

QUARTERLY

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MINO-VIEW LAHORE

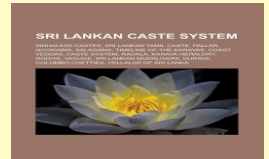
Voice of minorities and oppressed people in South Asian societies

Aam Aadmi Party a Rise of True Democracy in India



A Conspiracy of Silence Against Dalit victims

Taboos Make Discrimination Hard to Fight



Diwali Celebration in Lahore



Bangladesh: Arrest of Human Rights Defender Sends a Chilling Message

Caste Discrimination a Global Evil, European Parliament



Produced by: Sir Ganga Ram Heritage Foundation, Lahore

CONTENTS

• Editorial	i
• Diwali Celebration in Lahore (Pakistan)	1
• Aam Aadmi Party A Rise of True Democracy in India : Title Story (India)	2
• Caste Discrimination a Global Evil, EP (European Union)	4
• Bangladesh: Arrest of Human Right Defender Send a Chilling Message (Bangladesh)	6
• Dalit Watch (South Asia)	8
• Dalit Civil Society Leaders Submitted Memorandum to the President of Council of Minister (Nepal)	11
• Success Story MBBS Student Vandana's First Dalit to Top King George Medical University in 100 Years (India)	13
• Desecration of Dalits Corpse in Badin Condemned (Pakistan)	15
• Taboos Make Discrimination Hard to Fight (Sri Lanka)	16
• A Conspiracy of silence Against Dalit Victims (India)	18
• Quotations	20



EDITORIAL

In south Asia for the last two decade there is an increasing violation of the rights of minorities which has been a matter of concern. The fundamental forces are gaining access to state power and thus influencing the government to damage the interest of minorities. Liberal support which is crucial for the well being of the minorities has become substantially weaker and uncertain. The history of minorities in south Asia is history of increasing discrimination and deprivation. United Nation General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. To be free is not merely to caste off one's chain but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others. UNO, SAARC, EU, and ASEAN should take steps to change the world's attitude towards issues of equality and human justice. In this regard recently the European Parliament (EP) has recognized caste-based discrimination as a human rights violation and adopted a resolution condemning it and urging European Union institutions to address it. 2013 is the year which has challenged the political status-co of Indo-Pak. Firstly election polls in Pakistan entered a new era in which PTI emerging as the

2nd largest party. These results show the power democracy gives to people. The echo of this change reached India, as a result same change was witnessed in India, where (APP) Aam Aadmi Party made a spectacular debut in Delhi with an extra ordinary success. Expert predicts that this swing of change may further spread in the next election of Bangladesh and even in Afghanistan. Amnesty International has adopted Bangladeshi human right defender Adilur Rahman Khan as a prisoner of conscience. Dalit civil society leader submitted memorandum to the president of council of Nepal. In Indian capital National Tribunal of violence against Dalit women hair 45 cases of atrocities mostly against Dalit women from nine states across the country and desecration of Dalit corpse in Badin condemned by civil society organization of Sindh. The present issue of Mino-View is a little effort of SGRHF to share the events and issues of minorities for bringing the spirit of human brotherhood and peace full co-existence in the region. We welcome feedback from our respected readers, invite the scholars to write for Mino-View and join our hands to develop an egalitarian society.

Diwali Celebration in Lahore

Hindus Minority celebrates Diwali in Krishna mandir, Ravi Road Lahore on Sunday night (03-11-2013) with religious zeal and fervor. Mandir was fully decorated with lights and the fire work was also observed for happy Diwali. Diwali is infact a festival of light in Hindu mythology. Diwali celebrations are in two parts i.e. religious and social. The religious ceremony starts from reciting of Ramayan and ends with Hindu rite of ARTI. MR Khalid Ali Addl. Secretary (Shrines) ETPB, Mr Azher Nazir Sulehri DS (ETPB), Mr. Ayaz Zaheer Hashmi Chairman, All Pakistan Interfaith Committee, Islamabad, Mrs. A.Z.Hashmi chairperson APIC (Women)Islamabad, Mr. Munawar Chand,(Chairman, Hindu Welfare Council) Mr. Zubair Ahmed Farooq (Chairman United Religious Affairs & Advocate Supreme Court Pakistan), Mr Chaman Sardar (Chairman, Christian Interfaith Society) Mr Gulab Singh,Mr Ranjit Singh, Mr Akmal Lal (s/o Mahar Lal ex MPA Punjab) and other socio-religious

Mr Ch Riaz Ahmed (Vice Chairman ETPB) in his presidential address threw light on the state policy of Quid-e-Azam for minorities in which they are given full rights and responsibilities as equal citizens of Pakistan

PAKISTAN



personalities were also present there.

Mr Ch Riaz Ahmed (Vice Chairman ETPB) chaired the social ceremony of diwali. Mr Munawar Chand as a host thanked government of Pakistan and the staff of ETPB for making special arrangements on this event. Mr Khalid Ali Additional Secretary (Shrines) ETPB stressed on the need of tolerance in the society which, in fact makes all citizens of Pakistan united and strong.

