

QUARTERLY

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MINO-VIEW LAHORE

Voice of minorities and oppressed people in South Asian societies



Anti Muslim Riots in Burma



Socio-economic Conditions of the Dalit Community in Bangladesh



Only politics could bring an end to the social discrimination



Denial of drinking water and toilet facilities, increased atrocities against Dalit women

Will Secular India Elect the Butcher of Gujarat Massacre 2002 as PM



International Seminar on
Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar
Founder of Secular Democratic India
2nd May (Thursday) 2013

**8th Seminar on
Dr. B. R. Ambedkar
Day**

Stage Foundation, Lahore



Centre for South Asian Studies, P.U.



Patron-in-Chief
Prof. Yousaf Irfan

Editor
Syed Shaheen Hassan

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EDITORIAL

South Asia is the most populous region having more than 1.67 billion people. The region is no doubt, rich but in turmoil. People are victims of war, terrorism and extremism; hence the region lacks peace & prosperity which results in chaos & anarchy. Though South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) like European Union (EU) & Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN), is active for regional harmony & cooperation among South Asian States but no state can become stable unless the social bond is strong among people. Sir Ganga Ram Heritage Foundation is an NGO, established by intellectuals, scholars and social activists of Lahore – Pakistan, in 2006. It aims at evolving strong & stable society based on equality & fraternity. In fact, Man is born free but He is in chain of oppression & discrimination. Man has made tremendous achievement in science & technology but fail to learn how to live in peace & cooperation with people. The clash of civilization is fatal to all mankind whereas the cooperation of civilization is need of the day. SGRHF works for social uplift of downtrodden people irrespective of caste, creed and colour. Sir Ganga Ram is a man for all season to work for socio-economic empowerment of deprived people of the region. Quaid-e-Azam, the founder of Pakistan, has vehemently said that all citizens of Pakistan are equal. They are not to be discriminated on the base of caste, race & religion. Unfortunately the south Asian societies are ridden with socio-economic & racio-religious discrimination.

The Mino-View, a quarterly magazine, is a humble attempt to cover all dimensions of minoritie's life and culture not only in Pakistan but in all states of South Asia. South Asian societies and states are presently in war with each other. It has, in fact, disturbed stability of region. South Asian minorities are, in fact, victims of tyranny from both people & state simultaneously. SGRHF points out the minority issues & events for peaceful co-existence in the region. The memories of Operation Blue Star 1984, Gujarat Massacre 2002, killing of Christians in Orissa, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh during the months of August and September 2008, are still painful for the relevant minorities in the region. The minority killing in Myanmar, Burma (connecting frontiers with Bangladesh, SAARC state) and burning of Christian houses in Joseph Colony, Lahore Pakistan is quite aching to all

inhabitants in the region. The tragedy of Joseph Colony is a big one but the government / state is not involved in such inhuman activities as we find Narandra Modi, CM, Gujarat-India a main culprit of Gujarat Massacre. The effectives of Joseph Colony are immediately given relief from Mian Shahbaz Sharif, CM, Punjab-Pakistan and other social activists like Riaz Malik etc.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the champion of Humanism in South Asia is of the view that the state impartiality & empowerment of millions of Dalit people are necessary to obtain lasting peace in the region. Dalits are victims of High caste Hindu Brahmins. They are unfortunately denied human rights for the last 4 thousand years. Pakistan has 69% Dalits out of 1.4 million Hindu minority. They also complain for social boycott from high caste Hindu community in Tharparkur and other parts of Sindh. Dr. Sono Khingharani of the Thar Deep Rural Development Program (TRDP) conducted a seminar demanding National Commission for Minorities (NCM) in Pakistan, which is, in principle excepted by the government of Pakistan and urged the people to worked for such downtrodden Dalits in Pakistan too. The situation of Dalits in India is more miserable. They are victimized & discriminated in an organized manner. Miss Manjula Pradeep, NAVASARJAN, Ahmedabad, Gujarat-India is kind enough to send her research based report for the magazine. SGRHF is also grateful for Prof. Rajivlochan, Head of the Department of History, Panjab University, Chandigarh, India and Prof. Paramjit Singh Judge, Department of Sociology, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, India who have contributed the magazine on our request.

The present issue of Mino-View is a little attempt to promote justice and quality for the peace and stability of the region. It will act as a mirror reflecting the issues related to the identified minorities and other oppressed classes in the region. It will shed light on the darkest issues of our social system by voicing the concerns of minorities, Dalits and other oppressed sections of the SA societies. We will welcome feedback from our respected readers and concerned quarter. We invite social forces from all over the region to join hands for adopting a way towards egalitarianism.

Prof. Yousaf Irfan

8th SEMINAR ON DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR



Discrimination against Dalits is still powerfully prevailing in Indian societies. Those who are sincerely working for eradication of discrimination; they are nabbed, threatened, tortured and murdered. My four Dalit colleagues were also murdered during investigative research work on Dalit victims.

Majula Pradeep

Sir Ganga Ram Heritage Foundation (SGRHF) organized one day seminar on Dr. Ambedkar Day at Al-Razi Hall, University of the Punjab, New Campus, Lahore. Seminar was conducted on the topic “Social Discrimination – Poison for Democracy” after the recitation of Holy Quran. The seminar inaugurated with the welcome address of Director, SGRHF, Prof. Yousaf Irfan.

Governor of Punjab, Makhdoom Syed Ahmad Mahmud was the Chief Guest who addressed the audience and also distributed the souvenir among the guest speakers, scholar from India, Dr. Paramjit Singh Judge (Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar), Dr. Rajivlochan (Chandigarh University), and social activist Ms. Manjula Pradeep (Ahmadabad) came to Lahore to participate in this seminar and presented their scholarly papers on Dr. Ambedkar’s philosophy of caste discrimination. All the three scholars from India highlighted the caste system and the social discrimination that Dalit’s Face in their daily life and its impact on Indian Society. The Vice Chancellor Punjab University Dr. Mujahid Kamran also addressed the seminar along with Dr. Mujahid Mansoori a renowned scholar and a columnist, who spoke on Dr. Ambedkar. A great Dalit (untouchable) leader who was also known as the founder of modern secular democratic India a man who raised his voice against caste system of India throughout his life, a real inspiration of Dalits world, suppressed and down trodden section of the South Asian Societies.

Welcome Address by Director

Prof. Yousaf Irfan, Director SGRHF spoke on two points highlighting the aims and activities of SGRHF. He also stressed on the need of Muslim Dalit Friendship to eradicate caste-based discrimination in South Asia.

Prof. Paramjit Singh Judge (India)

Prof. Paramjit Singh Judge pointed out certain observations regarding Dalit mind setup in modern Indian society. The organization of Dalit community is common all over India. Now they prefer to live in city and get education in different fields of studies. They also acquire government jobs ordained in the Indian constitution which was, in fact, framed by Baba Sahab Ambedkar. Though casteism is a constitutional crime and some of high-caste officials are also brought to book for violating constitution. The simple constitutional guarantees for Dalits is not the real solution of the problem because Dalits themselves are ridden with thousands of sub-castes. Now they take pride of being Dalit but they prefer to be called Brahman Chamaar, Brahman Bhangi etc. The rich Dalits live in posh localities but avoid meeting with low ranked Dalits. The mind set of discrimination is being changed in cities but it is still heavily prevailing in undeveloped backward ruler areas.

Ms. Manjula Pradeep (India)

Ms. Manjula is a Dalit social activist mainly working in Gujarat and other adjacent areas of India. She is the first Indian Dalit woman who is awarded by UNO for her marvelous social services for the uplift of downtrodden Dalit community especially in rural / village areas. Her NGO known as New Creation / NAVSARJAN. She joined the organization in 1992 and worked



Manjula Pradeep Addressing the audience

on different Dalit cases based on discrimination including famous Pattan Rape Case. She vehemently said that discrimination against Dalits is still powerfully prevailing in Indian societies. Those who are sincerely working for eradication of discrimination; they are nabbed, threatened, tortured and murdered. My four Dalit colleagues were also murdered during investigative research work on Dalit victims. She was warmly appreciated by the audience.



