situation: A group of people have encroached upon Kumbazha Estate of Harrisons Malayalam Ltd at Chengara near Konni in Pathanamthitta district.

PATHANAMTHITTA: The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) has called upon the government to withdraw the police from Chengara, near Konni, where hundreds of landless people have encroached upon the Kumbazha Estate of Harrisons Malayalam Ltd.

At a press conference here on Tuesday, CPI(ML) State secretary P.J. James and district leaders M.K. Krishnankutty, P.K. Vijayan, V.G. Prasanakumar and M.S. Sadananadan said the party had decided to intensify its agitation for the cause of the scores of landless people in different parts of the State.

Harassment alleged

Mr. James alleged that the police deployed at the entry of the roads leading to the occupied area of the estate had been harassing the hapless families, cutting their food and drinking water supplies and denying them emergency medical care.

He said the living condition of the people at the estate was pathetic.

He alleged that the lease period of the estate in the possession of Harrisons Malayalam Ltd. had expired and the company could no longer claim the estate as its legal possession. He called upon the government to take immediate steps to take over the land and distribute it among the landless poor who had been occupying the estate for the past two months.

Mr. James alleged that the government was forcing the landless people into the street by laying siege to the occupied land. The government was sidelining the fact that the Revenue Department had identified nearly 1,500 acres (one acre = 0.4 hectares) of excess land in the illegal possession of Harrisons Malayalam Ltd. in 1974.

He alleged that the Forest Department had taken over 350 acres of excess land in the possession of the company at Chelikkuzhi without any justification.

He said the CPI(ML) would intensify the agitation demanding immediate takeover of the government land allegedly in the possession of the Harrisons

Malayalam, Tata and A.V. Thomas and Company Ltd. in different parts of the State.

He said the CPI(ML) would support an agitation by any party or organisation for the cause of the landless poor.

Hundreds of people, including women and elderly persons, owing allegiance to the Sadhu Jana Vimochana Samyukta Vedi had encroached upon the private plantation early in the morning of August 5, demanding five acres of land suitable for agriculture and Rs.50,000 in cash for each landless family.

The area of occupation by the Vedi workers went up in the weeks that followed and many even started vegetable cultivation on the encroached land.

The Vedi leaders claimed that the number of makeshift tents pitched on the encroached land went up to 4,000 by late August.

Continuing Dalits Adivasi Land Struggle: a field report from Kerala

30 October 2007, One World South Asia

http://socialjustice.ekduniya.net/ThematicArea/Dalits/news_item.2007-10-30.4820915113

Brief Report Of NCDHR-NFDLRM Visit*

Dalits Adivasi land struggle of Chengara, Pathanamthitta, Kerala

National Federation of Dalit Land Rights Movements (NFDLRM) is a National Platform of Dalit organizations; Land rights movements and Activist from all over the country. It is a part of National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights, a Human Rights Advocacy Platform in India.

NFDLRMs concentrates in addressing the Socio Economic Rights of Dalits very particularly the issue of Land for Dalits and involving in mobilizing the Landless Dalits for Mass Action and also to under take Advocacy and Legal Intervention to ensure land and livelihood, in addition to addressing the issue of Civil Political Rights of Dalits who face the inhuman practice of Untouchability which has drawn parallel to Apartheid. We undertake Fact Findings on the Struggles of Dalits and draw attention of all Authorities concerned to ensure justice to victims and communities who strive for human rights, right to land and livelihood.

NFDLRM and NCDHR, constituted A team with the following members to visit the Struggling area and the People.

- Manas Jena, National convenor, National Federation of Dalit Land Rights Movements, Bhubaneswar, Orissa.
- Mr. Lalit Babbar, National Co convenor, NFDLRM, Maharashtra.
- Mr. Arun Khote, National Media Secretary, NCDHR, New Delhi
- Mr. R Prakash, NCDHR, Convenor, Kerala.
- Mr. Pradeep, Human Rights Defender, Pathanamthitta.
- Mr. J. Vincent Manoharan, General secretary, National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR), New Delhi.

The Team visited and met the following persons:

- Mr. Laha Gopalan the Leader of Sadhujana Vimochana Samyutha Vedhi – who heads this struggle
- Around 2000 Strugglers in the Hill area of Chengara in the presence of Ms. Saraswathy, the Secretary of SVSVS.
- The Dalit Leaders from KDP, AKPMS, Bamboo Workers Union, Dalit Unity Centre, etc.
- *Rev. M.J. Joseph and Johnson of the Solidarity Co-ordination Committee .
- Chief Minister Shri .V.S. Achuthanandan
- Minister for Scheduled and Backward Communities Shri A. K. Balan

The major Findings:

- Dalits and Adivasis are the most neglected among the marginalized and the Landless in this state.
- Their life and livelihood is at stake and no successive Governments paid sufficient and special attention to address the demands of these people
- Ds and Ads are in continuous struggle for Land and even before 8 months their major struggle was put on hold with the assurance of the Government to assign lands to them
- Harrison Malayalam is the Private Company which holds thousands of hectares of land in various hills of this state and developed Tea and Rubber Plantation
- It was told that this company violated the conditions of the Lease agreement and sublet lands and even sold lands to the vested interests
- This company also encroached lands over and above the lands

earmarked in the lease deed and extended its plantation activity.

