

QUARTERLY

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Voice of minorities and oppressed people in South Asian societies

Dalits 25 and 9 Percent of Muslims Voted for BJB



Guidelines to Protect Minorities in Pakistan

They say We're Dirty



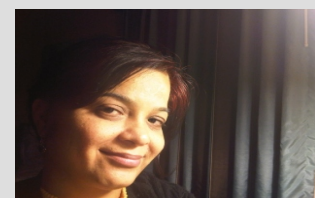
Health and Safety of Scavenger's in Dhaka City



Out of School Children, South Asia Regional Study



Nepali Dalit women Won Business For Peace Award



Violence Against Indian Dalit Women

By, Manjula Pradeep

Produced by: Sir Ganga Ram Heritage Foundation, Lahore

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EDITORIAL

South Asia is a land of deprived peoples. Poverty, Illiteracy, Inflation and lack of basic health facilities are more or less common problems of the region. But considering the social condition of the societies, Scenario is worse for the children and women who are most vulnerable and their miseries will enhance from triple to quadruple through caste system with continues trend of social discrimination which actually prevailed in the society. For the last one year South Asian region had gone through the electoral process and new governments formed especially in Pakistan and India. Recently in India Congress faced a humiliated defeat and BJP has emerged as single majority party. It was witnessed through the article published in New York Times that BJP got success not only by the help of new voters, they have also got the support of Muslim minority votes which is actually more than previous election of 2009. But notable thing is that 25 percent of lower caste dalits voted for BJP. Here an important question will arise that will this change help to stop discrimination and work for the social uplift of oppressed and downtrodden classes of the societies? Unfortunately current scenario presents a very dark picture. Some important issues are highlighted in this issue of Mino-View. In Human Right Watch report "They Say We're Dirty" examines that Discrimination remains a major factor affecting access to education for children from marginalized communities, including Dalits, tribal groups, and Muslims in India. Already vulnerable because of socio-economic challenges, these children need special attention and encouragement to remain in school. Another report by UNICEF and UNESCO "Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children, South Asia Regional Study India" highlighted that in India, school exclusion is considerably more prevalent among Muslim children, and among older children from socially disadvantaged groups. The average rate of exclusion for primary school-age children from Scheduled Castes is 5.6 per cent and Scheduled Tribes 5.3 per cent compared to the national average of 3.6 per cent. Girls from Scheduled Castes have the highest rates of exclusion at 6.1 per cent. Occupational health and safety of manual scavenger's in Dhaka, highlights the health problems of this most humiliated discriminated practice. Guidelines to protect Minorities in Pakistan. Nepali Dalit women Kesha Pariyar Won Business for Peace Award and Dilemma of Dalit Movement in Nepal is also included in this current issue. Miss Manjula Pradeep, NAVASARJAN, Ahmedabad, Gujarat-India is kind enough to send her Article *violence against dalit women* for the magazine. 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

EDITOR

Guidelines to protect Minorities in Pakistan



Under Article 20 of the Constitution of Pakistan every citizen, and this includes Hindus, Christians ‘shall have the right to profess, practice and propagate his religion’ and ‘every religious denomination and every sect thereof shall have the right to establish, maintain and manage its religious institutions

Though the entire nation is victim of the rising tide of religious extremism in Pakistan the worst sufferers are the minorities. Their places of worship are being ransacked; their men are being lynched on streets and their women converted and married.

Not that there is not enough of law on the country's statute book for their protection the problem is with enforcement of these laws. Under Article 20 of the Constitution of Pakistan every citizen, and this includes Hindus, Christians ‘shall have the right to profess, practice and propagate his religion’ and ‘every religious denomination and every sect thereof shall have the right to establish, maintain and manage its religious institutions.’ And no person, and this includes members of all communities including minorities, shall be required to receive religious instruction not related to his religion, says Article 22. As to who shall be held guilty of blasphemy, this includes members of all religions

including Muslims under Section 252 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC). So if desecration of mosques is blasphemy under the law so is the case if temples and churches are ransacked or burnt down. But not much is in evidence to suggest that the minorities in Pakistan receive equal protection granted by the law. In fact of late attacks on them and their places of worship have increased. In the last two months six incidents of desecration of temples took place in Sindh alone. In Punjab churches are more frequent victims of sacrilege. And the authorities don't go much beyond issuing condemnatory statements; the action part is conspicuously missing. How ironic it is that entire Pakistan



was in ferment, blaming Indian government of connivance in the demolition of Babri Masjid but when as minorities' places of worship have come under attack here there is a deafening silence. Things are about to change in the wake of telling observations made and directions given by Chief Justice Tassaduq Hussain Jilani as the three-member bench of the Supreme Court hears suo motto case relating to the bomb attack last year on All Saints Church in Peshawar in which about 80 lives were lost. 'We believe that the Constitution has set goals, pledges and commitments that the nation has vowed to live by, and to achieve these dreams we may develop guidelines for the protection of rights of minorities', he observed. For that the court envisages framing a set of guidelines for the law

enforcement agencies whose performance in this respect has been quite disappointing. These guidelines will be indicated by a team of three legal experts – former attorney general Muneer A Malik, Khawaja Haris and Hassan Aurangzeb – who have been appointed as amice curiae by the court.

The court will also entertain relevant proposals and suggestions from representatives of minorities. Strangely, if not intentionally, the cases of attacks on minorities' places of worship are registered under relevant legal provisions. For instance, when the court asked Sindh government law officer if cases of attacks on temples were registered under blasphemy laws he replied in negative insisting the incidents didn't attract such laws – hearing the court's comment he didn't

The court also asked the Punjab government law officer to report on the non-registration of Christian marriages.

know what the law is. The Sindh police was asked to come back with report showing what action had been taken so far against the offenders and under what law. The court also asked the Punjab government law officer to report on the non-registration of Christian marriages. One may put up with the discomforting thought that given religious and sectarian extremism now rampant in Pakistan the minorities get the raw deal.

That the authorities also become part of it as seems to be the case it's unacceptable.

Perhaps, the concerned officials are not fully conversant with relevant legal provisions. Whatever the reason or excuse for the lethargic application of law, which is there on the statute book to stop discriminatory treatment of minorities hopefully the envisaged guidelines are expected to be of great help.



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Source: Business Recorder

Dalits 25 and 9 Percent of Muslims Voted for BJP

Data from the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, a research institute, which drew upon the Lokniti poll, showed that more than half of upper-caste Hindu voters in India chose the B.J.P. The party also pulled in about a quarter of the votes from the Dalit, the lowest of the low castes, and garnered the largest segment of votes from Scheduled Tribes, according to Mr. Karandikar.

Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party's sweeping success in this year's parliamentary elections has stunned most political observers, who have scrambled to explain it since the results were announced on May 16. Pundits have cited the poor track record of the Indian National Congress-led United Progressive Alliance, which was in power for the last 10 years, and a "Modi wave," for lack of a better phrase, in interpreting the landslide victory that gave the B.J.P. 282 seats in the lower house of Parliament, well above the 272 needed for a majority.

Poll results show that about 90 percent of new voters in the age group of 18 to 23 years voted for B.J.P.," Mr. Bajaj said.

To decode the victory and the "Modi wave," India Ink spoke to three statisticians who followed the elections closely. They proposed four key trends: the youth vote, the Muslim vote, the anti-incumbency vote and



the Uttar Pradesh state vote. They also explained the disproportionate vote share of the B.J.P. compared to the seats it captured.