Mr Ayaz Zaheer Hashmi (APIC,Ibd) spoke in details about the government policy on inter-religious harmony in Pakistan. Mr Ch Riaz Ahmed in his presidential address threw light on the state policy of Quid-e-Azam for minorities in which they are given full rights and responsibilities as equal citizens of Pakistan. At the end, special prayers were offered for peace and prosperity of Pakistan

India

Title Story

Aam Aadmi Party a Rise of True Democracy in India



The assembly elections have yielded their results, but one result will dominate national politics in 2014 – the rise of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the prominence of its underlying message. After being denied a clear-cut victory in Delhi, the BJP will be tempted to say that the issues in the national elections will be different, and that Narendra Modi will be a more important factor in April-May 2014. But that would be underestimating the real impact of the AAP, which goes beyond its immediate performance in Delhi.

There are six things that will now inevitably change and if the big parties fail to take note, they will pay a price – as the BJP nearly did in Delhi. All parties will be impacted by the AAP phenomenon.

First, given the importance of the Delhi vote to the national audience, the clear message coming through is that TINA (there is no alternative) is a much over-rated factor in elections. Till yesterday, you had to think of the Congress and the BJP as the most viable alternatives to each other, both in Delhi and nationally. AAP has proved that a third

option is possible – even if it does not win. In many states, there are third and fourth parties that can now combine with AAP and queer the pitch for the national parties. This means all parties have to rethink their strategies.

Second, Delhi is not just any other state. Its citizens come from all over north India, and how they voted may impact decisions back in their home states. Pollsters will have to figure out how Biharis, UP-ites and Dalits voted in Delhi, since it could point to potential shifts back home too.

Third, AAP is setting the agenda for clean politics. After the results, all parties have to begin wondering whether they can win with the sheer number of criminals in their midst. This is particularly true of the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, which will be decisive for all parties in 2014. All parties will have to, at the very

Delhi election 2013, six things AAP has changed in politics

least, reduce the number of criminals and corrupt candidates the next time. Trying to do this can result in short-term revolts within parties, but some parties may consider this well worth the risk.

Fourth, while AAP is not a national force as yet, and its mobilizing powers may not be as strong in other states as in Delhi, the fact is national elections are won with wafer-thin majorities. In UP, the party winning 30 percent of the vote takes the bulk of the seats. This is the same in almost every state. What this means is that if the AAP is able to garner even 2-5 percent of the popular vote, even if it doesn't win, it will impact the election results.

Example: In Maharashtra, the mere existence of Raj Thackeray's MNS has robbed the Sena-BJP combine of possible victory at least twice. In Andhra, Chiranjeevi's Praja Rajyam (now merged with the Congress) took away a chunk of the vote and enabled YS Rajasekhara Reddy to make a clean sweep in 2009. This time, the Andhra Pradesh vote may be even more unpredictable in view of the Telangana factor. Small players can make a huge difference. This is why AAP could conceivably change the landscape for 2014 even if it does not win a single seat.

Fifth, for the BJP in particular, the current strategy centering on the incompetence of the central government will have to be nuanced and possibly reworked. It will have to take note of the new kid – on the block, and the new issues he is bringing to the fore. It is no longer possible to pit Narendra Modi

against Rahul Gandhi and hope for a walkover. Given the high media savviness of AAP and the likelihood of the party getting more national play on the media in the coming months, one cannot rule out the possibility of the focus shifting to larger issues beyond the Congress' incompetence. In this scenario, Modi's pitch may need altering.

Sixth, the Muslim vote is going to matter to all parties this time – even more than usual. For the last few years now, several Muslim parties have been coming to the forefront – from Assam (AUDF) to Maharashtra (MIM, Welfare Party) to West Bengal (Welfare Party, Social Democratic Party), and Uttar Pradesh (Peace Party). In last year's Jangipur Lok Sabha bypoll, for example, Pranab Mukherjee's son Abhijit barely squeaked through as two Muslim parties cut into his vote. The Welfare Party of India and the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) polled 41,620 and 24,691 votes, while the Congress won by a mere 2,500 votes.

With the AAM in play, it is not inconceivable that new alliances will be formed, for there is now strong evidence that Muslims are tired of voting for Congress and some of the regional parties (Samajwadi) merely to keep the BJP away. In Delhi too, a significant chunk of Muslims may have voted for AAP.

The systemic impact of the Aam Aadmi Party will thus go far beyond what its own immediate prospects indicate. And this is what could prove very important in 2014

By, R Jagannathan, First Post. Politics

Caste Discrimination a global evil, European Parliament

Europe



The European Parliament (EP) has recognized caste-based discrimination as a human rights violation and adopted a resolution condemning it and urging European Union institutions to address it.

The EP consists of 28 member-countries of the EU.

Acknowledging that caste-affected communities are still subjected to 'untouchability practices' in India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, the October 10 resolution stressed the need to combat discrimination based on work and descent, which occurs also in Yemen, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal and Somalia.

In December last, the EP passed a similar resolution, expressing alarm at the persistence of human rights violations against Dalits in India. Last week's resolution recognized the presence of caste-based discrimination globally and pointed out various forms of caste-related violence against Dalits, especially women.

The EP reiterated serious concern over violence against Dalit women and other women from similarly affected communities in societies with caste systems, who often do not report it for fear of threat to their personal safety or of social exclusion.

It was pointed out the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination based on caste, gender and religion, affecting Dalit women and women from minority communities, leading to forced conversions, abductions, forced prostitution, and sexual abuse by dominant castes.