Prof. Rajivlochan Addressing the audience

Prof. Rajivlochan (India)

Dr. Rajivlochan highlighted the constitutional rights and practical problems for the social uplift of these scheduled castes/ tribes/ backward classes. He said that Dalits consists of majority population of India if they are not properly empowered the fate of South Asian societies will remain vulnerable. The dilemma of Dalit empowerment is Dalit-oriented because Dalit themselves are caste ridden. They have thousands of sub-castes and treat their community accordingly. The constitutional rights are a path to make progress but the caste-based discrimination among Dalit is also a big problem.

Will Secular India Elect the Butcher of Gujarat massacre 2002, as prime minister in election 2014?



The question will rise from secular section of the Indian societies, Muslim minority, international human rights forums, US and European Union that will secular India elect the butcher of Muslim massacre in Gujarat 2002 as prime minister in election 2014?

IN 2002, when Narendra Modi was chief minister of Gujarat, Hindu mobs ran riot, raping and murdering Muslims and burning them alive. Over 1,000 people died in some of the worst religious violence seen in India since independence. Nobody has proved that Mr Modi did anything wrong, yet suspicions have lingered that he ignored or even condoned the pogrom, as a somehow understandable reaction to the death of 59 Hindu pilgrims in a train fire blamed on Muslims. Today Mr Modi is the dominant figure in India's opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). He is more than likely to be its candidate for prime minister in general elections due next year. But the question will rise from secular section of the Indian societies, Muslim minority, international human rights forums, US and European Union that will secular India elect the butcher of Muslim massacre in Gujarat 2002 as prime minister in election 2014? Mr Modi has reveled in his reputation as a strident Hindu nationalist. Before 2002 he had organised marches by Hindu pilgrims on sensitive Muslim sites in other parts of India, whipping up communal anger. During the killings, which lasted for three days, his officials and the police stood idly by? Despite ample opportunities, Mr Modi has never voiced regret for what happened. Perhaps this is because, horrible though it is to accept, his reputation as a scourge of uppity Muslims explains the devotion to him of the BJP's Hindu-nationalist hard core—the group the party relies on to get out. Mr Modi denies any wrongdoing. His defenders point out that the riots have been scrutinised in inquiries and that no court has convicted him of any crime. They are right. Doubt may cling to the impartiality of justice within Modi-dominated Gujarat, but India's Supreme Court, though slow, is genuinely independent. Just last year one of Mr Modi's former ministers was convicted of directing gangs in 2002 and sentenced to 28 years' prison. Even if the national courts were crooked, Mr Modi would not have benefited: since 2004 the Congress party, the BJP's bitter rival, has been in power nationally. Although Mr Modi may be clean enough to avoid conviction, he is not yet an attractive national candidate. India has a sorry history of burying sectarian violence. Little was done after the late Rajiv Gandhi looked away as Sikhs were murdered in Delhi in 1984. The same seems to be happening today, after a massacre last year of Muslims in Assam. Mr Modi could help end this blight. If he dreams of becoming a leader for all India, including its 177m Muslims, he must show genuine contrition for the horrors that happened when he was in charge in Gujarat.

“Narendra Modi is the No. 1 enemy of India’s Muslims, If Modi becomes prime minister, more Muslims will be massacred, more mosques demolished,” says Salman Hussain, a fiery Islamic scholar

The Muslim minority of India could not forget that what happened in Gujarat in 2002 and the Modi’s name to the fore, the foremost concern among Muslims now is to stop the BJP from returning to power in New Delhi at any cost. Muslim social and political organisations as well as prominent Muslims have evolved a one-point agenda: to deny the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) strongman Narendra Modi a shot at becoming India’s prime minister after the 16th General Election that is due in a year. Their tactic: defeat the BJP and its potential allies in every Lok Sabha constituency where the Muslim vote can sway the result. “Narendra Modi is the No. 1 enemy of India’s Muslims,” says Salman Hussain, a fiery Islamic scholar who teaches at one of India’s most influential Islamic seminaries, the 19th-century Darul Uloom Nadwatul, at Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh. “If Modi becomes prime minister, more Muslims will be massacred, more mosques demolished.” While that may be rabble-rousing at its worst, there is no denying that the anti-Modi sentiment among India’s nearly 180 million Muslims has deepened since a cry went up in the BJP last month to name Modi the party’s top prospect for the Lok Sabha election. The BJP is fundamentally an anti-Muslim party and Modi proved that with his role in the massacre of Muslims in Gujarat,” says Arshad Madani, who leads a faction of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind, an influential sociopolitical organisation of clerics. Five months after Modi became chief minister, more than 2,000 Muslims died in February-March 2002 in violence by Hindu zealots of the BJP-RSS after a train fire killed 57 Hindu passengers. “Muslims know that if the BJP comes to power, their troubles will worsen.

The US and European countries and other international forums have showed concern about Modi

In 2005 the U.S. State Department refused him a diplomatic visa to enter the country. The E.U., as a bloc, also blocked him from visiting its member nations

On March 2013, the Wharton India Economic Forum (WIEF), an annual India-centric conference hosted by the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, canceled the keynote address Modi was invited to give later this month, via videoconference. His speech was opposed by several Indian-American professors, who gathered more than 200 signatures to stop the event.



We cannot give platforms to people who have violated so many human rights while being in power,” Ania Loomba, a Penn English professor

It’s not the first time Modi, 62, has encountered friction overseas. In 2005 the U.S. State Department refused him a diplomatic visa to enter the country. The E.U., as a bloc, also blocked him from visiting its member nations. Germany and Britain have now lifted their ban, but the U.S. has yet to revise its policy. “We cannot give platforms to people who have violated so many human rights while being in power,” Ania Loomba, a Penn English professor and one of the petitioners, tells TIME. “It’s shocking that Indian students at Wharton feel that someone who is one of the most controversial figures in India should be invited to celebrate India’s ‘development’ and economic success.” The turn of events didn’t surprise many in India, where Modi has many detractors. Last month he faced protests when he delivered a speech at New Delhi’s prestigious Shri Ram College of Commerce. His efforts to portray himself as secular and progressive, with a focus on “propeople

good governance,” have been questioned by critics, who dismiss it as a public relations exercise.



Students protest outside a Delhi college after Narendra Modi was invited to deliver a lecture. Reuters

Narendra Modi, India's potential next prime minister addressed expatriate Indians in 18 US cities Sunday evening via video conference. But Mr. Modi did not mention why he was making this address by satellite and not in person. The United States denied him a visa in 2005 for his alleged complicity in bloody anti-Muslim violence in his home state of Gujarat in 2002. Ever since, ambiguity has surrounded Modi's ability to travel to the US, one he has not tested again with another application. If Modi were to become prime minister, it would inject discomfort into relations between India and the US. The relationship is now too broad to be deeply damaged, and analysts say Washington will probably wave away any visa barriers. But relations between the two country's leaders will hew more to protocol than personal affection.

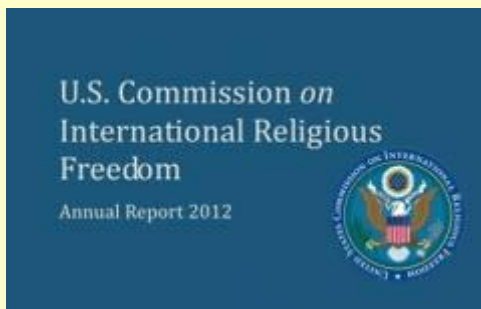
“It's going to be awkward for the US” if he wins, says Sumit Ganguly, a scholar of US-India relations at Indiana University, Bloomington.

“It's going to be awkward for the US” if he wins, says Sumit Ganguly, a scholar of US-India relations at Indiana University, Bloomington. “I am afraid for the first time we are going to be dealing with a prime minister in India where we feel genuinely uneasy, and the Indian diplomats will have a tough time in this country



Sumit Ganguly

In its annual report released last month, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) asked the US government to deny future visas for Modi.



We think that the evidence is sufficient and the concerns are sufficient ... about his role in the very serious violence that took place in Gujarat (**USCIRF**)

“We think that the evidence is sufficient and the concerns are sufficient ... about his role – not directly, but nonetheless in a position of responsibility – in the very serious violence that took place in Gujarat that it just would not be appropriate” to issue Modi a visa, says USCIRF Chair Katrina Lantos Swett.

