



Dharmapuri: A village of burnt homes and lost belongings

Description

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[soliloquy id=2127]



After the riot

Dalits are ranked as the lowest members of the Indian community. They face discrimination at almost every level. One out of every six Indians is a Dalit, yet they are deprived of fundamental rights and freedom, promised to all citizens of India. Addressing this issue, the Department of Electronic Media and Mass Communication, Pondicherry University organized a two day workshop entitled "Reporting the Rural".



Burnt belongings

On the first day, the speakers discussed with the students about Dalit issues and the pathetic conditions prevailing in such communities. Among the eminent speakers were writer and activist D. Ravikumar, who is also the secretary of VCK, Jeeman Jacob, Bureau Chief, South, Tehelka. Also present were A. Muthu Krishnan, writer and activist and Dr. T. Marx, reader in the Department of English, Pondicherry University. On the second day the students were taken on a field trip to the Dharmapuri district in Tamil Nadu. We reached the village at Nakkankotai where a recent conflict had emerged as a Vanniyar girl had married a Dalit boy. Angry upper class men burnt the houses in the villages. The condition was horrifying.

As I walked through the narrow lanes I could see the wrecked houses and broken furniture. The interiors of the houses were fully burnt along with the food thrown on the floor. Papers and notebooks were charred and thrown on the ground. It gave me goose bumps. The smell of the burnt assets still haunts me. It was no less than a nightmare. What was surprising to notice is that mainstream media had ignored this part of the story. Most of the media had reported about the conflict but not the atrocities suffered by the inmates of the village. Language was a barrier for me, yet I could understand the pain and sorrow of the women and children as they showed me their cuts and burns. This photo essay is an attempt to express the agony and distress faced by the Dalits of Dharmapuri.

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Category

1. Think Tank

Date Created

April 21, 2014

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