Caste discrimination continues to be widespread and persistent, affecting an estimated 260 million people worldwide, despite the governments of some affected countries are taking steps to provide constitutional and legislative protection, the EP said.

It noted that caste-based discrimination occurred in Diaspora communities, untouchability practices took on modern forms and the affected communities faced

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restricted political participation and serious discrimination in the labor market.

“In a few countries, such as India, mandatory affirmative action has to some extent contributed to the inclusion of Dalits in the public sector, but the lack of protective non-discrimination measures in the labor market and the private sector adds to exclusion and growing inequalities,” it said.

The International Labor Organization estimates that an overwhelming majority of bonded labor victims in South Asia are from the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and that forced and bonded labor is particularly widespread in the agriculture, mining and garment production sectors, which supply products to a number of multinational and European companies.

Source: International Dalit solidarity Network

The International Labor Organization estimates that an overwhelming majority of bonded labor victims in South Asia are from the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes



Bangladesh: Arrest of Human Right Defender Sends a Chilling Message

Amnesty International has adopted Bangladeshi human rights defender Adilur Rahman Khan as a prisoner of conscience

The arrest of a prominent Bangladeshi human rights defender over the weekend is a clear violation of the right to freedom of expression, Amnesty International said.

The organization has adopted Adilur Rahman Khan as a prisoner of conscience following his arrest without a warrant on 10 August. He is being detained solely for peacefully challenging alleged human rights violations by Bangladesh security forces.

“Adilur Rahman Khan’s arrest sends a chilling message to government critics – if you raise concerns about human rights, there will be serious consequences. He must be released immediately and unconditionally,” said Abbas Faiz, Bangladesh researcher at Amnesty International.

“Instead of punishing human rights defenders, the Bangladeshi authorities must address alleged violations by carrying out investigations and holding accountable those responsible.”

BANGLADESH



Adilur Rahman

Adilur Rahman Khan is the secretary of Dhaka-based human rights organization Odhikar. Yesterday detectives searched Odhikar’s office, seizing computers and other equipment.

In recent months Odhikar had been critical of the Bangladeshi security forces’ actions during protests by the opposition group Hefazat-e-Islam on 5 and 6 May this year.

At least 44 people were killed during the protests, most of them after police allegedly used excessive force. Two police officers and a Bangladeshi Border Guard were reportedly killed by the protesters.

At a press briefing on 11 August, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police’s Joint Commissioner Monirul Islam explained the reasons for Khan’s detention: “Odhikar published a motivated report which used the photos of

those who had died in the Hefazat attacks on May 5... This has tarnished the image of the law enforcement agency, government, and, overall, the state”.

Odhikar has reported that as many as 61 people died during the May protests, but says it will not publish the list of victims' names, fearing it would put their relatives at risk. It has instead called on the government to form a commission to carry out an independent and impartial investigation into the incident – a call echoed by Amnesty International and other international human rights organizations.

“Rather than investigating the dozens of deaths reported, the authorities have turned against the messenger, Odhikar,” said Abbas Faiz.

“The government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is letting the security forces implicated in human rights violations off the hook, whilst suppressing those who raise concerns about their conduct.

“This is in clear breach of the right to freedom of expression and makes a mockery of the Bangladeshi government's pledges to other UN member states to uphold human rights.”

Source: Abbas Faiz, Amnesty International's Bangladesh researcher



Abbas Faiz - Bangladesh Researcher of Amnesty International.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

Instead of punishing human rights defenders, the Bangladeshi authorities must address alleged violations by carrying out investigations and holding accountable those responsible

Dalit Watch

Congress eyes Dalit escape velocity

November 7, 2013

UPA has lined up a slew of pro-Dalit measures to be tabled this winter session

The Congress-led UPA, battling two term anti-incumbency, has lined up a slew of measures including crucial bills slated to be tabled this winter session in its bid to win back the Dalit and Scheduled Castes vote. Aware of the Bahujan Samaj Party and Mayawati's hold over the Dalit vote bank, bills targeted at the SC community – namely a legislation for Scheduled Castes and Schedules Tribe Area Sub Plan; re-introducing the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Reservation in Posts and Services) Bill, 2008 (that has since lapsed); strengthening the Prevention of Atrocities against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes act 1989 are on the anvil. Additionally, to bolster its attempt to woo the Dalit voters, the Congress party has set up specially trained three member teams at Panchayat level to reach out to the Dalit community. The revamped SC cell in the Congress is for the first time synergizing its strategies with other departments- the Panchayati Raj cell and the minorities' cell.

It was Congress Vice President Rahul Gandhi at whose behest the party has been galvanized to “get back” the loyal Dalit vote that has since ceded to Mayawati. In fact say

senior party sources, “Rahul Gandhi is very clear that Dalits need to be empowered and he is gearing up for a long term strategy to engage with them.” In fact it was Rahul Gandhi's open wooing of this vote bank when he recently decried Mayawati's leadership saying that she did not let other Dalit leaders grow.

Sources confirmed that the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry has already been circulating the bill to frame into a law the existing policy of Scheduled Castes and Schedules Tribe Area Sub Plan. This will ensure dedicated earmarking of allocations for SCT/ ST welfare and give it legal backing, marking a departure from the lax implementation of the existing policy.