- It tries to extend the Lease period and also claims that the land could belong to the Government but the Rubber Trees are theirs.
- The CITU wants to protect the interest of the Plantation workers who are their members and thereby does not show interest in the struggle of the D and A demanding land in the Plantation areas
- The D and Adivasis claim that the Government will always come out with the rhetoric reply that there is no surplus land in Kerala to assign to the landless.
- Therefore, the Struggling people now want the land under the lease of H and M company to be assigned to the landless, since the lease period is also getting over. Even otherwise, they say that the lease could be terminated the lands could be given to the sons and daughters of this soil whose livelihood is at stake.
- The Non Dalits and the Land Mafia quietly are watching the progress as their eyes are on these lands and it is told that they do not want the D and A to get this land which is fertile and attracts matchless costs.
- Media is conspicuously silent – may be with a notion to block out this struggle and to create a myth among the general public that this struggle is diluted and the strugglers disappeared from the scene.
- Dalit Movements yet to join this struggle but they start expressing their solidarity in different ways.
- The Solidarity Committee formed by Navchetana is active in giving visibility to this issue through various strategies, which include, Satyagraha, consultations, cultural activities and holding public meetings, poster campaign etc.,
- NFDLRMs initiated by NCDHR earlier visited this area a month ago, met the struggling people and assured their solidarity and support and came out with a poster campaign.
- It appears that the Local Collector has assured the Struggling People that the whole land in question will be surveyed and the surplus land will be notified as Government land and he will act on the policy decision of the Government on the demands of the Ds and Ads.

- The Landless families of Ds and Ads register with SJSVSV and move in to the hill area to pitch their tents demanding land for them as well. The number gets increased day by day.
- The people who have pitched their tents in the Hills are not able to

move from their sites with the fear that either the Goondas of the Company or the Government will anytime involve in eviction activities using force.

- But they seem to be determined even to face bullets for the sake of their demand for Land
- They suffer from hunger and chikangunya which is worsened by the arrival of the monsoon rains.
- The children from Primary school to High school have stopped their education owing to this struggle.
- The "otherwise abled", the sick and the old age are the worst sufferers both physically and mentally.

Last Update:

The Delegation met the Chief Minister and the Minister for Scheduled and Backward Communities and appraised them of the struggle that in progress in Chengara of Pattanamthitta by the Dalits and Adivasis and demanded that land should be distributed to the Struggling Landless people and their interest and concerns should be protected .

The Chief Minister Shri .V.S. Achuthanandan assured the Team that the Govt has already initiated a process to identify the Government and surplus land and also committed to the policy of distribution of land to the poor and the landless.

*The Minister for Scheduled and Backward Communities Shri A. K. Balan, shared the Team that the District Administration is already on the job of surveying the land and assured to distribute the land to the Struggling people. Also he assured to implement the SC/ST (PoA) Act 1989 to protect the Rights of the SC and ST. He also shared the appointment of the SC/ST Commission to address the concerns and interests of these communities.

The Demands

- Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes, Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims should be immediately given homestead land for housing and agricultural land for cultivation for a decent livelihood. The land title should be given in the joint name of the Women and Men of the Strugglers.

- The struggling Dalits and Adivasis in Chengara and other hill areas should not be evicted from the areas where they occupied the lands for their livelihood
- The lease agreement made with Harrison Malayalam and other similar Private Estate owners should be cancelled forth with and those lands to be assigned to the Dalits and Adivasis
- Any breach of clause of Lease Agreement by Harrison Malayalam and other Lessees should be viewed as breach of Lease and action should be taken against for such lapse besides cancellation of the Lease.
- The land being enjoyed by the Lessees and other vested interested should be distributed to the Struggling Dalits and Adivasis and also the other marginalized.
- Medical assistance is to be provided to the ailing people among the strugglers as they suffer from Chikengunya and other communicable diseases.
- The poor and land less families given land should be subsidized with interest free loan without any collateral security for housing and agricultural activities like land development, irrigation, purchase of agricultural appliance, seed etc.
- SCs and STs(POA)Act 1989 should be implemented strictly by the state government to protect the communities from the practices of untouchability and caste discrimination in all sphere.
- Any effort by the Harrison Malayalam Company to evict these Struggling people by any means should be prevented by the Government and it should protect the struggling Dalits and Adivasis.
- The Surplus land in the State of Kerala should be identified by implementing the Land Ceiling Act and the same be distributed to the landless Dalits, Adivasis and other Marginalised Communities.