She acknowledges that the US will be factoring in important security, commercial, and democratic considerations should Modi be elevated by Indian voters. But religious freedom and human rights are values that also need to be considered, she says. “Democratic processes can be used to elect people who are perhaps unworthy at times of the office they hold,” she says.

SOURCE:

1 The Modi card and the Muslim Ace_by *Ajit Sahi* **Tehnika.com**

2 If Narendra Modi wants to lead India, he needs to show contrition for the slaughter of Muslims by The Economist

3 Why Wharton Canceled Narendra Modi’s Speech by Time World

4 If Narendra Modi wins India's elections next year it would inject discomfort into the deepening relationship between India and the US by The Christian Science Monitor.

Anti-Muslim Riots in Central Burma



Anti-Muslim riots in March and April are a bloody reprise of last year's massacre of Rohingya and Kaman Muslims in the western State of Rakhine where, accordingly to official estimates, 110 people were killed and 125,000 people were forced to flee to refugee camps.

Since the summer of 2012 Burma has seen pogroms, massacres, riots of unprecedented scale against religious minorities, the latest are on the 30th April. Few hundreds have been killed and few hundred thousands have been rendered homeless. Much has been talked about how it is a ploy by the hardliners in the army and the post-reform government to stall further reforms. It might be true to a large extent, but the silence of the pro-democracy opposition is intriguing. While many from the “pro-democracy” camp have remained either silent or ambivalent; many others have shown that they actually belong to the ranks of fundamentalist who in the pretext of unfounded “sense of self-victimization” are fomenting a near genocidal situation in the country. The non-sectarian democratic forces within Burma would do a service to the country and to the world, if they can use their hard-earned moral authority to put a stop to the riots from turning into a full blown genocide. It is high time that all of us understand and recognize religious fundamentalism as a social reaction with fascist potentials and it must be unequivocally opposed and confronted.

On 30th April, in a small town called Okkan, 100 km away from Rangoon, a Muslim woman on a bicycle bumped into an 11 year old Buddhist monk who dropped his alms- bowl, damaging it. Soon a Buddhist mob gathered and went on a rampage killing at least one person and destroying several mosques and torching Muslim owned poultry farms and houses.

According to official report at least 43 people were killed and several hundreds injured. 13,000 people, in Meikhtila alone, have been forced into refugee camps

Earlier On 20th of March, a Buddhist woman got into an altercation with the Muslim owner of a gold shop over the price of a gold hair pin in Meikhtila town of Mandalay Division. According to reports, during altercation the Buddhist woman was slapped by the shop owner and her husband thrashed by the staff working in the shop. Soon a mob gathered and started attacking Muslim owned businesses nearly destroying most of them. That very evening four Muslim youth killed a Buddhist monk in an alleged act of revenge.

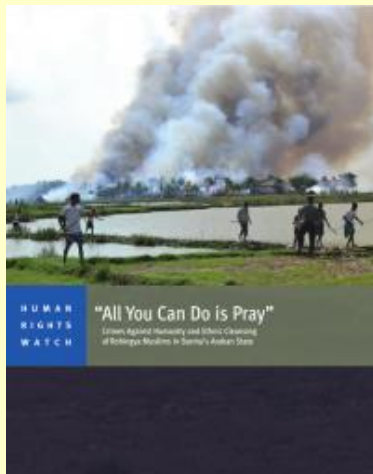


From the late evening of 20th March, much of the Muslim dominated wards of the town were engulfed in flames. In the following 5 days, a Buddhist mob led systematic pogrom against Muslims ensued which spread to 15 other smaller towns resulting in numerous charred bodies, buildings and mosques. According to official report at least 43 people were killed and several hundreds injured. 13,000 people, in Meikhtila alone, have been forced into refugee camps guarded by Para-military troopers. These rounds of anti-Muslim riots in March and April are a bloody reprise of last year's massacre of Rohingya and Kaman Muslims in the western State of Rakhine where, accordingly to official estimates, 110 people were killed and 125,000 people were forced to flee to refugee camps.

Report released on 22nd April, Human Rights Watch alleged that the security forces not only collaborated with Buddhist monks but also actively took part in killing Rohingya and Kaman Muslims in Rakhine State last summer.



In the last week of April, BBC released a video footage of Meikhtila riots in Central Burma where Buddhist monks in saffron robe can be seen leading the murderous mob while police stood by as onlookers. Various reports have also appeared that hints at State complicity, if not direct involvement, in the recent rounds of anti-Muslim riots. In a report released on 22nd April, Human Rights Watch alleged that the security forces not only collaborated with Buddhist monks but also actively took part in killing Rohingya and Kaman Muslims in Rakhine State last summer. Further, the report pointed out that the massacre was well planned. The history of anti-Muslim riots in modern Burma goes back to the colonial period, when, out of economic resentment, anti-Muslim (and largely anti-Indian) riots broke out in Rangoon in 1930 and 1938. However, it was after the coup of 1962 that State-sponsored persecution of Muslim started. General Ne Win and the military junta that replaced him played the religious ultra-nationalist and racist card to manipulate the masses for the entirety of the dictatorial regime. Muslims and other non-Buddhists were barred from the upper echelons of the army also fostered a sense of a Burmese identity strongly linked to Buddhism, which has been the breeding ground for waves of anti-Muslim violence.



The Human Rights Watch report gives detailed accounts of the role played by Buddhist monastic association in the last year's pogrom in Rakhine state. Various reports from the affected areas in this year's riots in Central Burma have detailed the leading role that monks are playing in the riot (which is corroborated by the video released by BCC in late April).

Source:

1 Burma – Lest We Don't See, A Genocide Is In The Making: Bonojit Hussain

Bonojit Hussain is a Delhi – based independent Researcher, and an activists with New Socialist Initiative (NSI) .

Houses Burnt At Joseph Colony



A highly-charged mob of thousands burnt near 100 Christian houses in Badami Bagh area of Lahore on Saturday to “take revenge of the blasphemy” allegedly committed by a Christian two days earlier.

A highly-charged mob of thousands burnt near 100 Christian houses in Badami Bagh area of Lahore on 8th March, Saturday to “take revenge of the blasphemy” allegedly committed by a Christian two days earlier. Eyewitnesses said that the mob broke into the houses, looted them and burnt the remaining belongings on the roads. SSP Operations Suhail Sukhera and the SHO of Badami Bagh were also reportedly injured when the mob pelted a police party with stones. Punjab Law Minister Rana Sanaullah told that he saw no reason for the mob’s violence especially after the person accused of blasphemy had been arrested on Friday. He added that cases have been registered against those responsible for Saturday’s vandalism and that they will be prosecuted. Sanaullah added that all those whose property had been damaged will be compensated within five days. Shahi Imran, who had filed the blasphemy FIR, said that he was not responsible for the incident and he had left the area when the mob arrived to burn the houses. He maintained that the accused should be taught a lesson but the other Christian families should not be harmed. SSP Sukhera, when contacted, denied that the houses were set on fire and said that the police personnel were present in the area. Chief Minister Punjab Shahbaz Sharif also took notice of the incident and set up a five member committee to investigate the matter. He also announced Rs0.2 million as compensation for those who lost their household stuff. On March, a mob of almost 3,000 people forced for their lives, leaving behind their houses and possessions unprotected. The charged group had gathered around Joseph Colony on Noor Road, led by Shafiq Ahmed, who was in search of the accused Savan, alias Bubby. The mob then attacked Savan’s house, setting it on fire and pelting it with stones. Other houses in the locality – home to about 150 Christian families – were also attacked. Many residents, including women and children, hastily fled to save themselves. Savan was arrested and shifted to an undisclosed location.