"Everything about this election was new," said V. K. Bajaj, the chief executive at Today's Chanakya, the only polling firm to predict accurately the magnitude of B.J.P.'s win. If it wasn't, no party would have crossed the 272 mark.

The youth vote: By all accounts, new voters were swept away by Mr. Modi. "Our exit poll results show that about 90 percent of new voters in the age group of 18 to 23 years voted for B.J.P.," Mr. Bajaj said. What was equally interesting, Mr. Bajaj pointed out, was that nearly half of

those voters said they would have considered other options if Mr. Modi had not been the B.J.P.'s prime ministerial candidate. According to Karthik Shashidhar, a data specialist who writes for Mint newspaper, the B.J.P. did better in states where the youth population was higher. In those states, there is a correlation between the youth population, those aged between 18 and 35, and the proportion of seats won by the B.J.P.-led National Democratic Alliance, he said.

The Muslim vote: With the announcement of Mr. Modi as the prime ministerial candidate for the B.J.P., questions emerged about the likely response of the Muslim

In 2014, preliminary estimates peg the Congress party's vote share among Muslims at 43 percent. But at the same time, the B.J.P. share of the Muslim vote edged up to 9 percent.

electorate. Mr. Modi was the chief minister in Gujarat when religious riots broke out there in 2002. More than 1,000 people died, mostly Muslims, and Mr. Modi has been criticized for his handling of the violence. Since then, Mr. Modi has often been portrayed as a polarizing and divisive figure, one against whom Muslims might vote en bloc. But the experts agreed that the Muslim vote was divided in this election, and that it was unclear whether Muslims had voted against the B.J.P., which has Hindu nationalist roots, or against Mr. Modi himself. "If the Muslim vote in Uttar Pradesh was one bloc, then the B.J.P. would not have done as well as they have done now," Mr. Shashidhar said. Rajeeva Karandikar, a statistician who contributed to the CNN-IBN/Lokniti exit poll, said that in 2009, the Congress party garnered 36 percent of the vote among Muslims, while the B.J.P. had 3 percent.

In 2014, preliminary estimates peg the Congress party's vote share among Muslims at 43 percent. But at the same time, the B.J.P. share of the Muslim vote edged up to 9 percent. "It is clear that Congress has gained Muslim votes," Mr. Karandikar said, "but so has the B.J.P."

Mr. Bajaj said that the B.J.P. had gained votes among all communities, including the Muslim community, of which a small section voted for Mr. Modi. This mixed vote among Muslims helped the B.J.P., Mr. Bajaj said.

The anti-incumbency vote: In a country where the Indian National Congress has been in power for most of the nations

B.J.P. had gained votes among all communities, including the Muslim community, of which a small section voted for Mr. Modi. This mixed vote among Muslims helped the B.J.P.

history and has played a key role in India's struggle for freedom, the Congress party's tally of 44 seats came as a shock – it was the party's worst showing ever.

Some analysts have said that the numbers do not indicate that a desire for change was what spurred a record voter turnout of 66 percent. Mr. Bajaj argued that dissatisfaction with the incumbent government did, however, play a significant role in how people voted.

There is no way to measure how much an anti-incumbency mood influenced voters, he said, "but we cannot completely rule that out as a factor leading to high voter turnout."

Mr. Shashidhar, who performed a preliminary analysis of 140 constituencies where there was a "direct fight" between Congress and the B.J.P. in 2009, found that back then the B.J.P. had won 66 and Congress 74; making it "an even contest," he said.

In 2014, however, in the 110 constituencies in which there was a direct fight between the two main parties, the B.J.P. won 100 while Congress won just 10.

"Even in the seats that Congress won, it had fielded high-profile candidates like Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, Kamal Nath, Jyotiraditya Scindia," Mr. Shashidhar said.

Mr. Bajaj said that the anti-incumbency sentiment was at work at both the state and national levels. "In states where the Congress was in power at the state level like Maharashtra, Assam and Himachal Pradesh, there was a double anti-incumbency against Congress," he said. "People were unhappy with the central and the state government and that reflected in their choice in the national election."

However, in B.J.P.-governed states, like Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, there was a pro-incumbency sentiment, Mr. Bajaj said

"Some analysts have said that the numbers do not indicate that a desire for change was what spurred a record voter turnout of 66 percent. Mr. Bajaj argued that dissatisfaction with the incumbent government did, however, plays a significant role in how people vote"

The U.P.A. basically handed the victory to the B.J.P." said

Mr. Shashidhar, referring to the United Progressive Alliance, in his reading of the Congress Party's dismal performance.

The Uttar Pradesh vote: The northern state of Uttar Pradesh, or U.P., is the fulcrum for national elections. It sent 80 representatives to the lower house of Parliament, more than any other state.

The B.J.P.'s focus on Uttar Pradesh paid off not only because of the sheer number of seats but also because of the disproportionate gains they made there, thanks to the presence of big regional players, the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party, in addition to the two main national parties.

A close contest between four parties meant that votes were divided in such a way that the B.J.P. didn't need to gain a majority of votes to win a seat, said Mr. Shashidhar. It just needed to get more votes than the competition.

"In U.P., because it is a four-cornered contest, 40 percent of votes gives you 90 percent seats," Mr. Shashidhar said. "There are seats in U.P. where they managed to win with more than half the votes, but still there were a number of seats where they just scraped through."

However, the story of Uttar Pradesh has been a hard one even for the experts to explain.

"In all the work that I have done in India and abroad, U.P. has been the toughest one to crack," Mr. Bajaj said, citing the caste factor, the four-way contest and the divisions of religion and region in the vast state.

But he maintained that the B.J.P. had increased its support base across different communities, transcending caste and religious boundaries.

Data from the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, a research institute, which drew upon the Lokniti poll, showed that more than half of upper-caste Hindu voters in India chose the B.J.P. The party also pulled in about a quarter of the votes from the Dalit, the lowest of the low castes, and garnered the largest segment of votes from Scheduled Tribes, according to Mr. Karandikar.

Other important trends: A lot of debate has centered on how B.J.P. got only 31 percent of the vote share but won about 52 percent of the seats. That can be easily explained, Mr. Bajaj said. India follows the first-past-the-post system, which means that the winning candidate in any constituency does not have to win a majority of the votes; he or she only has to win more than the others. Mr. Karandikar highlighted the better regional presence of B.J.P. as a positive for the party.

The B.J.P. has a strong presence in the north and west but is

traditionally weak in the south and east. However, it is making inroads in places where it is not traditionally strong, like in Kerala, where the party picked up 11 percent of the vote, and in West Bengal, where it got 17 percent.

Mr. Bajaj also underscored B.J.P.'s increasing sway in rural areas, where voters in the past have favored the Congress party because it has implemented large-scale public works programs to benefit the rural poor.

The B.J.P. won a larger proportion of the rural votes than the Congress party did in this year's elections. In fact, the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies estimated the B.J.P.'s urban and rural vote shares at least 10 percentage points above what Congress was able to secure.

"The B.J.P. won big in states which have a predominantly rural population like Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, making inroads into the countryside," Mr. Bajaj said. In sum, Mr. Bajaj added, for the B.J.P., everything seemed to work in its favor.