Additionally, the earlier Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Reservation in Posts and Services) Bill, 2008 that has since lapsed, will be reintroduced to ensure that SCs and STs get a prescribed percentage of posts in civil services.

The government intends to also give more teeth to the Prevention of Atrocities against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes act 1989, confirmed sources.

With Rahul Gandhi closely monitoring the efforts focused on Dalit engagement and empowerment, the Congress has put in place three member teams right at the Panchayat level to reach out to every Dalit household informing them of the UPA's social welfare measures and key bill such as the Food and Land bill among other things.

Whether such a move will help Congress to harness for the Dalits “the escape velocity of Jupiter” (to put in Rahul Gandhi’s words) will be evident with 2014 poll result

Source: Business Standard

Congress develops database to help it win Dalit voters and 84 reserved seats

Nov 14, 2013

New Delhi: Congress is employing a multipronged approach to woo Dalit voters ahead of 2014 general elections.

The party has decided to focus mainly on 11 states including Uttar Pradesh that have the most reserved seats, besides identifying the reasons for the party's successive defeats in these segments and picking Scheduled Caste candidates well in advance.

The party has identified the states that have more than three reserved constituencies each, K Raju, head of Congress' Scheduled Castes department told ET. "We are developing a database on what have been the issues in these constituencies, who were the candidates, the factors why the party has not done well and the general moorings in the parliamentary segments. This will help us in selecting better candidates," said Raju, a former bureaucrat who was hand-picked by Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi to head the department that had been nearly defunct.

The database will include constituency-wise details of prospective candidates, electoral pattern over the past three elections, socio-political groups active in the constituency,

electoral issues and reasons for the party's defeats.

In all, there are 84 parliamentary constituencies across the country reserved for Scheduled Castes. Of these, 72 are in the states that the party has decided to concentrate on - Uttar Pradesh (17), Andhra Pradesh (7), Bihar (6), Karnataka (5), Madhya Pradesh (4), Maharashtra (5), West Bengal (10), Odisha (3), Punjab (4), Rajasthan (4) and Tamil Nadu (7).

Congress won just 24 of these 72 seats in 2009, drawing a blank in states including West Bengal and Odisha.

In the crucial Hindi heartland, where it has lost considerable clout over the past five years, it held two reserved seats in Uttar Pradesh, one in Bihar and two in Madhya Pradesh. Apart from early selection of candidates, the party has decided to depute Dalit ministers from the Centre for special rallies to these constituencies. A panel of Dalit ministers and senior Congress leaders - including Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde, Mallikarjuna Kharge - has been drawn up. **Source: The Economic Times**

Dalit vedike to hold demonstration

Karnataka

November 15, 2013

Mysore: The Karnataka Dalit Vedike has alleged that the Union and State governments are neglecting the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

They were more interested in publicizing programmes for Dalits with an eye on the vote bank, office-bearers of the vedike alleged. “We demand that the governments

implement the welfare measures for the deprived sections of society. We will hold a demonstration outside the Deputy Commissioner's to press for our demands such as waiver of loans taken from the Ambedkar Development Corporation and the Department of Tourism, correction of anomalies over promotions of people from the community in State and Central government establishments, and implementation of welfare schemes under the Social Welfare Department," they said.
Source: The Hindu

124 Dalit Complaints, only 1 conviction: NGO

Tamil Nadu

October 9, 2013

Madurai: It took a lot of courage for 124 Dalit women to shed off inhibition and come forward to file police complaints against Caste Hindus for inflicting caste-based atrocities, including sexual abuse and rape. Yet, only one case has ended in conviction, reveals a survey conducted by Evidence, a Madurai-based NGO.

The survey collected samples of criminal cases filed by the Dalit women across 22 districts in the state, between January 2009 and August 2013. "Analysis revealed that a case filed by one Anitha at Pollachi in June 2011 against a Caste Hindu for making sexual advances under the pretext of marriage, has ended up in conviction," said A Kathir, Executive Director of Evidence.

Of the total complaints, FIR was registered in 112 cases, 57 cases are pending in court, 48 are pending for the completion of investigation with police and 11 were dismissed. Out of the 124 cases of atrocities against women including abuse using

derogative caste remarks, sexual remarks, sexual nagging, caste and sexual teasing, physical assault, forced sexual assault, attempt to rape and rape; the accused were arrested in 74 cases and 40 women have received compensation, said Kathir.

Though they made representation for their cases with the DSP, SP, District Collector, State and National Human Rights Commission and the Women Commission, the victims never even got five per cent remedy in the cases, he claimed. "We have selected cases which can be legally intervened. But interaction with them and cross-examination of case histories only show that police didn't take steps to solve them. Instead, in some cases, they acted in connivance with the Caste Hindus and filed counter-FIRs against the victims," said Kathir.

For instance, in the Dalit woman Thulasiammal rape case in the Kinathukadavu police station limit in Pollachi, police deliberately booked a Senthil along with five other Caste Hindus under SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act. "Thulasiammal told us that the Caste Hindu Senthil is her friend who fact tried to save her when the other Caste Hindus raped her. Police falsely included him in the case and they haven't arrested the main accused," said Kathir.