Repaired houses handed over to Christian families in Joseph Colony

On 17 March Punjab Chief Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif has said that the whole nation has strongly condemned the reprehensible act committed against Christian community in Joseph Colony Badami Bagh and he once again apologizes to Christian brethren for this condemnable incident. He said that deterrent punishment will be awarded to the elements involved in the incident so that no one could dare to indulge in such

inhuman act in future. He said that sixty houses have been handed over to the affected families in Joseph Colony after their repair while reconstruction of the remaining houses will also be completed within next seven days. He



said that financial assistance of five lakh rupees per family has been paid to the affectees. He said that grievances of the Christian brethren will be redressed and collective efforts will be made for building a new Pakistan. Leaders of Christian community were also present. Secretary Communication & Works gave a briefing regarding rehabilitation work in Joseph Colony. Speaking on the occasion, Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif said that Christian community has played a commendable role for the development of Pakistan and promotion of education. He said that Christian brethren have equal rights under law and constitution of Pakistan and their protection is the responsibility of the state.

Source:

1 [Alleged blasphemy: Mob burns scores of Christian homes in Lahore by tribune.com.](#)

2 Government of Punjab

Denial of drinking water and toilet facilities in rural areas directly results in increased atrocities against Dalit women



In September last year, 14-year-old Meena (name changed) from the Sansi Dalit caste, was abducted and gang raped by four Rajput men when she stepped outside her house to perform morning ablutions. They later dumped her outside her house before registering an FIR against her name for committing theft in their house. The charges were condemned by the Sansi community and the girl sent to her relative's place after the medical report confirmed rape.

The incident where this took place, Kalayat in Haryana's Kaithal district is dominated by the Rajputs with Dalits, particularly Sansis constituting 25 per cent of the village population. Denial of basic facilities such as drinking water or absence of toilets here like several other villages requires minor girls like Meena to walk long distances every day. Dalit women also succumb to atrocities by upper caste communities as most of times the source of drinking water is located in the upper caste fields.

This issue explains the underlying inter-linkages between caste dynamics, lack of basic amenities and the patriarchal character of society. Drinking water and sanitation are the most critical issues that impact women's lives corresponding to healthcare facilities, education, shelter, livelihood and security. It is the presence and absence of these indicators that symbolizes the course of development, especially gender inclusive 'development'. In most parts of the country, absence of water and sanitation puts women, especially Dalit women, in a vulnerable situation. Walking several miles to fetch water or for toilet often results in incidents of harassment in rural areas. According to an article by Alexandra Barton on the water project, Indian women in rural regions can walk up to an average of 10 miles a day, carrying up to 15 liters every trip." The Human Development Report, 2006, states "Women in Africa and Asia often carry water on their heads weighing 20 kg, the same as the average U.K. airport luggage allowance." As a society, we are living on a paradox where women continue to invest time and labor but receive the minimum possible returns. The issue gets further complicated when viewed from a marginalized perspective. A report published on Caste Discrimination against Dalits by Center for Human Rights and Global Justice and Human Rights Watch way back in 2007 described that "Dalits are denied equal access to a spectrum of places and services intended for use by the general public, such as police stations, government ration shops, post offices, schools, water facilities and village council offices. As a result of segregation in water facilities, more than 20 per cent of Dalits do not have access to safe drinking water, only ten per cent of Dalit households have access to sanitation (as compared to 27 per cent for non-Dalit households), and the vast majority of Dalits depend on the 'goodwill' of upper-caste community members for access to water from community wells".

About 4,219,829 SC households till today continue to draw tap water from untreated sources. It is shocking to see that there are about 47,736 households in rural areas and 16,375 in urban areas where night soil continues to be removed by humans (Census 2011)



The figures from Census 2011 provide a meaningful insight into current socio-economic scenario of India. Only 43.5 per cent of households have access to tap water and only 32 per cent have water from treated sources while 11.6 per cent continue to draw from untreated sources. Glancing at the Census 2011 data for Scheduled Caste population, it clearly indicates that there has not been much progress in condition of Dalits since 2007. The total population for SC households in rural areas is 32,919,665 of which only 63, 48,622 have access to tap water from a treated source. About 4,219,829 SC households till today continue to draw tap water from untreated sources. As far as sanitation in rural SC households is concerned, only 7,520,933 families have latrine facilities within the premises. It is shocking to see that there are about 47,736 households in rural areas and 16,375 in urban areas where night soil continues to be removed by humans.

Source: Access to dignity barred by Jyotsna Siddharth

DALIT WATCH



1- 4 UP Dalits, missing for a week, found murdered

2-Culture of impunity harms Dalit women

3-12 year Dalit girl raped in Punjab

4-Dalit houses attacked, 4 hurt

5-Pakistan: Dalits demand representation

6-UPR Bangladesh: Dalits need protection

7-Dalits stopped from performing Holi

4 UP Dalits, missing for a week, found murdered

Express news service : Lucknow, Thu May 09 2013

Four Dalit farmers, who were missing since April 30, were found murdered in Asmauli police station area of Sambhal district on Wednesday. The bodies were found buried in two trenches in a field. The bodies bore injury marks caused by sticks. The postmortem report is awaited to ascertain the exact reason of death, said Moradabad Range DIG Amrendra Kumar Sengar. The victims were identified as Vijay Singh (43), his brothers Suraj (35) and Jasveer (30) and their neighbour Manoj (29) — residents of Gammanpura village in Moradabad district bordering Sambhal. The Moradabad police arrested three persons, including a history-sheeter, Anees, of Sambhal district. The police said that bodies were recovered following the interrogation of Anees, who is the prime accused in the case. Others arrested in the case are Afsar and Vijay Singh Jatav, who was released from jail in a criminal case on April 28. The police said that a hunt is on to trace four other associates of Anees who were involved in the crime. On Wednesday, the victims' family members and locals blocked the Moradabad-Delhi highway for more than eight hours demanding compensation. The situation came under control after senior officials reached the spot and conveyed the state government's decision to give ex-gratia of Rs 13 lakh to the kin of each of the deceased. Earlier, on Monday, a three-member team of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes visited the families of the victims, and held meeting with the police and administrative officials of Moradabad and Sambhal. On Wednesday, Commission's chairman P L Punia met the families of the victims. The police said that the murders were a fallout of an incident that took place on April 17 at Gammanpura where the victims and other locals had beaten up Anees after he misbehaved with a widow. Sengar said Anees has 17 criminal cases against him. Station Officer, Pakwada police station, D P Pundheer said that Anees confessed to the crime during questioning and said that he, along with six others, had murdered the farmers to avenge the attack on him.

Source Express News Service

Culture of impunity harms Dalit women



Ms Rashida Manjoo

02/05/13 On the last day of her visit to India, the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Ms Rashida Manjoo, said that Dalit women experience some of the worst forms of discrimination and oppression.

India lost an opportunity when introducing new rape legislation recently. The legislative measures adopted in the wake of last December's brutal gang rape incident in Delhi fail to

address inequality and discrimination issues that are closely interlinked with violence against women. This is one of the messages contained in a statement from the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Rashida Manjoo, who concluded an official mission to India yesterday. She stressed that a legislative and policy approach is insufficient without addressing discrimination and violence and the pervasive culture of impunity in India. Many of her observations are of particular relevance to Dalit women and women from other oppressed and marginalised communities. The Special Rapporteur mentioned caste-based discrimination and violence as some of the numerous manifestations of violence against women and girls in India. Such manifestations are rooted in discrimination and inequality, and are strongly linked to the social and economic situation of women, she said. Ms Manjoo noted that Dalit, Adivasi and minority women exist “at the bottom of the political, economic and social systems, and they experience some of the worst forms of discrimination and oppression - thereby perpetuating their socio-economic vulnerability across generations.” In the concluding part of her statement, the Special Rapporteur summed up a number of recommendations from various UN bodies, one of which expressed grave concerns about the “continuing atrocities perpetrated against Dalit women” and mentioned the “culture of impunity for violations of the rights of Dalit women”. These observations have been welcomed by the Dalit women’s rights platform, AIDMAM, which considers them “an indication of the failure of the Indian Government to protect Dalit women from systematic violence and discrimination”. An AIDMAM statement adds that “the perpetrators and the duty bearers enjoy impunity, and victims of brutal violence continue to be victimised.” Rashida Manjoo travelled to several Indian states during her 10-day visit and met with officials as well as civil society representatives, including a number of Dalit women. Her report from the mission will be presented to the UN Human Rights Council in June 2014.