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Source: By MALAVIKA VYAWAHARE,
The New York Times



Dalit women ignite the audience at the Women in The World Summit in New York

“Even if no one else recognizes us as human, we will shout it from the rooftops. ... The shame is not on the women, the shame is on India,” said US Dalit woman filmmaker Thenmozhi Soundararajan in the talk she gave together with Asha Kowtal from AIDMAM, at the high profile Women in The World Summit in New York. Uma Thurman introduced the talk by playing the part of a Dalit woman rape victim and NBC anchor Cynthia McFadden moderated the discussion.**

Video clips filmed by Thenmozhi Soundararajan from the Dalit women’s march in India introduced the talk followed by a reading of a Dalit woman rape victim Manisha’s story by actress Uma Thurman.

“The law is not meant for us. ... I am all alone,” Uma Thurman read from Manisha’s story. Asha Kowtal, general secretary of the All India Dalit Women Rights Forum (AIDMAM), explained to the crowd at the summit and all those watching on live streams - that Manisha’s story is not only

typical, but it’s widespread — and silenced — simply because they were born into the lowest castes.

Moderator Cynthia McFadden, senior legal and investigative correspondent for NBC News, cited a disturbing statistic that even when a rape case makes it to court, the perpetrator is punished only one percent of the time.

Asha Kowtal explained that there is a massive problem with widespread impunity in cases of crimes against Dalit women where reports are often not taken by the police and even when the case does get

reported by the police the chances of justice for Dalit women are slim to none.

Thenmozhi Soundararajan gave the disturbing example of a case where a Dalit woman rape survivor showed a judge video footage of her rape that was circulated around her village by the perpetrators, but the judge simply laughed and said “Great, now you have proof that you enjoyed yourself.”

The two women described the Dalit women march that they were both a part of where Dalit women marched for self-respect and visited rape victims to empower them and demand

that the police bring the perpetrators to justice.

Cynthia McFadden was shocked that she did not herself know more about the issue of caste discrimination and the violent repercussions for Dalit women, because it was so underreported in the global media. Even in the wake of the 2012 Delhi gang rape case that was widely reported – similar cases against Dalit women went under the radar. McFadden vowed that this lack of media attention was something she would personally change.



Asha Kowtal stressed that caste-based sexual violence is a full-fledged human-rights crisis that has been perpetuated throughout centuries.

The two women explained that Dalits are essentially seen as voiceless and are stripped, beaten, spat on, raped with objects, and even burned alive. Their minds and bodies are constantly violated. The audience at the Summit in New York were behind the women and shouted out Dalit Women Fight in unison at the end of the talk. “We have to end the silence,” said Asha Kowtal in conclusion.

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Source: International Dalit solidarity Network

The Women in the World Summit is: a powerful summit centered on women and men from around the world sharing their true stories of courage, resilience, and determination for progress. Featuring CEOs, industry icons, and world leaders, as well as artists, and grassroots activists. The 3-day event makes vivid the stories of the courageous women who are shattering glass ceilings in every sector and fighting for their rights.

Participants Include: Meryl Streep, The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton, Director of the IMF Christine Lagarde, Tina Brown, Jon Stewart, Pussy Riot, Ambassador Samantha Power, Cecile Richards, President Jimmy Carter, Rashida Jones, Senator Susan Collins, Katie Couric, Amb. Melanne Verveer, Sarah Silverman, Laurene Powell Jobs, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, Diane von Furstenberg, Norah O'Donnell, Mellody Hobson, Thomas L. Friedman, Amb. Anne Patterson, Cynthia McFadden, Sheila Nevins, Alyse Nelson, Barbara Bush, Lesley Stahl, America Ferrera, Executive Director of UN Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Zainab Salbi, Soledad O'Brien, Amb. Deborah Jones, Susan Silverman, Sally Hazelgrove, Maya L. Harris, Lauren Shweder Biel and many more.

THEY SAY WE'RE DIRTY



The teacher always made us sit in a corner of the room, and would throw keys at us when she was angry. We only got food if anything was left after other children were served.... Gradually we stopped going to school. Shyam, 14, Dalit boy from Uttar Pradesh now working at a brick kiln.

Human Rights Watch

When you speak with officials about the right to education, they love to talk about plans and circulars. But ask them about implementation and they hem and haw. They have nothing. Sanat Sinha, chief coordinator, Bal Sakha, Patna, July 2013

Four years after it came into force, the Right to Education Act is yet to be properly implemented. While nearly all primary school children are enrolled in school, many millions do not actually attend classes. Often, this is because their caste, ethnicity, economic condition, religion, or gender acts as a barrier to education. Most children with disabilities are excluded from government schools due to lack of teachers with specialized training, and inadequate facilities and care.

Human Rights Watch examines the obstacles preventing certain children from attending school and the government's failure to take the steps necessary to address the problem. Discrimination remains a major factor affecting access to education for children from marginalized communities, including Dalits, tribal groups, and Muslims. Already vulnerable because of socio-economic challenges, these children need special attention and encouragement to remain in school. Instead, a lack of proper monitoring leaves such children vulnerable to exclusion, denying them the right to a child-friendly and equitable environment as set out under the Right to Education Act. Poor monitoring also results in poor retention of at risk children, many of whom end up pushed into work and early marriage. his report finds that discrimination takes various forms, including teachers asking

Dalit children to sit separately, making insulting remarks about Muslim and tribal students, and village authorities not responding when girls are kept from the classroom.



Teachers and other students often address these children using derogatory terms for their caste, community, tribe, or religion. In some schools, children from vulnerable Communities are not ever considered for leadership roles such as class monitor because

of their caste or community. Many are expected to perform unpleasant jobs such as cleaning toilets. Schools in marginalized neighborhoods often have the poorest infrastructure and least well-trained teachers; many have fewer teachers than required.

The teacher tells us to sit on the other side. If we sit with others, she scolds us and asks us to sit separately ... The teacher doesn't sit with us because she says we 'are dirty.' The other children also call us dirty everyday so sometimes we get angry and hit them.

Human Resource Development is also the commission's funding body—creating a conflict of interest. Political and bureaucratic interference are also undermining commissions at the state level. And a grievance redress mechanism, crucial for effective implementation of the act, still

does not exist in all state India as a party to core international human rights treaties has an obligation to promote and protect the right to education.



National and state governments must ensure compulsory and free primary education for all children, remove barriers to education, including for children who work, and end discrimination against minority students. Seeing to it that these standards are met, through systematic monitoring and accountability mechanisms, is crucial if India is to meet the educational goals set out in the Right to Education Act.

Key Recommendations

• The Indian government should take steps for the effective implementation of the Right to Education Act that focus not simply on enrollment, but on the retention of every child in school at least until age 14. An essential first step is creating and implementing a system to monitor and track all children from the time they are enrolled to the time they graduate grade VIII, and a uniform protocol for identifying children who are out of school,

have dropped out, or are at risk of dropping out.

• The government should develop clear standards for monitoring children at risk of dropping out, and develop mechanisms to ensure relevant authorities undertake social mapping, especially in marginalized communities, engage with minority communities, and intervene to ensure that children who have left school can return.

• The government should develop clear indicators to improve the detection of and response to discrimination in schools. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights should develop guidelines to address discrimination and other abuses of children, and set out appropriate disciplinary measures.

• The government should instruct the Ministry of Human Resource Development to develop guidelines and manuals for teachers that set forth good practices for social inclusion and equity, such as encouraging children from marginalized communities to participate in school activities, ensuring more frequent collaboration between children of different castes, and promoting innovative activities aimed at inclusion.