He said, according to the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act, the officer in the rank of DSP has to investigate the case, but in many cases, only the local inspector investigates,
Source: The New Indian Express

Dalit Civil Society Leaders Submitted Memorandum to the President of Council of Minister

Dalit Civil Society Leaders Submitted Memorandum to the President The Government of Nepal has acknowledged through the national and international human rights forums that the Dalit community of Nepal has lagged behind in all social, economic, and political spheres as a result of century-long caste based discrimination and untouchability. The state has made laws and declarations in different times in order to address the cause of Dalit community. In 19 March 2002, the National Dalit Commission was established and declaration of Untouchability Free Nation in 2006 [4 June] by the reinstated parliament after people's movement II paved the path towards restoring the dignity and human rights of Dalits. The article 14 of the Interim Constitution 2007 has guaranteed the Rights against Untouchability as the fundamental rights. The Caste Based Discrimination and Untouchability (Offence and Punishment) Act 2011 endorsed by the Legislative-Parliament made that any practice of discrimination and untouchability at both in private and public places a crime, and punishable according to the law. The government has also established a

NEPAL



Mechanism to end the caste based discrimination and untouchability and promote Dalit rights in 2011 for the practical and effective implementation of all the laws and state commitments. Despite these declarations and legal and constitutional provisions, Dalits are still facing worst form of discrimination on the ground of caste in every sphere of life. Rights have not been realized: the practices in the society have not changed significantly; Dalits are facing abuses and brutal attack while attempting to enjoy their rights and freedom enshrined by the constitution. To take some examples, a couple of inter-caste marriage of Bidur of Nuwakot district faced brutalism by the local people and they were expelled from their village on 28 April 2013. The exile of Mahendra B.K. of Bhairavsthan VDC of Achham district 17 years by the local people from the state with the involvement of Police

The Caste Based Discrimination and Untouchability (Offence and Punishment) Act 2011 endorsed by the Legislative-Parliament made any practices of discrimination and untouchability at both in private and public places a crime, and punishable according to the law.

Dalits are still facing worst form of discrimination on the ground of caste in every sphere of life. Rights have not been realized the practices in the society have not changed significantly

administration is the most recent case of repulsion. The attack and killing of Sete Damai of Dailekh district and Manbire Sunar of Kalikot district are the extreme in its form. The continued abuses and brutal attack over equal rights seekers [Dalit] are due to ineffective implementation of constitutional and legal provisions and prejudice prosecutors and reluctance of the state machinery for protecting the rights Dalits and rampant impunity. The state has been unreceptive and ignorant on this issue; this has drawn our attention and we Dalit Civil Society working for the rights of Dalit are concerned about such negligence of state machinery and impunity. Therefore, on behalf of Dalit community we the Dalit Civil Society strongly appeal to the Government of Nepal to take immediate action against

perpetrators and take special initiative against such crimes of human rights violation, and for this, we put forward the following demand for immediate action: Our Demands: 1. Ensure effective implementation of the Caste Based Discrimination and Untouchability (Offence and Punishment) Act, 2011 by punishing the perpetrators according to the law ensuring justice and appropriate compensation to the victims. Additionally, promulgate Rule of the Act. 2. The Legislative Parliament of Nepal unanimously passed the Caste Based Discrimination and Untouchability (Offence and Punishment) Act on 24 May 2011 [10th

Jestha 2068] by expressing the state commitment to end Caste Based Discrimination and Untouchability and ensure justice and equality to Dalits. Therefore, declare 10th Jestha as the National Day for the Elimination of Caste Based Discrimination and Untouchability and declare it as national holiday and take initiative to celebrate the day by the state itself. 3. Make functional and proactive to the Mechanism to End the Caste Based Discrimination and Untouchability and Promote Dalit Rights formed under the chair of Prime Minister in 2011 for the practical implementation of the declaration of Untouchability Free Nation [21 Jestha 2063] through the effective implementation of related laws and commitments made by the state in this regard. Together with this, declare the period 2070 to 2080 BS as the Decade against Discrimination and Untouchability and make required rules, programmes and adequate budgets for this. 4. Ensure effective implementation of the existing laws, rules and regulations and international human rights instruments ratified by the state. And, take initiative to submit the Principles and Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination Based on Work and Descent, a Comprehensive Legal Framework to Eliminate Caste Discrimination Globally accepted by UN, and also submit the due periodic reports of CERD. 5. Immediately enact Dalit Rights Commission Act to establish the National Dalit Commission as an independent powerful commission.

Source: Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization (NNDSWO)

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Success Story

MBBS Student Vandana's First Dalit to Top King George Medical University in 100 Years

For a medical university that has been in news time and again for alleged discrimination against Dalit students, King George Medical University (KGMU), Lucknow, is all set to award its most prestigious awards to a student belonging to Schedule Caste — for the first time in over 100 years of its history.

Vandana, an MBBS student of SC category of 2008 batch, has topped the university and bagged a total of 17 medals, including the most prestigious Hewett Gold Medal and Chancellor's Gold Medal, apart from two other gold medals for academic excellence.

The medals would be bestowed upon Vandana in the ninth convocation ceremony of the university

The Hewett Gold medal is awarded by the varsity for obtaining highest marks in Final Professional MBBS Part II examination whereas Chancellor's medal is given for obtaining highest aggregate marks in MBBS.