Source: International Dalit Solidarity Network

12 year Dalit girl raped in Punjab



May 13, 2013,

Moga (Pb): A minor Dalit girl was allegedly abducted and raped by a youth in the Ghalkalan village, 7 km from here, police said.

The 12-year-old victim was recovered within five hours after registration of the case by her parents. However, the accused Mangat Singh managed to escape after seeing the police, leaving the girl on the Moga-Ferozepur road, where he raped her

Dalit houses attacked, 4 hurt



TNN | May 6, 2013

CHANDIGARH: Four people were injured when a Jat community mob attacked dalit houses in Dalit Basti at Mangalpur village in Jind district on Saturday night. Following the incident tension gripped the area and Jind deputy commissioner M L Kaushik and SP Balwant Singh Rana are camping in the village. A special police post has been set up to guard around 1000 dalits living in the village. The incident was triggered by the Jat youths when they caught and beat up one Shamsher Singh, a mentally challenged youth alleging that he is a tractor thief. Police have started the investigation after registering a case of rioting against two dozen persons following a complaint by Shamsher's sister Premo Devi whose house was attacked by the mob. In her complaint, Premo Devi said her brother had strayed into the fields of Gaje Singh and Sonu on Saturday night. "They caught and beat my brother. After thrashing Shamsher, they attacked our house and other houses in the dalit basti," she said. The SP said the situation is under control and the representatives of both the communities have resolved to maintain peace in the village. "We have rounded up four persons and they are being questioned. At the same time police teams have been constituted to nab the other accused," he said.

Source: The Times of India

Pakistan: Dalits demand representation



02/04/13

Participants in a consultation on Dalit political representation have adopted a resolution urging political parties in Pakistan to nominate members of ‘scheduled castes’ for seats in the country’s elected assemblies.

Political parties in Pakistan should include Dalits in their lists of candidates for the upcoming elections to ensure that they are represented in national and provincial assemblies. Otherwise, they will miss out on the Dalit vote, a meeting in Hyderabad of Dalit groups and political and social activists concluded last week. In a unanimous resolution they urged the parties to do the following: nominate at least one Dalit for a seat reserved for minorities; nominate a Dalit woman for a seat reserved for women; allot at least one general seat to a Dalit. Parties that fail to do this should not receive any votes from ‘scheduled castes’ (the official term for Dalits), the resolution said. Zulfiqar Shah, general secretary of the Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network (PDSN), noted that there are several million Dalits in Pakistan. They have a sizeable vote in a number of constituencies, particularly those in the lower part of Sindh province. Mr Shah stressed that the Dalit vote can be decisive and needs to be used wisely. According to Gianchand, a former legislator, the districts of Umerkot, Mirpurkhas and Tharparkar in Sindh have around 50 percent Dalit voters. However, political parties do not recognise their status, and they are not properly represented in elected assemblies. Participants in the consultation described it as ‘ironic’ that the last National Assembly only had one Dalit member, while the Upper House as well as provincial assemblies had none at all. They also agreed that discrimination against Dalits by the political parties is not only against the spirit of equality, but also a violation of international conventions that Pakistan has ratified.

Source-International Dalit Solidarity Network

UPR Bangladesh: Dalits need protection



The UPR session
30/04/13

When Bangladesh was reviewed by the UN's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism on 29 April, concerns were expressed about the human rights situation of the country's minorities, including Dalits.

Vulnerable and marginalised groups in Bangladesh, including Dalits, need more protection from the country's government, a number of states declared during the UPR session of Bangladesh in Geneva. Two states, Slovenia and the Holy See, made specific references to Dalits in their interventions. The Slovenian representative noted that Dalits continue to suffer discrimination and recommended that the Government of Bangladesh address their needs in a national action plan. The Holy See mentioned the need to improve the conditions of vulnerable groups, including Dalits. The idea of a national action plan to eliminate discrimination against Dalits was put forward in the run-up to the UPR by a group of NGOs, including the Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM) and IDSIN. In a joint submission on 'The Human Rights Situation of Dalits in Bangladesh', the NGOs also stressed the importance of introducing legislation to protect Dalits, one of the country's poorest and most marginalised communities. During the UPR session, the Bangladeshi Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dipu Moni, confirmed that an anti-discrimination law is in the making. Such a law is expected to include provisions on caste discrimination. She also noted that special measures had been introduced in some sectors for socially marginalised and vulnerable groups that experience discrimination. Dalit human rights groups in Bangladesh as well as IDSIN acknowledge that the Government of Bangladesh has paid more attention to the Dalit issue in recent years, including allocating funds for their welfare. "However, it has not yet fully recognised the scope of human rights violations based on caste, work and descent in the country, and has not yet taken any comprehensive action to address the situation", BDERM President Mukhul Shikder said. At a side event the process of drafting the anti-discrimination legislation which will be subjected to a national consultation and presented to concerned ministries within 45 days. The non-discrimination provisions of the constitution have not proven to be effective, and there is a need to shift to a different gear". At the side event, which was held immediately after the review, human rights defenders groups committed to stand by the vulnerable groups and noted the particular need to protect women of minority

communities from human rights violations. When the human rights record of Bangladesh was reviewed in February 2009 during the first UPR cycle, no states made specific recommendations on caste discrimination and the protection of Dalits despite civil society inputs on the situation. However, several recommendations on minority protection, poverty eradication, access to justice and public services and other issues were of relevance to Dalits. Since the first review, numerous UN human rights bodies - including the Special Rapporteur on water and sanitation and the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty - have made recommendations on enhanced protection of Dalits and “marginalised and excluded groups” in organised by a group of Bangladeshi and International NGOs on the status of minorities in Bangladesh, the Chair of the country’s Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Mizanur Rahman, stated that the Dalits were the most vulnerable of the marginalised communities today. He added: “The NHRC is involved in Bangladesh.

Source: International Dalit solidarity Network

Dalits stopped from performing Holi



March 28, 2013

R OHTAK: Despite the claims by the Indian Government the discrimination continues as Dalits are stopped from performing pooja and celebrating Holi.

Schedule Caste (SC) families were stopped from performing Holi pooja and assaulted allegedly by the members of upper caste at Jahangirpur village of Jhajjar district of Haryana. Police have started investigation into the matter but no case was registered in this regard even after two days of the incident. The SC families have threatened to leave the village if the accused are not arrested by the police after registering a criminal case against them. A sizable number of people of Schedule Caste today met Jhajjar district police chief, Anil Dhawan, at his office and demanded registration of criminal case against the accused, alleging that they had been living in a state of trauma since the incident while the accused were roaming openly in the village. They also urged deployment of sufficient number of police personnel at the village to avoid any untoward incident. While interacting with media persons here, people from Dalits, said they had been performing Holi pooja separately from the upper caste for several years to avoid any untoward incident during the festival. However, “the people of the upper caste not only misbehaved with women of our families by using derogatory languages but also prevented them from performing Holi pooja. The women and children were also manhandled when they resisted the act,” alleged Brahma Nand. Poonam, a woman, said they would have to leave the village if action was not taken against the accused in this regard.

Success Story



Shanti Devi

Dalit Farmer women became a Politician

Her political journey began when she was elected ward member in the local elections on the Nepali Congress ticket

Her involvement in politics has brought sufferings; People has destroyed her crops and even kidnapped her husband

She suffered discrimination for being a Dalit and was barred from sitting with upper caste people on the committee

Her party CPN (UML) nominated her to the historic Constituent Assembly (CA) from Kapilvastu, acknowledging her social as well as political commitment.