**Source: They Say we're Dirty
"Denying an Education to
India's marginalized. Human
Rights watch**



A Study on Occupational Health and Safety of Scavenger's in Dhaka City

World Scenario on Occupational Health and Safety

Worldwide, occupational diseases continue to be the leading cause of work-related deaths. According to ILO estimates, out of 2.34 million occupational fatalities every year, only 321, 000 are due to accidents. The remaining 2.02 million deaths are caused by various types of work-related diseases, which correspond to a daily average of more than 5,500 deaths. This is unacceptable

Decent Work deficit.

The inadequate prevention of occupational diseases has profound negative effects not only on workers and their families but also on society at large due to the tremendous costs that it generates, particularly, in terms of loss of productivity and burdening of social security systems. Manual scavengers are people who manually remove or dispose human excreta. Although the practice was eradicated in Europe and the west with the invention of flush



toilets. The practice of manual scavenging was legitimized during British rule, with the operation of dry latrines in military establishments and railway stations. To avoid the shame associated with the practice, the British called the manual scavengers "night soil workers"; a change of name did nothing to change the marginalization and abuse faced by this community.

In much of Asia and parts of Africa, caste is the basis of discrimination against and exclusion of distinct groups.

Over 250 million people worldwide (160 million in India) suffer from this form of discrimination. Communities affected by caste include the Dalits in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan, as well as the Buraku people of Japan, the Osu of Nigeria's Igbo people, and certain groups in Senegal and Mauritania.

Agonies of Dalit scavenger's in Bangladesh

The Dalits are not a homogeneous group in the same way a caste is, but they are more of a class, gathering several different castes. It is for instance undoubted that the so called Sweepers or *Horijons* of Bangladesh comes from India. It is said that they were brought to Bangladesh during late Mogul's times, from the beginning of the 17th century. It is then reported that a large migration of Dalit Sweepers took place when Dhaka became a municipality in 1864.

Another source claimed that a large migration of Dalits from India to different cities of Bangladesh happened around 1620's. A massacre took place in Dhaka by the Burmese pirates, to remove the dead bodies from the city, Dalits were brought in here from different parts of India.

Now they live in 27 Colonies in Dhaka and its



neighboring town Narayanganj. It is predicted that there are about 5.5 million Dalits in Bangladesh. At present around 32,000 Jatt sweepers live in Dhaka city. Among them, around 3,000 are employed by the Dhaka City Corporation for its cleaning and waste collection activities.

The rest are employed by government and non-government agencies. DCC set up colonies for Dalits at Ganaktuli, Dayaganj, Dhalpur, Sutrapur, Agargaon and Gabtoli embankment. Around 5,000 more live in 13 smaller settlements in Naryanganj and Savar (Bangladesh Dalit Human Rights (BDHR).

RESEARCH FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

After the eight weeks of field work, it was revealed that scavenger's work begins in the early morning and continues until finish the work. They carried out their job without any form of protective equipment. Generally they collect and sweep four kinds of wastes like domestic waste, commercial waste, industrial waste, and hospital Waste.

There are different ways and forms in which they are carrying out collecting and sweeping of garbage. They manually collect garbage into buckets or baskets using brooms and carried away to an area where the waste is discarded.

The way of waste collection and dump with no gloves, boots and mask pose a serious threat to the health of the municipal workers.

The abundance of fleas and offensive odors in waste disposal sites, along with the lack of proper protective devices, make working conditions even more unhygienic.

Research findings indicated that they worked in poor sanitary conditions to collect plastics, paper, glass bottles, rubber materials from dump sites, which was risky as they were exposed to various infectious agents and toxic substances that may cause illness.

Due to that, they usually had cuts, injuries, irritation of eyes and suffered from skin rash and related health problems. Most of the respondents said that they often got injured from sharp objects, got rash when they collected and processed garbage. While working on busy road area, there is always panic of accidents from moving vehicles.

Though there is no official data of sweeper's death by road accident but respondents whispered with morns that there were many sweepers

death by road accidents and even police never took any initiatives for supporting them.

Occupation related health problems among the workers last year. Scavengers were asked to remember illnesses they have experienced during the last year.

Scavengers undertaking routine work on seven days in a week at dump sites most suffered with low back pain (42%), cold and cough (94%), and skin rashes (20%). Other problems included headaches (36%), Stomach ache (34%), Fever (70%), Asthma (12%), Irritation of eyes (6%), Gastric (30%) Jaundice (14%). Fever, cough, and low back pain were the most reported.

Most respondent had frequently suffered such weakness and never had an annual medical checkup.

If they were ill, most of them were self-medicated by buying drugs or go to private health care centre. One hundred percent of the respondent had no access to health service facilities from City Corporation's hospital.

Recommendations

In this study, only one sweeper colony was visited within a short period. In order to have more accurate and detailed information for knowing the real situations of scavenger's occupational hazards, more data of the related study should also be needed.

Trade Union Formation: It is important to form Trade union, because trade unions have the

power to identify the issue of scavenger as a labour issue and work on the line of decent work for all. Trade union can bring about mass activity on legal awareness context to Scavenging.

Policy Creating: To understand the issue of decent work, working condition as well as coordination with NGOs, GO's where they can discussed, interact among themselves and work together to improve occupational safety and health and job security among traditional scavengers.

Awareness and sensitization campaign: GO and NGO both should take initiatives of awareness and sensitization programme on Human rights, Capacity building training on scavenging and Decent work.

Safety measures distribution: It is important that the government should distribute

health and safety materials including necessary equipments

like mask, hand gloves, boots, aprons, garbage collecting tools,.

Occupational health services and Monitor safety practices: Scavengers ought to be benefited from occupational health services, which should include periodic health monitoring and hospital services.

Trainning and Health Care Centre establishment: It is important to establish a training centre on every sweeper's colony. Where they can get motivation and inspiration to use PPE at work. Prevention is more effective and less costly than treatment and rehabilitation.

And it is also essential to establish health care centre in every sweeper's colony. Because a vast population living

in those colony and they were deprived governments health



care facilities and many public facilities.

More research on this topic must be conducted, especially regarding health care services and facilities of the City Corporation.