(Dalit students Vandana)

Confirming that Vandana is the first student from SC category to get the top two gold Medals, KGMU Vice-Chancellor Prof DK Gupta said: "In the last 100 years, we saw no student from SC category get an award (in academics)...I am very happy that this student (Vandana) bagged both the gold medals this year."

Vandana maintained that her achievement is more of an individual success, which she owes to her family rather than a story of community struggle and victory.

"I do not really relate to 'Dalit struggle' because I have had the good fortune of getting excellent education and my parents and siblings have been very supportive," Vandana, youngest of the three children of Harish Chandra Ram, a PWD junior engineer, told The Sunday Express.

Even in the past, Vandana has proved herself as a meritorious student with an

INDIA

Vandana has topped the university and bagged a total of 17 medals, including the most prestigious Hewett Gold Medal and Chancellor's Gold

The 24-year-old doctor, who hails from Ballia, said her success would be more meaningful if it becomes an inspiration for girls of her community

outstanding 91 per cent marks in 10th and 89.64 per cent in 12th.

After completing schooling from Lucknow Public School, Vandana got 37th rank in SC category in medical entrance examination which secured her a seat at KGMU.

Ruling out any discrimination by KGMU faculty members, Vandana said her struggles are similar to any other student and she has faced no biases against her in university.



(King George Medical University (KGMU), Lucknow)

The V-C also made Vandana's achievement a case against the allegations that the university teachers discriminate against students of SC category. "Allegations have been made that teachers discriminate against Dalit students in the university but they are false. In our university, education is the only priority," said Gupta.

The 24-year-old doctor, who hails from Ballia, said her success would be more meaningful if it becomes an inspiration for girls of her community.

Vandana believes discrimination against Dalits is prevalent in the society and it can

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be eradicated by providing good quality education to Dalit children.

"Many intelligent children from my community in my village do not get the opportunity to study in good schools or colleges. They have no money and have to work to fulfill their necessities," she said.

After completing her MBBS, she wants to pursue masters in medical science and excel as a medical professional.

Hard work and 'interest' in the subject remains her key to success. "The MBBS course is so vast that it is impossible to mug up the entire syllabus. If we study with interest, only then can we succeed in our field," claimed Vandana, who puts in four to six hours of study every day, and hopes to become a pediatrician one day.

Source: The Indian Express

Desecration of Dalits corpse in Badin condemned

KARACHI: The civil society organizations of Sindh condemned the violence against Dalit (lower cast) families by a mob and desecration of a corpse.

The Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network (PDSN), the Pakistan Institute of Labor Education and Research (PILER) and other civil society organizations condemned the violence by a mob which removed the body of a Dalit (Bheel) from the grave, dragged, desecrated and put it on the road for many hours in a remote village of Pangriyo in the Badin district of Sindh.

The Dalit families, while protesting the incident, claimed they had been burying their dead in the graveyard of Haji Faqeer Oliya in the Pangriyo town for decades and there was a separate space for them in the graveyard. They said they had buried Bhooro Bheel, who died in a traffic accident the other day, in the graveyard. Some mischievous religious elements of the town objected to the burial of a non-Muslim in the graveyard but with the intervention of the local civil society and notables they managed to bury the youth's body in the said graveyard.

The Dalit families said the local

PAKISTAN



Muslim religious leaders tried to instigate others by announcing on mosque loudspeakers that a non-Muslim had been buried in the graveyard of Muslims. These elements invited students of various madrassas from nearby towns of Jhuddo and Matli, who were armed with sophisticated weapons.

The families said they later led a mob to the graveyard and dug out the buried body and dragged it on to the roadside. The body remained there for over eight hours. Later, they buried the corpse at another place.

In a statement, PDSN, PILER and other civil society and human rights organizations and activists condemned the acts of discrimination and violence against non-Muslims by religious elements and exploitation of religious sentiments against the followers of other religions. They expressed concern over the increasing violence in the name of religion in Sindh, which was famous for its secular nature and Sufi following.

Source: Daily Times

The Dalit families claimed they had been burying their dead in the graveyard of Haji Faqeer Oliya in the Pangriyo town for decades and there was a separate space for them in the graveyard.

The Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network (PDSN), the Pakistan Institute of Labor Education and Research (PILER) and other civil society organizations condemned the violence by a mob which removed the body of a Dalit (Bheel) from the grave

Taboos Make Discrimination Hard to Fight

Sri Lanka has three parallel caste systems, one for each of the country's three population groups: the majority of Sinhalese; the Sri Lankan Tamils to the north and east; and the Indian Tamils who are mainly found in the tea plantations and at the bottom of the social hierarchy in towns.

Most people will know to which caste they belong, but the issue is nevertheless rarely discussed publicly and is widely regarded as taboo. There is a number of reasons for this: caste-based discrimination is mild as compared to other countries in South Asia and to a large extent detached from religion; there are few examples of untouchability

left; and during decades of civil war there has been

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a rise in ethnic nationalism among both the Tamils and the Sinhalese.

There is now a stronger focus on what unites the various ethnic groups than on what divides them.

Even though caste is now often regarded as an outdated concept – particularly among the young generation – and as a threat to social cohesion, all caste systems still practice various kinds of discrimination. Some underprivileged castes

Sri Lanka



are denied access to religious sites and buildings while others experience discrimination based on descent and work. Certain unclean jobs such as cleaning of toilets and garbage collection are inherited through generations.