She has demanded a country free of 'untouchability', ownership of land for the landless Dalits

Shanti Devi Chamar's father, a landless farmer, moved to Mumbai, India in the hope of a better future. This is where Shanti Devi was born. Shanti's father worked in a textile mill, but life did not get better. After he got sick, it became hard for the family to make both ends meet and they returned to Kapilvastu. Her father died after a few days after their return, when Shanti Devi was just 14 years old. At her mother's insistence, Shanti Devi went to study at a school in the village. Her uncles disapproved of this, thinking that education would ruin her character. And before she could complete her education, her mother married her off to Patiram Prasad Chamar. Although Shanti Devi was not happy with the marriage, she agreed - mainly for her mother's sake, living in a conservative Madhesi society. Life after marriage was not easy for Shanti Devi. They were poor and her status in her new family was next to nothing because of the little dowry her mother was able to afford. Frustrated and sad, she wrote a letter to her mother asking her to come and see the life she was living. Her mother promised to help her and was able to give her a small amount of money, and in turn Shanti Devi was able to buy some land, build a two-room house and complete her schooling. She started working in the fields and her crops produced good yields despite her having little practical experience at farming. Soon, news spread and people came to see her work and learn from her skills. Although she had started contributing to the family financially, she still had little to say in important matters.

women's empowerment project

Such was the plight of Madhesi Dalit women, one which Shanti Devi wanted to change. The right opportunity knocked at her door in 1998 when a women's empowerment project was launched in her village, and the authorities were looking for educated women to serve as president and secretary. She expressed her interest, raising many eyebrows, and later became the secretary of the women's group, through which she launched women's and children's education programs. This marked the beginning of her social and political journey. She helped to open the first school in her village in 2000, the Shree Saraswati Community School, with support from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), paving the way for another 20 primary schools. She served as treasurer of the School Management Committee. She also was elected member of the District Level School Support Committee. Her political journey began when she was elected ward member in the local elections on the Nepali Congress ticket. Despite her party membership, she suffered discrimination for being a Dalit and was barred from sitting with upper caste people on the committee. Despite raising her voice to bring an end to such discrimination, she was harassed and ultimately resigned from the Nepali Congress to join the CPN (UML) which she thought of as a less biased party. She worked for

several of the UML's sister organizations including the All Nepal Women's Association (Akhil Nepal Mahila Sangh), the Farmer's Association, Oppressed Castes Liberation Society and the Madhesi faction of the Lumbini Zone Coordination Committee. She has also served in various organizations, including the Feminist Dalit Organization (FEDO), Kalika Swawalamban Samajik Kendra, among others.

Political Involvement

Shanti Devi's involvement in politics has brought her some unwanted attention. People have destroyed her crops and even kidnapped her husband. A simple farmer by profession, her husband was intimidated and asked her to give up her political career. However, Shanti Devi was determined and continued her political life despite her husband's wrath. She herself was attacked after she demanded the implementation of a revolutionary land reform program, geared against feudal landlords. She has endured insults and insinuations from her own community for working with male friends during campaigns, who has been called "untouchable" by people of upper castes, accused of trying to seize other people's land and beaten up. Despite all this, she has not stopped her struggle for the rights of the landless Dalits. She approached various governmental and non-governmental organizations in the capacity of a community leader to make demands on behalf of the Dalits, including raising their pay to NPR 160 (100 rupees cash and 60 rupees allowance). Shanti Devi was involved in an uprising, where Dalits challenged the landlords, threatening to stop working if their wages were not increased. Despite several setbacks and disagreement from the landlords, negotiations took place and their wages were fixed to NPR 100, up from NPR 35. The next year, it was increased as per the demand to NPR 160. Shanti Devi has played an active role in organizing Dalit women during the People's Movement of 2005/06. After the concept of inclusive and proportional representation earned credibility, her party nominated her to the historic Constituent Assembly (CA) from Kapilvastu, acknowledging her social as well as political commitment. She feels that the presence of 21 Dalits in the CA is a result of their tough struggle for equality and justice. Belonging to the major committees, the Committee for State Restructuring and Distribution of State Power and the Public Accounts Committee, Shanti has raised several issues within

them for disadvantaged groups including women, Dalits and Madhesi; and pushed for their right to rise to the top echelons of power through special arrangements if needed. She has demanded a country free of ‘untouchability’, ownership of land for the landless Dalits and provisions for inclusive and proportional representation in education, health care and employment. Shanti Devi has also suggested a high-level commission to monitor the implementation of rights and privileges set aside for Dalits. Moreover, she lobbied for nursing and midwife training for Chamar women, who take care of delivering children for minimal pay. In the Committee for State Restructuring and the Distribution of State Power, Shanti, along with other women members, prepared a list of women’s rights, with a separate agenda for Dalit women, Madhesi women and Madhesi Dalit women. These lists have been used for the preparation of the preliminary draft report of the committee. She has also pushed for citizenship to be conferred through the mother and for equal property rights for both sons and daughters. The responsibilities that come with the CA have certainly not been easy to handle but Shanti Devi is doing everything she can, properly balancing her professional and personal life. Her movement will only be successful when people sit and eat with Dalits, when women are respected, when discrimination ends - and when a truly equal society is established.

Socio-economic Conditions of the Dalit Community in Bangladesh

Written by: Farzana Islam (*Nagorik Uddyog*)



Poor economic conditions do not allow Dalit people to live outside their colonies. The majority of Dalits live in houses that are no more than a room. They have been living in these small spaces for many generations.

The Dalit community in Bangladesh is a heterogeneous group with different Professions, language and culture. There is a lack of national data on the number of Dalits and their different professions. In the cities they are mostly employed to perform tasks such as cleaning, removing human waste and sweeping. In nonurban settings Dalits work in different areas e.g. tea plantation, fishery, leather processing and shoe making. The levels of deprivation vary depending on the professions they have. Dalits also have different languages and religions. Besides Bengali they speak Telugu, Hindi and other languages from the sub-continent. They can be Hindu, Christian or Muslim. Dalits in Bangladesh have around 16 sub-caste groups. These differences in language, profession and religion can sometimes be contentious and makes it difficult for Dalits to organize themselves and have a collective voice.

Housing

In Dhaka city, the ‘colonies’ in which Dalits live define their identity in significant ways. These segregated settlements are a symbol of their overall exclusion from society. Due to the mistrust from non-Dalit Bangladeshi society, Dalits often prefer to stay within their community and with their ‘own’ people. Poor economic conditions do not allow Dalit people to live outside their colonies. Even if some families can afford it they are denied accommodation, as non-Dalits are unwilling to rent a house to a Dalit individual or family. The majority of Dalits live in houses that are no more than a room. They have been living in these small spaces for many generations. The size of the families have increased manifold but they have been forced to accommodate themselves in the same small housing. If a Dalit family was provided with housing 40 years ago, they have continued to live in the same small house despite two new generations being added to the family. Consequently 12 to 14 family members are sometime squashed into a tiny space. Often these tiny spaces are used for income generation activities. When family members are out during the day it is converted into a ‘factory’ to make or process food products for the market such as pickles, candles, pappads, or incense sticks.

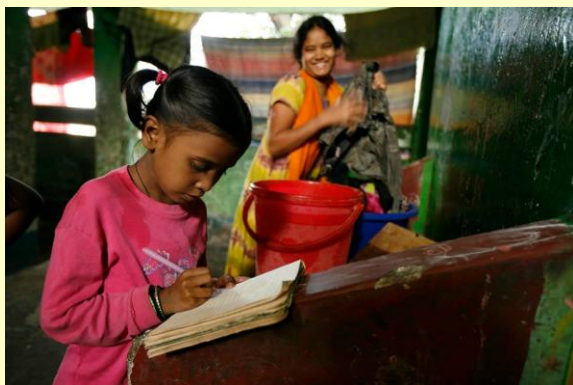
Sanitation and Hygiene



Dalit colonies are often unclean and unhygienic with open sewers, lack of toilets and bathrooms and uncollected garbage blocking water ways. Along with cramped living spaces, the lack of water and electricity compound to make their lives yet more miserable. Sometimes Dalits have to wait for water until late morning. A significant part of a Dalit woman's life is spent in collecting water. This is not only time consuming, it is often the cause of conflict with other households. Private toilets are nonexistent and public ones are very few, overused and filthy. This encourages many to use common open spaces to defecate, adding to public health threats.

Dalit people's meager livestock such as pigs, goats and chickens, cohabit with them in these unhygienic surroundings, further increasing the public health risk.