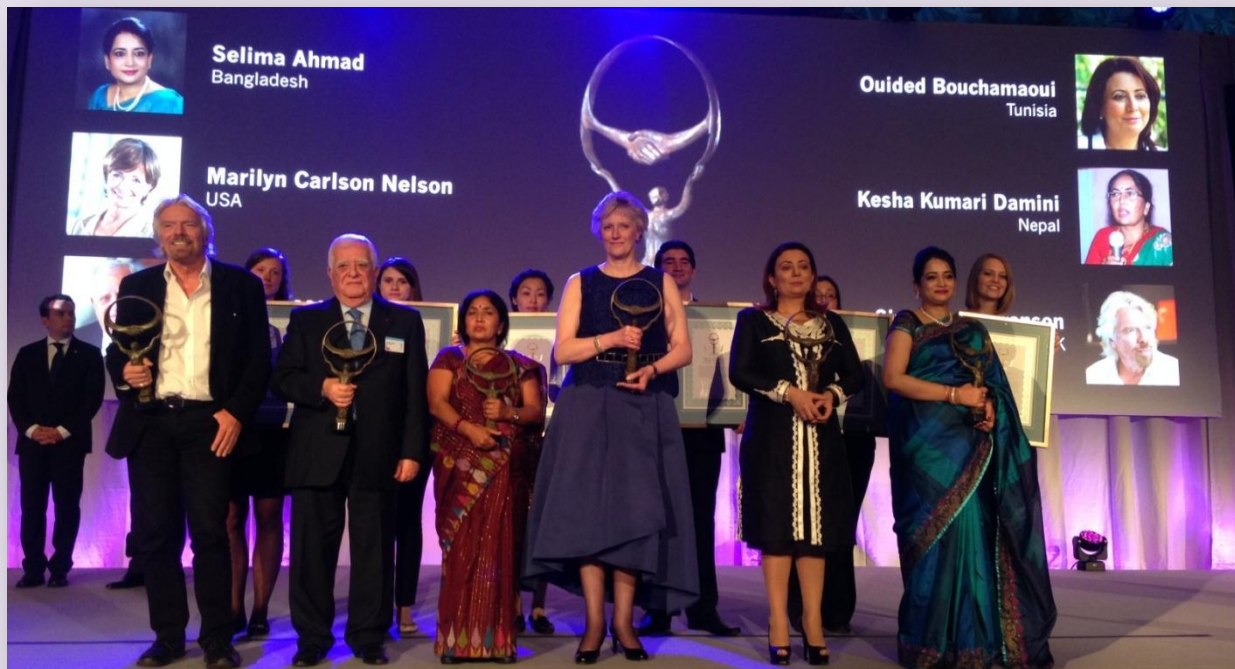
The City Corporation can take concrete steps now to improve their capacity for preventing occupational diseases.

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Source: Nagorik Uddyog and Safety and Rights Society

Success Story

Nepali Dalit women Kesha Pariyar won

Business for Peace Award



Kesha Pariyar (Kesha Kumari Damini) an entrepreneur in Nepal, who is a chairperson of National Micro Entrepreneurs Federation (NMEFEN), has won Business for Peace Award (BPA) in Oslo.

It's a big achievement for Nepal and Nepalese women too. Being a woman and from Dalit her success will not only be inspiration for woman of Nepal but also it will be a big slap on

the thoughts of caste discrimination system. Kesha Pariyar with five more entrepreneurs from all over the world was selected as one of the 2014 Business for Peace

Honourees by the committee of Nobel Laureates.

The award was given by Business for Peace Foundation, Based in Oslo, Norway. She was awarded amongst a special

function on May 15th in the City Hall, Oslo, and the same promising venue where the Nobel Peace Prize is presented each year. Each year award goes to individual business leaders who have fostered peace and stability through private enterprise.

This year, including Kesha Kumari other five winners were Richard Branson of UK, the founder of the Virgin Group. Slemia Ahmad of Bangladesh, the vice president of the Nitol- Niloy Group. Ouided Bauchamaoui of Tunisia, head of the Hedi Bauchamaoui Group. Adnan Kassar of Lebanon, chairman of Lebanon's Fransabank and Marilyn Carlson Nelson of USA, past chairman and CEO of Carlson.

Kesha was born in a poor Dalit family of Binamare-7 Baglung. She was married to Bahadur Pariyar at the age of 18.



Kesha Kumari Damini
Kesha Kumari Damini Receiving Award



Struggling to have two meals a day for her six children and facing social discrimination for being poor Dalit woman, she came into contact with MEDEP in 1999. In 2003 she received entrepreneurship development

training and access to credit by the programme which helped her to establish Manisha Tailoring and Training Centre in 2003. She was elected as Chairperson of District Micro entrepreneurs' Groups Association, Parbat in 2005. Kesha has been providing continuous leadership to over 70,000 Micro Entrepreneurs Karna Bahadur Thapa, the Minister for Industry said "Her leadership and success has inspired many others to become entrepreneurs, explore self-employment opportunities and overcome discriminations."

In an interview with Nick Gowing former moderator of the BBC, Kesha Kumari said: "I will continue to work for the benefit of poor and marginalised women in Nepal. I want all women in Nepal to become empower and independent."

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Source: Nepali Magazine Sajhilo



Violence against Indian Dalit Women



By: Manjula Pradeep

Nine major forms of violence, Six being in the general community – physical assault, verbal abuse, sexual harassment and assault, rape, sexual exploitation, forced prostitution, kidnapping and abduction, and three being violence in the family – female feticide and infanticide, child sexual abuse and domestic violence from natal and marital family members.

The economic, social, educational and political status of Dalit women is directly linked to violence and subjugation of Dalit women which does not give them to space to fully enjoy constitutional rights.

A three-year study of 500 Dalit women's experiences of violence across four Indian states shows that the majority of Dalit women report having faced one or more incidents of verbal abuse (62.4%), physical assault (54.8%), sexual harassment and assault (46.8%), domestic violence (43.0%) and rape (23.2%). Verbal abuse included regular derogatory use of caste names and caste epithets possibly amounting to 'hate speech', as well as sexually explicit insults, gendered epithets and threats.

Forms and Frequency of Violence against Dalit women

Nine major forms of violence, Six being violence in the general community – physical assault, verbal abuse, sexual

harassment and assault, rape, sexual exploitation, forced prostitution, kidnapping and abduction, and three being violence in the family – female feticide and infanticide, child sexual abuse and domestic violence from natal and marital family members.

Location of Violence

The majority of Dalit women face violence in *public spaces* – streets, women's toilet areas, fields, etc. – in and around their villages and towns. The next most common place for violence is *within the home*. Aside from domestic violence, a number of women face physical assaults, verbal abuse, sexual harassment and sexual assaults in their very home from non-family members. Violence in the *workplace* ranks third in terms of common locations for violence. Moreover, given their economic dependence, Dalit women often do not report violence from employers in the workplace, instead keeping silent in order to retain their

means of livelihood. In addition, as many Dalit women either work in the perpetrators' home, or have to go there to receive their wages or ask for loans, etc., the *perpetrator's home* also becomes another site for violence perpetrated by general community members. Finally, *government spaces* become grounds for violence where women are forcibly incarcerated, verbally abused, sexually harassed or raped in police stations.

Social Status of Perpetrators of Violence in the General Community

Within the wide range of identified perpetrators of violence against Dalit women in the general community,

Dominant caste landlords

Emerged as the most prominent group. The violence they mete out is physical, verbal and

sexual, often in response to Dalit women asserting their economic rights, that is, challenging caste-class relations by demanding their right to wages or land, or their right to sexual integrity, that is, the right to choice in sexual relations. *Police* also emerge as key perpetrators of violence against Dalit women. They are not active perpetrators; they also act in a significant number of cases in collusion with the perpetrators by failing to enforce the law when violence against Dalit women takes place. Two other groups of perpetrators whose numbers are significant belong to the *professional category*, namely doctors and teachers. In all these cases, these perpetrators hold positions of authority or positions entailing a duty of care and responsibility towards other people. Hence, their presence as perpetrators indicates their gross misuse of the power and authority conferred on them by virtue of their professions. In addition, there are a large number of “other dominant caste persons” as perpetrators. Their significance lies in the fact that they are often ordinary community members who, by virtue of their “higher” caste status vis-à-vis the Dalit women, engage in violence against these women. Moreover, often this violence is committed by these perpetrators not only as individuals, but also as group violence involving people of the same status.

Caste Background of Perpetrators of Violence in the General Community

Caste-wise, both forward castes (FCs) and backward castes (BCs) are seen to engage in violence against Dalit women, either as individuals or as a group. Dalit perpetrators are also present in significant numbers, as mentioned above. Their concentration lies in four forms of violence, namely physical assaults, verbal abuse, sexual harassment and sexual assaults, and rapes. Together, however, they account for significantly very low % of all perpetrators of violence against Dalit women.