The continued existence of caste-based discrimination affects about 20% to 30% of the population. This is highlighted in a new survey by Sri Lankan researchers for the Institute of Dalit Studies (IIDS) in association with the International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN). The study is one of the few recent examples

of academic research into the topic and describes how caste discrimination has become “underground” and “a hidden entity, not openly addressed by society”. The reluctance to deal with the issue means that the government has refused to institute quota systems or any other attempts to favor the underprivileged caste groups. The lack of focus has at the same time made it difficult for the victims of discrimination to organize themselves. This is contrary to the situation

Dalit – “broken people” – is increasingly used to describe members of lower castes. But this word is rarely used in Sri Lanka some lower caste communities fear that the concept of Dalit may lead to further marginalization

in India and Nepal which both have strong movements of Dalits or “lower castes”. While policies from abroad can not necessarily be imported, the survey concludes that “caste-blind policies are not the best way to deal with the continuing and emerging aspects of caste-based discrimination”.

Sri Lanka's Dalits are part of a regional term

Dalit – “broken people” – is increasingly used to describe members of “lower castes”.

But this word is rarely used in Sri Lanka. Some “lower caste” communities fear that the concept of Dalit may lead to further marginalization.

This fact sheet uses the term “lower caste” in inverted commas as the International Dalit Solidarity Network rejects the concept of ranking people according to castes.

Over the last couple of decades, Sri Lanka has experienced a number of transitions that have contributed to the struggle against caste-based discrimination. In the war-affected Jaffna society, the Tamil Tigers have banned discrimination based on caste. War and the accompanying emigration and social upheavals have further loosened the grip that “upper caste” VellÇlars traditionally had on “lower caste” Panchamars. New organizations have sprung up to fight various discriminatory practices, even though some argue that the Tigers’ reluctance to discuss caste issues might have

silenced a more thorough struggle against the inherited inequalities and discrimination.

In the tea plantations, urbanization and the youths’ search for new opportunities in the city have created the so-called Colombo

Boys: they are young people, working and studying in the capital, who reject the old caste traditions

and often bring this new thinking back to the plantations during holidays.

Influence from political movements has

in some cases allowed “lower castes” among the Sinhalese in

even remote villages to demand

further rights from the “upper castes”;

national legislation has in some instances helped

members of the “lower castes” to secure land rights. The ability to work overseas – most often as housemaids in the Middle East – has provided alternatives to social marginalization, even though these jobs often come with their own problems and injustices.

Source: International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN)

Over the last couple of decades, Sri Lanka has experienced a number of transitions that have contributed to the struggle against caste-based discrimination. In the war-affected Jaffna society, the Tamil Tigers have banned discrimination based on caste. War and the accompanying emigration and social upheavals have further loosened the grip that “upper caste” Vell Çlars traditionally had on “lower caste”

A conspiracy of silence against Dalit victims

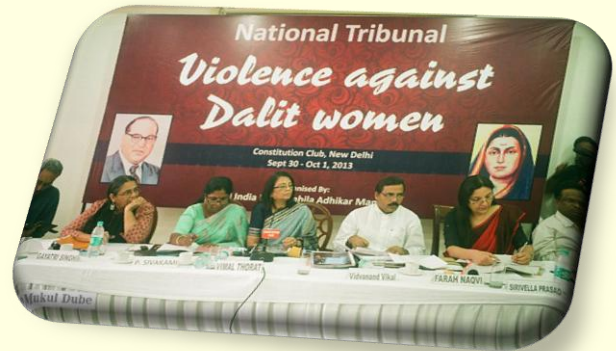
India

Cases deposed at National Tribunal reveal new forms of discrimination against SCs and STs

In Gujarat's Mehsana district, Dalits cannot sell milk to cooperatives as it comes from 'Dalit' cows; in Rajasthan's Ajmer, a Dalit woman is branded a witch, beaten and ostracized from the village; in Orissa's Kandhamal, a Dalit girl was trafficked for sex and in Haryana, minor Dalit girls are gang raped every other day by dominant or upper caste men.

Each time these victims of caste atrocities tried to register a complaint, they were threatened, coerced and counter cases were slapped against not only them but also civil society organizations and lawyers working with them. Medical reports of rape survivors were routinely fudged and the police refused to register appropriate FIRs. The violence committed on Dalit women's bodies was gruesome, to say the least. These facts came to light when victims of 45 such

We have to say loudly and without shame that our police, institutions and administration are casteist. If you are casteist, keep your poison to yourself. Do not poison your profession with it. Jury member Farah Naqvi, National Advisory Council said.



cases, mostly Dalit women from nine States across the country deposed before an eight-member jury of a National tribunal over two days in the Capital.

After listening to the cases, jury member Farah Naqvi, National Advisory Council said these stories were a wakeup call. "I would be terrified to fight the battles these women have taken up. Let's not tiptoe around this or try to be polite; we are a casteist society, deeply embedded in caste, class and community structures. We

have to say loudly and without shame that our police, institutions and administration are casteist. If you are casteist, keep your poison to yourself. Do not poison your profession with it. The bottom line has to be accountability and we need to first fix it. Then begins the longer battle of ridding our

society of casteism,” she said. another jury member, spoke about the conspiracy of silence that officials, medical personnel,



jury member Farah Naqvi

public prosecutors practiced. He said their combined callousness and nexus marginalized and pushed all these victims to the periphery.