APPEAL :

All Dalit and Adivasi Movements, Political Parties and Civil Society Organisations are requested to express their Solidarity and Support at all possible ways and means to strengthen the Struggle of Dalits and Adivasis of Chengara to get land to ensure a secured Life with Dignity

Contact Details and to enlist support to this Struggle:

Mr. Laha Gopalan ,State President - SVSV

Ms. Saraswathi, State Secretary - SVSV

Pattanamthitta, Kerala

Laha Mobile: 092491 01709

Manas Jena

National Convenor - NFDLRMs

Lalit Babar

National Co-Convenor - NFDLRMs

VINCENT MANOHARAN

General Secretary - NCDHR

Source: ARUN KHOTE, Secretary- Media

National Campaign On Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR)

8/1, 2nd Floor, South Patel Nagar,

New Delhi-110008

Ph: 011- 25842249 /25842250

Landless encroach on Harrisons Malayalam estate, put up tents

Ajayan, Livemint.com : the wall street journal, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2007

<http://www.livemint.com/2007/08/11010238/Landless-encroach-on-Harrisons.html>

The displaced people have formed a group and are demanding that five acres, cash be given to members

Kochi: Around 1,000 landless people in the Pathanamthitta district of Kerala have pitched tents in the Kumbazha rubber estate of Harrisons Malayalam Ltd (HML), part of RPG Enterprises, and are demanding retrieval of the land and distributing it to them.

They gathered under the banner of the Sadhu Jana Vimochana Samyukta Vedi and put up their tents early this week. Their struggle is for the assignment of land that the government had promised to them more than a year ago.

Vedi member T.S. Achuthan said the estate lease already had lapsed and the group's members would not vacate the land until the government allotted them five acres and Rs50,000 in cash each, as was promised more than a year

<http://groups.google.com/group/greenyouth>

ago. The Vedi now also has the support of a breakaway outfit of tribespeople, Adivasi Gotra Jana Sabha, whose leader, Sreeraman Koyyan, has promised to back the agitation.

In 2001, the Adivasis in Kerala had led a month-and-a-half-long struggle under the banner of the Adivasi Gotra Mahasabha led by tribeswoman C.K. Janu and had attracted global attention.

The demand then was that 45,000 landless Adivasi families be provided five acres each of cultivable land. The government then had said that land would be identified and a recommendation would be made to the Union government that Adivasi lands be included in the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution so that the land could be alienated at a later date.

Although the promise of land assignment has been met partially, the struggle of the Adivasis continues. This has led other marginalized and landless groups to move the government to get land that is being seen as an encroachment into HML land.

HML management has moved the Kerala high court, which will hear the urgent petition on Monday.

The company's general manager for rubber C.Vinayaraghavan said the petition seeks eviction of the encroachers since the rights of the estate have been vested with the company.

The land was handed over to the company in 1918 from the Vanchipuzha Madhom family, which had been given the land by a Travancore king. However, the ownership of the land had been disputed in the Travancore high court that ruled in favour of the Madhom family, he said.

Vinayaraghavan added that after the 1964 Land Reforms Act of Kerala, rights to the land were vested with the tenants and there was no issue regarding lease expiration. Earlier this year, the government had imposed a fee for cutting old trees called the senior-age tree fee but the management challenged it before the Kerala high court, which stayed the fee collection on 2 July. This was despite the government claiming a right to the land, he added.

The area is now tense and has been cordoned off by police and HML is not being allowed to tap rubber trees. Vinayaraghavan said there was an earlier attempt by the Vedi activists to encroach upon a nearby forest land allotted to HML by the then royal family. This is being managed with the support of the Kerala forest department, which helped in foiling the encroachment move. It was then that the activists moved into the rubber estate.

HML officials met senior police officers and government officials, including Kerala chief minister V.S. Achuthanandan to discuss the crisis. It is now up to the court to take a call.

Dalit's Struggle Demanding Land in Kerala

NCDHR

<http://www.ncdhr.org.in/latestinterventions/dalit2019s-struggle-demanding-land-in-kerala>

NCDHR is closely monitoring the issue and planning State level and National level intervention in the coming days. Activists of National Federation of Dalit Land Rights Movements and National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights visited the area

Thousands of Dalits in Kerala is in the path of struggle for the last 43 days demanding land. Dalits from the southern districts of Kerala forcibly occupied the land now under the control of Harrison's Malayalam Plantation Corporation at Chengara , in Pathanamthitta district. This land was leased out to the corporation by the erstwhile Travancore dynasty at a nominal rate. The contractual period has already expired but the successive govts in Kerala never tried to attach the land.

Last year also the Dalits conducted a similar struggle but it was wound up as an agreement was reached between the revenue minister of the state and Dalit leadership that land would be distributed within six months time. But that promise was never kept.

The state govt , mainstream political parties and the media prefer it better to neglect the whole issue. In the meantime the authority is trying to give an extremist overtone to the struggle .It is alleged by the Sadhujana Vimochana Samyuktha Vedi (SJSV) , which is leading the struggle that the

<http://groups.google.com/group/greenyouth>

govt was preparing the ground for a police attack against the people in the model of Muthanga.

Activists of National Federation of Dalit Land Rights Movements and National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights visited the area and assessed the situation. NCDHR is closely following the issue and planning serious and effective intervention at the National and state level in the coming days.

</ends>