Perpetrators of Violence in the Family

As far as violence in the family is concerned, husbands, the Dalit women’s in-laws, her relatives and husbands’ relatives are perpetrators of violence, in descending order. Husbands are also the key perpetrators of domestic violence, followed by mothers-in-law, the woman’s other relatives, fathers-in-law and their husband’s other relatives. Given that most of the Dalit women’s natal and marital families are very poor, the day-to-day struggles for survival, caste oppression and gender oppression often translate into frequent violence against Dalit women within the home.

Violence in the General Community

The verbal abuse that is integral to many women’s experiences of violence also indicates the dominant caste perpetrators’ worldview as regards Dalit women’s ‘inferior’ caste, class and gender status, and consequent powerlessness and vulnerability. Built into the

patriarchal caste system is the assumption that Dalit women are available for any form of exploitation and violence, as a consequence of their “low” and “impure” character, and hence the low character of their caste that does not deserve honor and respect.

As far as Dalit perpetrators are concerned, the majority being male, many assimilate and reproduce the gender inequality structured into the caste system by using patriarchal norms to commit violence against women of their own community.

Almost as frequently identified a causal factor for violence in the general community lies in the area of Dalit women’s *civil rights*. The violence is either a response to the Dalit women’s alleged breach of caste norms by exercising their freedom of expression in speaking out on an issue, or seeking to protect her family or community, or as a means used to reinforce their submissiveness and voicelessness as demanded under the caste system.

These issues include

Revenge or retaliation to settle scores with the woman, her family or her community; response to the women when they questioned the perpetrator/s for violent acts done to them, their children, their family members or other Dalit community members; where a male member of the woman’s household was wanted for questioning by the police; insecurity faced as a widow caste system, related to

economic resources – land, or other economic resources /capital such as wages, payment for services, etc. – and particularly Dalits asserting their rights to own or utilize resources. Causes for violence related specifically to land and common property resources, being key economic resources in the villages, include:

women and their families asserted their rights to own land; in order to appropriate the land belonging to the Dalit women or their families; reaction against Dalit women and their families owning or leasing land;

Similarly, causal factors related to Dalit women's labour and work include:

Women protested against forced or bonded labour; Women challenged working conditions;

Women questioned the delay or part-payment or under-payment or non-payment of wages.

Women asked for workers' compensation following their husbands' deaths.

Otherwise, other causal factors that provoked violence include those related to Dalit women's *basic livelihood* outside of economic issues.

Women asserted their rights to access or enjoy housing, or water, or the public distribution system (PDS), or education.

In the realm of *political rights*, several Dalit women spoke of their assertions of basic political rights as provoking violent dominant caste backlashes. The issues that led to violence included.

Women contested panchayat elections.

Women exercised or attempted to exercise political authority as elected panchayat representatives.

Finally, violence also took place when Dalit women sought *justice and the protection of the law* for violence done to them, or to forestall such action, by any of the following acts:

Women filed or tried to file a police complaint.

Women brought or tried to bring incidents of violence to the traditional village panchayat for arbitration.

Women refused to accept compromises following acts of violence; to prevent women from telling anyone of the violence or filing a police complaint; to prevent women from being witnesses against the perpetrators in a court case.

II Violence in the Family

Similarly, Dalit women faced violence in the family over a range of issues, suggesting the assimilation of the larger patriarchal caste system's norms by particularly Dalit men, with negative implications for Dalit women's personal lives and interactions in their community. Female feticide and infanticide stemmed from gender discrimination, combined with poverty or a response to the child being born of an illicit relationship. By comparison, child sexual abuse is primarily seen as the result of husbands asserting their perceived right to sexual relations with their child brides. When it comes to domestic violence, however, the causes

for this violence are much more nuanced and varied.

Gender inequality and norms of female subordination

Formed a major category of causal factors for violence meted out by natal and marital family members to Dalit women. Examples of causal factors falling within this category include

women allegedly failed to be dutiful wives.

Women asserted their rights.

Women were unable to bear children, or unable to bear sons. A second major category was *economic* causal factors for domestic violence, including: poverty; insufficient dowry.

Women earned more income than their husbands, or their natal families had a higher economic status than their marital families.

Women asked their husbands to account for money given from their earnings to the husbands, or refused to give their earnings to fund their husbands' drinking habits, or refused to mortgage jewelry to satisfy their husbands' spendthrift habits; to deny women their share of their deceased husbands' property; A third prominent category of causal factors related to Dalit women's *civil rights*, which include.

Women's insecurity due to their husband's unemployment or alcoholism.

Women's insecurity as widows, or as destitute

Overall, much of the domestic violence arose out of a combination of factors such as internalized gender

discrimination, poverty, dominant discourses of dowry, wifely fidelity and duties, and distrust of women to guard their own sexuality all leading to husbands' perceived rights over their wives, or their husbands' alcoholism. The message effectively sent home to Dalit women is that they must keep "in their place"; that is, they must remain submissive daughters or wives, and should not assert their rights against Dalit men and other dominant family members.

Recommendations:

1. Recognize Dalit women as a distinct category among women, and accordingly disaggregate data on Dalit women in census reports, action taken reports and progress reports on implementation of all laws, policies and programmes.
2. The share of budget for the development and welfare of Dalit women should be based on their percentage of population both in the Scheduled caste development and in the women development budget.
3. Present a periodic white paper on the status of Dalit women vis-vis enjoyment of their rights, particularly to development and freedom from violence, in Parliament.

4. Caste-based violence and untouchability to be declared as national crimes and violence against Dalit women as a specific Dalit gender crime.
5. Encourage educational institutions to adopt policies of equal opportunities coupled with affirmative action for Dalit girl children, and monitor their implementation with the participation of teachers, parents and boys and girls, and establish measures to address problems arising from casteist and sexist prejudice and stereotypes.
6. Ensure non-discriminatory health services and facilities with ensuring Dalit women's equitable access to adequate nutrition, including health and maternity benefits.
7. Ensure basic amenities within Dalit women's dwellings and localities, especially electricity, potable water and toilet facilities, as well as decent sewage systems.
8. Establish special services for women survivors of violence where they can benefit from professional assistance of psychologists, doctors, lawyers, marriage counselors, etc.
9. Provide immediate and enhanced relief and a

long-term package of holistic and adequate rehabilitation to them and their family members.

10. Establish a comprehensive and holistic programme for the rehabilitation of former Joginis, and Badi community women.
11. Rehabilitate all women manual scavengers into different occupations by linking better rehabilitation with vocational training.
12. Identify areas in which Dalit girl children are employed as child labourers, and constitute rehabilitation schemes with incentives to pull them back into education.
13. Increase emphasis on vocational and skill-based education for Dalit girls and women, and equip them for job market.

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Source: Dalit Women Speak Out: Violence against Dalit Women in India by Irudayam, A., Mangubhai, J.P. and Lee, J.,

2006. Chennai: National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights, National Federation of Dalit Women, and Institute of Development Education, Action and Studies

Dalit Watch

Inspiring stories of Dalit millionaires: Obstacles to triumph

May 7, 2014

New Delhi: Multimillionaire Ashok Khade did not have even four annas to replace the

broken nib of his pen when he was about to sit for his class XI

board exams; Kalpana Saroj worked at a hosiery factory for a measly Rs 2 a day before owning a business empire of Rs 1,000 crore.