Education



Illiteracy is widespread among Dalit people. Again it is difficult to provide corroborating evidence as the census so far has not addressed the issue of caste. Exact numbers of Dalits who are illiterate remain unclear but sample studies indicate this is around 96%. The educational prospects for the next generation of Dalits are not looking promising. Dalit parents who were interviewed believe

strongly that their girls and boys are not interested in going to school. Very few Dalit boys and girls have completed their A-levels and even fewer still have actually completed college or a professional course. Financial hardships have been identified as the main reason for children failing to pursue their education. In many cases young boys and girls have to give priority to earning a living rather than attending school. Parents want their children to go to school but are often unable to earn enough, and are therefore forced to ask their children to supplement the household income.



A Dalit mother from the Bede (water gypsies) community explains the situation:

“My children don’t go to school. What can I do? They exhibit their skills with Serpents so that they can earn a few Takas. When will they get the time to learn how to read and write? Only a few Dalit boys and girls are going to school – but they will not get a good job. A boy from our neighbourhood is now studying in a college. If he doesn’t get a good job, other boys will lose interest in education. Education is not for us – especially not for our daughters.”

Education being a particularly expensive commodity for Dalit families, it is important for them to be assured that it will result in employment. With no assurances from the state it is unlikely that Dalit communities will choose education over trying to make a living. This is especially true for Dalit girls who will be married at an early age and for whom parents think education is not a necessity.

Source: Report Dalit women in Bangladesh: Multiple Exclusions, by Bangladesh Dalit and excluded Rights movement (BDERM) & NAGORIK UDDYOG

Urban Dalits in Punjab

Paramjit S. Judge, Professor of Sociology, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar



Paramjit S. Judge

Most of the scholars have studied the rural dalits in India despite the fact that they themselves belong to the cities. It rarely occurs to them that the women that come to their houses in the mornings for doing domestic work invariably belong to dalit castes. In a typical middle class setting women and men may indulge in conversation in which their domestic worker may be mentioned. If it is not regarding their laziness and half-witted minds, the conversation may turn to their affluence. A woman may say, "Now these domestic workers have refrigerators and coloured televisions, scooters, etc". It would also become the basis of their understanding the increasing prosperity of their country. Dalits in the cities and towns form an important section of the Punjab society. Most of the dalit leadership has emerged from them and they are more articulate than their rural counterparts in raising various issues that concern them. From this perspective Dr. Ambedkar's call to all depressed castes to leave their villages and go to the cities seems to have lot of prudence and foresight. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar worked out this strategy on the basis of his views on the village society of India. Contrary to the views and

observations of the British writers who held that the villages in India are self-sufficient communities, Dr. Ambedkar argued that village social structure represented oppression and exploitation of dalits. He reacted to some of the British writings on the village republics in India quite sharply, as it is evident from his following observation: "In this republic there is no place for democracy. There is no room for equality. There is no room for liberty and there is no room for fraternity. The Indian village is very negation of the republic" He never told them to pursue particular occupations. For him going to the cities was more important than doing any particular occupation. This brings Dr. Ambedkar in the galaxy of modern thinkers. Glorifying villages could only spring from medieval minds. Other nationalist leaders like Gandhi thought of reforming the village structure through Sarvodaya, which implies that even they were aware of the problems involved in the villages in the country. For us the important issue is to know whether the dalits responded to the call of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and migrated to the cities. Still another question that comes immediately to our mind is that are the dalits in the cities have been able to change their conditions? In the subsequent discussion we shall be trying to tackle these issues through the examination of two cities, namely Amritsar and Jalandhar. Since such matters are always related with hard facts, we therefore begin by giving some information on the basis of the census of India, 2001. According to this information, the dalits constitute 28.85 per cent of the total population of Punjab, but in the cities and towns of Punjab their percentage is 20.72, which is less than the state average. It becomes quite clear that still most of the dalits in the state live in villages and they have not migrated to the cities as per the call of Dr. Ambedkar. Can we say that they are still dependent on the village landowner for their livelihood? It is only possible if most of them are engaged in agriculture as labourers. Interestingly, even this has not happened. According to the Census, the agricultural labourers constitute 16.4 per cent of the total workers and if we assume that 70 per cent of them belong to the scheduled castes, it becomes quite clear that the proportion of the agricultural labourers among the dalits is quite low. Though the dalits are not engaged in agriculture as daily wage-workers, yet they continue to largely live in the villages that may mean that they still remain under the oppressive power of the upper caste landowners. It seems that there is an assumption that in the cities the dalits are doing much better than their rural counterparts. The survey of Amritsar and Jalandhar cities indicated

certain interesting features that prove to be contrary to the general notion that in the city the dalits are better placed in terms of social status, because there is a sense of anonymity. It was found that there were distinct colonies of the dalits in both the cities. Certain localities, such as Boota Mandi, Bhargo Camp, etc. in Jalandhar and Gowal Mandi, Haripura, etc. in Amritsar were identified with the dalits. In fact, the reality was not confined to this. Each of the localities was having only one caste of the dalits. For example, Boota Mandi that became prominent last year due to Talhan clash mainly consists of the Ad-dharmis. It may be reminded that I am not referring to the migrant population from Bihar and other states. The discussion is confined to the Punjabi dalits. An attempt was made to know the reasons for such a scenario of the urban dalits. It was found that most of them became urban not because they chose to settle in the cities, but because the place where they were living was enveloped by the city. Most of the dalits migrated first to the village, which is located near the city. This migration is not random and adventurous; rather it follows a set pattern. It is based on kinship relations. First the girl belonging to the village that is located close to the city does not go to her husband's village. Her husband comes to live in her village. Since work opportunities are more in the cities, he is able to settle himself. Invariably he starts his work as a casual worker. After some time he brings his parents, brothers and sisters to live with him. In due process of time the dalits of one caste begin to concentrate in one village. With the ever-expanding cities like Amritsar and Jalandhar these villages are covered in the municipal limits. Around these villages develop posh colonies and the upper caste people of the village move out to leave behind the dalits. In this process, the role of cities in improving the conditions of the dalits has to be understood in a different way. We know that the market in the city recognizes only economic inequality and it has nothing to do with caste, colour or creed. Thus a dalit is no different from equals in the market situation. However, in the social situation, that is, the place where he lives in the urban neighbourhood, caste begins to haunt him. Some colonies in the cities have been identified with the dalit castes. In such a situation the caste identity is likely to sustain despite urbanization, because of the very nature of the pattern of migration of the dalits. India has still a long way to go.

Only politics could bring an end to the social discrimination that existed



Two Dalit women directly elected to the constituent Assembly of Nepal. There were no Dalits in the elected parliaments of Nepal before 2008.

In 1990, Nepal's constitution introduced a multi-party democracy and abolished caste-based discrimination, thereby opening the way for the Dalit movement, Dalit women in particular, to organize them and stand against caste-based discrimination and violence. Dalits are the 'lowest' social group in the Hindu caste system. Being a Dalit is also a political category or movement aiming to abolish the system which labels someone as 'untouchable' and keeps them marginalized as a group. Dalits are also fighting for proportional representation, inclusion and affirmative action. Dalit women face a triple dose of discrimination: due to being women, poor and Dalit. As a result, their economic, educational and social opportunities are far lower than for women of other communities. In the current Constituent Assembly (CA), elected in 2008, there are 49 Dalit members (8%). Of the 197 women in the CA, 21 are Dalit women (10.7 %). For the first time in history, two women were elected to the CA through the "first past the post voting system" (FPTP), whereas 19 Dalit women were elected through an electoral quota from the "proportional representation" list system. One of them is Sita Devi Boudel (Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist). She says she never thought that she would one day become a CA member. Sita, who was elected to the CA through FPTP, feels happy about winning the election as someone from a marginalized community, but more than that, she feels a sense of accountability now she is there.

Laxmi feels that although society has been slowly changing for the better, caste-based discrimination has not ended.