In the context of the discourse around rape in the country, he said it was important to take cognizance of the fact that violence against Dalit women was of a ‘special’ kind.

There is wanton negligence of officials at all levels— right from constabulary to superintendent— and there has been a failure of proper implementation the Scheduled of Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, said Asha Kowtal of All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch.



Jury members

The SC/ST Act should undergo a change to take into account new forms of discrimination that are coming up: in NREGA, health facilities, contracts, tenders and land distribution. Dalit Christians in Kandhamal are unable to take recourse to the Act and they must be brought within its ambit. National and State human rights institutions are either insensitive or don’t have resources to take up these cases,” said Henri, adding that the law proceeds as if the victim does not exist.

“There needs to be proper rehabilitation and relocation of victims in halfway homes.”

P. Sivakami, writer and activist from Tamil Nadu, pointed out that most victims were vulnerable in deep-rooted poverty and landlessness and said they should be socially and economically empowered to be able to fight against these atrocities.

“The landless are meek victims and the landed also suffer from psychological barriers which make them feel superior to the landless. How are we going to reform them?” she asked.

The tribunal was organised by AIDMAM. Other jury members were advocate Vrinda Grover, co-founder of Human Rights Law Network Gayatri Singh, Prof Vimal Thorat, general secretary NCDHR Srivella Prasad and Vidyanand Vakil, chairperson Bihar State Commission for SCs.

Source: The Hindu

Each time these victims of caste atrocities tried to register a complaint, they were threatened, coerced and counter cases were slapped against not only them but also civil society organizations and lawyers working with them

Quotation

Beverly Nichols says about Baba Sahib Ambedkar

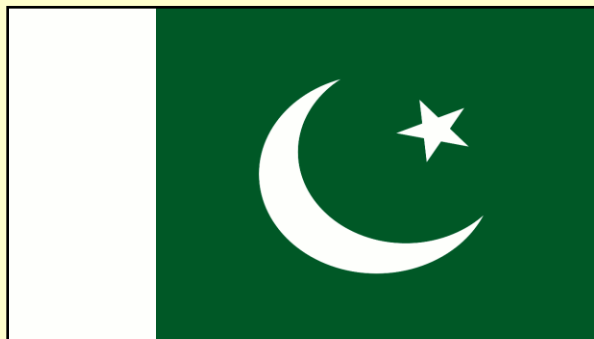
“He, Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar is one of the best hated men India.” Because Dr. Ambedkar, in the eyes of most of the 180 million caste Hindus, is “Untouchables”. A person to bring pollution if his Mayfair dinner-jacket should happen to brush against their dhotis. A creature from whose touch, the extreme orthodox must fly as though he were a leper, a monster whose slightest contact compels them to precipitate themselves into the nearest bath-tub to soap and pray, and pray and soap, and soap and pray, so that the filth of Dr. Ambedkar – (M. A. London) – the shame of Dr. Ambedkar – (high honors at Columbia University) – the plague and scourge of Dr. Ambedkar – (special distinction at Heidelberg) – should be washed for ever from their immaculate and immortal souls.”

“Verdict on India” by Beverley Nichols,

DR Baba Sahib Ambedkar writes about his experience of untouchabilities

“I am in Baroda since a long time and still no permanent arrangements for my accommodation have been made. In the office, the peon throws the file on the table. When it is time to take back the files he tries to pick up the files from such a long distance that the files fall down on the ground. When I feel thirsty, I am not given water to drink, because there is no arrangement for given water to untouchables in the office. It is even said that I should bring my water from home because if I touch the water in the office it will become impure. How can I possibly stay here in such difficult circumstances, and how can I serve the state?”

**Letter (1917) as Military Secretary to
Maharaja Gaikwad, Baroda State,
India (Page 1**



We Remind the Nation

The importance Pakistani nation gives to its minorities can be measured by public announcement of the founder of the nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, which he made just three days before the declaration of the partition of India. He said in his historical speech delivered in parliament on September 11, 1947 that: There would be complete freedom to the minorities in Pakistan for spending their lives according to their faith and life style. They will be absolutely free to go to their temple, churches, and other worship places for performing their religious practices.

It was not just the word of ordinary assurance after the formation of Pakistan when a three Member committee had been constituted under convener ship of Syed Ameer Hussain Qudwai, for designing the national flag of newly born nations, the committee followed Quaid's approach towards the minorities in the region by considering minorities as essential part of the nation, our First national assembly approved the proposed national flag, where, color white was suggested as the symbols of minorities. By adopting this two colored flag we gave message to the whole international community that minorities are essential section of Pakistani nation. Although minorities at large in Pakistan are satisfied, as they themselves and the people outside the country recognized this fact. Now when election campaign is going to stand, Sir Ganga Ram Heritage foundation remind the nation Particularly all political parties that chalking their election program they should keep in mind Quaid's and people's commitment with our friendly and patriotic minorities as Pakistani Muslim majority is religiously and morally bound to protect the interests and right of the minorities of the country.

**SIR GANGA RAM
HERITAGE FOUNDATION
LAHORE**