These inspiring stories are among a collection of profiles of 15 Dalit entrepreneurs who have braved both societal and business pressures to carve out profitable niches for themselves. The book "Dalit Millionaires: 15 Inspiring Stories" by authors Milind Khandekar, Reenu

Talwar, Vandana Singh is a vivid chronicle of how the battle has moved from the village well to the marketplace. These individuals faced several obstacles only to set up multi-crore business empires in the past few years.

These entrepreneurs are from every sector of the economy. Saroj turned around Mumbai's

Kamani Tubes Limited which had shut down, and transformed it into a profit-making company.

Khade's company DAS Offshore Engineering Private Limited manufactures platforms used at Bombay High refinery for oil extraction.

Hari Kishan Pippal of Agra runs People's Heritage Hospital, and Devkinandan Son runs the Taj Plaza hotel, located close to the Taj Mahal. Savitaben Kolsawallah of Ahmedabad makes tiles, while Devjibhai Makwana of Bhavnagar manufactures filament yarn. Sanjay Kshirsagar moved on from a 120-foot tenement and now seems well on his way to become the emperor of a Rs 500 crore firm.

"The success of Dalit businessmen in the 20 years following liberalisation of the economy has come as a ray of hope. Many Dalits have finally been able to achieve economic equality, owing to their own hard work, rather than help from the government," the book, published by Penguin Books India, says.

Khade's father mended shoes near Chitra Talkies at Dadar in Mumbai while his mother worked in the fields for 12 annas a day. In 1973, when he had to appear for his class XI board exams, he didn't have even four annas to replace the nib of his pen. His teacher had to give him the money to have the nib changed so that he could take the exam.

With sheer determination, Khade moved on and is now the managing director of the company that has a turnover of Rs 140 crore.

Saroj, a child bride, was tortured by her husband's family and she tried to commit suicide but survived. She moved to Mumbai.

Source: Financialexpress.com

Make SC, ST Ordinance a Bill: Dalit leaders

May 5, 2014

Orissa: Speakers and many Dalit leaders on Saturday while participating in a State-level roundtable hailed the outgoing UPA-II Government's promulgation of SC and ST Prevention of Atrocity Act Amendment Ordinance-2014 on March 4 this

year and urged all the stakeholders to make it a Bill as it has lots of provision to provide justice to Dalit people.

While discussing various aspects of the ordinance former Director General of Police Manmohan Praharaj said, "The ordinance has lots of provision to ensure justice to the SC and ST victims. But it is important to ensure in making it a Bill bypassing it the Parliament within six months of the promulgation of the



ordinance."Being organised by Dalit Adhikar Sangathan, the round table stressed on setting up of special courts to deal the cases of SC and ST people and complete the hearing within two months and punishment for neglect of duties of officials.

"The State Government has announced to open two special courts for SC and ST people but it is yet to be materialised. We urged the Government to open at least six special courts in Puri, Cuttack, Balangir and Baleswar districts and other Dalit atrocity prone areas to deal their cases as per the provision," said Sangathan State coordinator Jugal Kishore Ranjit.

Many social workers, Dalit organisation representatives participated in the event and shared their views.

Source: The Pioneer

PU students hold protest against Dalit rapes in UP

June 4 2014

CHANDIGARH: Activists of Ambedkar Students' Association (ASA) on Tuesday held a candlelight march in Panjab University campus to protest against the gangrape of two teenaged Dalit girls.

Holding placards and candles, the PU students marched from the Student Centre to Sector 14

market to mark their protest against the UP government's failure to ensure Dalit rights. "The Akhilesh Yadav led government has failed at all the fronts to protect its citizens' basic rights. Proper sections of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocity) Act 1989 should be invoked in the FIR and speedy trial of the case should be done according to the rules of the Act," ASA president Gurdeep Singh said. The students also demanded trial of police officials under Section 4 of the Act.

"UP state should be declared atrocity-prone state as a large number of atrocities are taking place in the state without any check. Dalits should be provided protection against such victimization," ASA activists demanded.

Source: The Times of India

Young Dalit Everesters from India feted in Kathmandu

1st June 2014

KATHMANDU: Jagaran Media Centre (JMC), on Sunday, felicitated two Indian teenagers belonging to the Dalit communities in recognition of their successful ascent of Mount Everest.

S Anand Kumar (16) and Malavath Poorna (13), who hail from the Indian state of Andhra, had made it to the world's

highest summit from China's Tibetan side on May 27. With the ascent, the 13-year-old Poorna had succeeded in keeping a new world record as youngest female to scale the world's highest peak.

The JMC, which works for Dalit rights in Nepal, feted the two young climbers amidst a programme in the Capital.



Poorna belongs to the family of tribal farm labourers in India. The climb was made possible after the teenage girl, whose father from an indigenous tribe earns just INR 35,000 (\$600) a year, was sponsored by a government-run social welfare organisation in southern India, according to media reports. Upon the success of young Indian climbers, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had tweeted, "Was very happy to read this. Congrats to our youngsters. They make us truly proud".

Source: The Himalayan



Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children



Caste Extracts: In India, school exclusion is considerably more prevalent among Muslim children, and among older children from socially disadvantaged groups. The average rate of exclusion for primary school-age children from Scheduled Castes is 5.6 per cent and Scheduled Tribes 5.3 per cent compared to the national average of 3.6 per cent. Girls from Scheduled Castes have the highest rates of exclusion at 6.1 per cent. Children from Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes, particularly girls are more likely to be excluded from school than children from other social groups.

South Asia Regional Study India Published by UNICEF and UNESCO 2014

Girls in rural areas, particularly those from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India have higher rates of exclusion.

Social groups: in India, school exclusion is considerably more prevalent among Muslim children, and among older children from socially disadvantaged groups. The average rate of exclusion for primary school-age children from Scheduled Castes is 5.6 per cent and Scheduled Tribes 5.3 per cent compared to the national average of 3.6 per cent. Girls from Scheduled Castes have the highest rates of exclusion at 6.1 per cent. Among India's social and religious communities, two groups stand out as having a

higher than average proportion of pre-school children excluded from school based on analysis of NSSO 2007-08 data. About half of pre-school age children from Scheduled Castes and from Muslim families are not attending school, compared to 40 per cent overall.

Among India's social and religious communities, pre-primary age children from Scheduled Castes and from Muslim families have higher exclusion rates.

Children from Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes, particularly girls are more likely to be excluded from school than children from other social groups.

For some social and religious groups, formal sector job opportunities are limited by discriminatory employment practices. Compounding this, the marginalization of specific groups in relation to livelihoods goes even further: in India, some low caste communities face physical and well as social segregation from mainstream society, limiting informal economic opportunities too – as well as discrimination in education systems. One report in India concluded that high unemployment rates among low caste communities reduced motivation to send children to school because of the little economic benefit expected from schooling (Sachar

Committee Report, 2006). In Sri Lanka, high dropout rates are seen in communities that have been historically marginalized from employment opportunities—especially the Indian Tamils who worked in

An estimated 29 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 go to work. Child labour is illegal in India for children under 14 years of age. Girls often work in informal sectors such as domestic work or as paid house helps, which are not counted in official statistics. Most of these children belong to the poorest, most marginalized communities, including Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

communities and reduces the perceived benefits of schooling. In India, poor or absent water and sanitation facilities have a more significant negative effect on schooling for children from marginalized communities such as those belonging to the low caste, Scheduled Castes and



Scheduled Tribes groups (NEGFire Seminar, 2011 as cited in the India OOSCI Study).