Laxmi Maya Pariyar



Sita Devi Boudel

It was caste discrimination and the practice of untouchability by the ‘upper caste’ in the village that pushed another CA member, Laxmi Maya Pariyar (Nepali Congress) toward politics. She entered, believing that only politics could bring an end to the social discrimination that existed. Her grandmother, Ichhamaya Tailor, was also actively involved in politics and inspired her to become involved. Laxmi feels that although society has been slowly changing for the better, caste-based discrimination has not ended. Social ills, like being forced to leave the village and being ostracized from families for marrying into a lower caste, and Dalits being physically attacked for entering temples, are still the bitter realities of Nepali society. In the CA, Dalit women are attempting to make caste-based discrimination a punishable act; and they are pushing an agenda of affirmative action, equal access to education, health and employment, and proportional participation and representation in all state structures. Along with other women, Dalit women are demanding equal property and inheritance rights to men, and citizenship provisions based on equality which, in effect, would allow a mother to pass citizenship to their children. In Nepal, most Dalits are landless and work in other people’s fields in rural areas. Shanti Devi Chamar (the Communist Party of Nepal, UML), a daughter of a landless farmer, has demanded land ownership for Dalits. She has also proposed a high-level commission to monitor the implementation of rights and privileges set aside for Dalits. Moreover, she lobbied for nursing and midwife training for Chamar women, who take care of delivering children for minimal pay. The Dalit women’s movement has pointed out that the mainstream Women’s Movement has been silent on caste-based untouchability and on the equal participation and representation of Dalit women. The Dalit women’s movement argues that the issues raised by the broader Nepali women’s movement are not inclusive and that the movement is driven by one class and caste group. To counter this, Shanti Devi, along with a few other women members, prepared a list of women’s rights, dealing specifically with Dalit women, Madhesi women and Madhesi Dalit women. This agenda has been used to prepare the preliminary draft report of the Committee for State Restructuring and Distribution of State Power.

Has multiparty democracy delivered for the Dalit women?

The story so far is mixed. Dalit women are now represented in the Parliament, they have participated in the constitution drafting process, and caste-based discrimination is being abolished in law. Their level of confidence has risen and

they no longer suffer discrimination in silence. But society and customs are changing more slowly than the law: and even the Dalit CA members need to disguise their names when renting apartments in the capital to avoid discrimination. Development efforts are yet to bear the fruit: Dalits continue to be poorest and the least developed community on the human development index in Nepal.

Many Dalit CA women members are still encouraged by their efforts and hopeful that the new constitution will bring about the change for better; Sita Devi Boudel feels that she has played an important role by having included in concept papers and draft reports of the CA many of the social, economic and political issues raised by women from the Janajati/indigenous, Dalit, Madhesi and Muslim communities. She considers that, if the constitution is prepared on the basis of the draft reports of the CA committees, there will be positive change in the status for women and Dalits.

Source: Has democracy delivered for Dalit women? By *Leena Rikkila Tamang and Deepti Khakurel*



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Understanding Untouchability in Gujarat

This study was undertaken in 1589 villages from 12 districts of Gujarat with 5462 respondents. The basic objectives behind the study was:

1. To refute the belief that untouchability is limited to remote and economically underdeveloped corners of India.
2. To educate indian society about these practices and to initiate an informed national and international debate on how to address the problem.

The study produced an immense amount of data with 98 variables representing untouchability practices directed at the Dalit community from Non Dalits and 99 variables representing practices directed at the Dalit community from within the Dalit community itself.

98 distinct practices were clustered into eight categories:

- a) Water for drinking
- b) Food and beverage
- c) Religion
- d) Touch

- e) Access to public facilities and institutions
- f) Caste based occupations
- g) Prohibition and social sanction
- h) Private sector discrimination

It was a resulting research intended to be a census of untouchability and not a public opinion survey. The questionnaire prepared for the study was of thirty six pages and the villages which were covered in the study were those who were familiar with the work of Navsarjan.

Randomization technique was used to determine in which of the 3084 villages the census would be conducted on both community and household levels involving whole Dalit population within a village. The stratification was based on gender, age and subcaste. 106 enumerators were trained and the survey was done in a period of two years and nine months.

Untouchability practiced by the Non Dalits on Dalits:

Out of the 98 variables, 48 variables were found related to one another in rigorous and systematic way as they fit into a single untouchability index. Within the eight categories, the highest percentages were found as below:

- 1) Discrimination in serving tea for Dalits in Non Dalit houses - 98% of the villages
- 2) Dalits not allowed by Non Dalits to touch worship articles - 97% of the villages
- 3) Dalits discriminated in entering Non Dalit house – 97.3% of the villages
- 4) Dalits discriminated in hiring cooking pots for wedding by the Non Dalits – 87.6% of the villages
- 5) Dalits not allowed to participated in navratri garba in the village by Non Dalits – 85.2% of the villages
- 6) Dalits not allowed to fetch water from a water tap in Non Dalit area – 71.4% of the villages
- 7) Non Dalit mid wife not giving services to Dalit women – 66.2% of the villages
- 8) Private doctor not giving his/her services to Dalits – 10% of the villages

Key highlights in the Index:

- ⤴ 80% of all untouchability practices concerned with religion are present in the index.
- ⤴ 58% of all untouchability practices concerned with food and beverage are

present in the index.

- ⤴ 40% of all untouchability practices concerned with touch are present in the index.
- ⤴ 33% of all untouchability practices concerned with water are present in the index.

Those untouchability practices which are not related with the 48 practices in the index, but are having high percentages are:

1. Inter caste marriages are prohibited between Dalits and Non Dalits – In 98.4% of the villages.
2. A Dalit cannot hire a house in a Non Dalit locality – In 98.1% of the villages.
3. A Dalit cannot touch the pots or utensils of a Non Dalit – In 97.6% of the villages.
4. A Dalit priest cannot provide services to the Non Dalits – In 97.2 % of the villages.
5. A Dalit cannot enter a village temple – in 90% of the villages.

Discrimination related to touch is was highest scoring items outside the index.

Untouchability practiced within Dalits:

Out of the 98 variables, 49 variables were found related to one another in rigorous and systematic way as they fit into a single untouchability index. Within the eight categories, the highest percentages were found as below:

- 1) All Dalit sub castes cannot sit together in community meals in Dalit community – In 88.6% of the villages.
- 2) A lower Dalit sub caste is discriminated in serving water in higher Dalit sub-caste – In 88.% of the villages.
- 3) All Dalits are not invited to attend katha by all Dalits – In 87.4% of the villages.
- 4) All Dalit women would not sing marriage songs in all Dalit weddings – In 76.2% of the villages.
- 5) All Dalits cannot hire cooking pots of all Dalits – In 75.6% of the villages.
- 6) All Dalits will not protest if there is a discrimination against another Dalit in the panchayat - In 64.8% of the villages.

Key Highlights in the index:

- ⤴ 80% of all untouchability practices concerned with religion are present in the index.

- △ 66% of all untouchability practices concerned with water are present in the index.
- △ 56% of all untouchability practices concerned with touch are present in the index.
- △ 52% of all untouchability practices concerned with discrimination in access to public facilities are present in the index.

Practices relating to imposing caste based occupation on a particular Dalit sub caste was seen higher in Untouchability practiced within Dalits.

Those untouchability practices which are not related with the 49 practices in the index, but are having high percentages are:

1. Prohibition of inter caste marriages within Dalits - In 99.1% of the villages.
2. A Higher Dalit sub caste will enforce a Lower Dalit sub caste to disposal of the carcass – In 95.8% of the villages.
3. All Dalit cannot access burial grounds for the Dalits – In 92.4% of the villages.
4. A lower Dalit sub caste would be forced to collect Kafan from the cemetery – In 91.4% of the villages.
5. All Dalits cannot share smoking pipe – In 90.7% of the villages.
6. A lower Dalit sub caste are not served tea or discriminated when they visit higher Dalit sub castes – In 87% of the villages.
7. A lower Dalit sub caste not allowed to sit with higher Dalit sub castes in Katha – In 80% of the villages.
8. A lower Dalit sub caste not provided water on a higher Dalit sub caste's farm – In 78% of the villages.

The entire study does signify the key issues relating to untouchability and where and what are challenges which does not allow to remove various forms of these practices going on for thousands of years. The study also shows the failure of the state to enforce laws and various mechanisms to abolish untouchability and the society's mindset and lack of preparedness to treat each and every one as equals which is a fundamental right guaranteed in the Constitution of India.

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