In India, studies have shown that corporal punishment contributes to dropping out (Reddy and Sinha, 2010). Humiliation, harassment and abuse by upper caste teachers towards children from Scheduled Castes have been shown to undermine their motivation to stay in school (Nambissan, 2000). And teacher prejudice towards weak learners has been shown to demotivate students, who are often from marginalised communities (PROBE, 1999). According to the ILO, India has the highest number of working children in the world - an estimated 29 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 go to work. Child labour is illegal

in India for children under 14 years of age. Girls often work in informal sectors such as domestic work or as paid house helps, which are not counted in official statistics. Most of these children belong to the poorest, most marginalized communities, including Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.



Source: Unicef

Dilemma of Dalit Movement in Nepal

By Vidya Bhushan Rawa

Nepal's Dalit movement face and existential crisis as attempt are being made that it does not stand on its own and depend on the various ideological formations in the name of ideology, politics or development. The Hindu Nepal had relegated Dalits to a position prescribed to them under the Manu's law and remote areas still function on those 'traditions' and 'cultures' which were strengthened by the monarchy. However, there is a lot of churning in Nepal after people threw away its Hindu Monarchy and opted for a secular constitution. It decided to give wider political representation to Dalits and other ethnic minorities resulting in a substantial presence (though still much below their population percentage) in the Constituent Assembly. In the first CA (after the peace accord) there were nearly 50 members from the community in the Assembly of 601 which was about 8.32% representation of a community which is officially 13.5% of Nepal's total population though independent experts suggest that Dalit population in Nepal is not less than 20%. This representation of Dalits was due to a serious commitment shown by the Maoists towards the Dalit issue

particularly related to land reforms which attracted huge number of people to them. The percentage of the Dalit



representatives elected during the recently held elections of Constituent Assembly have drastically reduced and has shocked political analysts and Dalit Rights activists who felt that this has happened due to faulty electoral system.

Nepal has a mixed Member Electoral system in which 52% elected representative comes through First Past The Post System (FPTP) and rest 48% have to be elected through Proportionate Electorate System (PES). There is no provision of reservation for the Dalits in the FPTP and hence it is difficult for them to get elected. Actually in the last CA just 7 members belonging to Dalit community won through FPTP out of 18 candidates put up by different political parties and rest 43 were elected through the proportionate electorate system. In the current election of Parliament just one member got elected through FPTP and rest won through the PES. There was no provision of ensuring the Dalit representation which

remains highly insufficient in the Constituent Assembly of Nepal.

At the time when the new constitution is being drafted the fair representation of Dalits and other ethnic minorities is essential so that their interests are protected. Unfortunately, in the absence of independent identity of the Dalit movements in Nepal, political parties seemed to be unaccountable to this approach resulting in substantial reduction in the Dalit representation in Constituent Assembly. In fact many Dalit political leaders have expressed their concern on the issue. The reason for Dalit issues being left to the mercy of the caste Hindu dominated political parties are very clear as no independent Dalit movement has taken shape in Nepal. Thousands of NGOs exists 'working' for the Dalits apart from the 'social movements' which are actually 'action' side of political parties as well as NGOs working on different issues. The mainstream political parties rarely raised the issue.

Dalits do not have reservation in the government services and their percentage is far below in these services. Though, it is true that Nepal's political parties as

well as government is quiet keen on speaking about untouchability and caste discrimination in public and supported the law against it in the United Nations, the fact is that there is strong resistance among the people when the question of representation comes. People accept that 'they' should be 'helped' but feel very much like the upper caste Hindus in India that 'jobs' should not be 'reserved' as it would affect 'merit'. In fact, I was shocked to see the reactions of students at a law college in Kathmandu where I spoke on the issue of social justice, participation and representation of the Dalits. The students were not ready to take the matter that easily and questioned and counter questioned.

In the political turmoil of Nepal, Maoists actually took up the Dalit question a bit more seriously than their other political counterparts. The issue of land reform was very important as the entire edifice of the feudal structure is based on heavy accumulation of land in some hands. Unlike, Indian Communist Parties, Nepal's CPN gave representation at senior level to many Dalits said Tilak Pariyar, a very respected a senior party member of the Communist Party of Nepal. Hailing from a Darjee community (tailoring work) which is one of the large Dalit communities in Nepal, Tilak Pariyar said that he faced caste discrimination during his

growing days but the Maoist movement fought against both the caste discrimination as well as feudal structure of the Nepalese society. However, my own experience is that both Prachanda and Babu Rai Bhattarai have never used the opportunity to speak against social tyranny of the brahmanical system and continued with term 'feudalism'. Nepalese leadership cannot blame 'imperialists' for the caste system like many 'brahmanical' scholars do in India blaming the British rulers to 'divide' our society. Mr Tilak Pariyar blamed the leadership of Prachanda for not taking the Dalit issues seriously and ignoring their leadership. His party has broken up with Prachanda and returning to prepare 'Jan Vidroh' as they feel that Parliamentary form of democracy is just manipulations and would not allow them to make pro people legislations.

However, despite all setbacks and internal differences, Nepal owes its democracy and rise of Dalit assertion to Maoists. Hundreds of young leaders have emerged and want to make a change. Today, political parties are responding to the issue of Dalits in political structure though in the second phase of the elections for Constituent Assembly, the representation of Dalits has reduced and political parties are maneuvering the entire issue so that no further compensation is granted to Dalits. Many activists have appealed to the government to ensure the Dalits get representation according to their population in the Constituent Assembly so that

there issues are properly debated and discussed. In fact, the electoral system that Nepal has today is because of the Maoists forced the political parties to opt for proportionate electorate system though the political parties who are manipulating and subverting the democratic process to deny the ethnic minorities and Dalits a fair share want Nepal to revert back to First Past the Post System which produced more symbolic democracy during the King's regime with almost no representation from the marginalized sections of society. Nepal will have to guard against this onslaught and sinister design of many such political parties which want to follow the Indian pattern which nothing but manipulation of the corporate and caste forces.

Nepal started building up institutions for the benefits of Dalits. It has formed various autonomous bodies like National Human Rights Commission, National Dalit Commission and National Women's Commission. However the effectiveness and efficacy of these Commissions is still questionable including the power they enjoy.

At the World Conference against Untouchability organized by International Humanist and Ethical Union and other organizations from Nepal including Nepal Dalit Commission, a member of Constituent Assembly boasted in glory how they have been able to get the word 'Dalit' into Constitution of Nepal unlike India where the official term is 'scheduled castes'.

While the Nepal's political leadership felt proud of it, there is an inherent danger as I warned many of them during the conference. Our constitutional forefathers were more visionary in this regard. Baba Saheb Ambedkar actually understood the diversity of the untouchable communities and hence all those castes were scheduled for clarity and representation purposes. Some time in boasting one big identity, we ignore the diversity of castes in it and later some communities dominate the entire spectrum while majority of others suffers silently.

While I do not wish to sound negative but the fact is that in popular discourse on Dalits in Nepal, we do not hear much about Mushahars, Mehtars (manual scavengers), Doms, chamars, Halkhors (Ploughman) etc. In fact, I doubt if there is any survey existing on the conditions of these communities who remained most marginalized and untouchable. The dominant discourse of untouchability is led by Kamis i.e. Vishwakarmas who are Lohars (ironsmith) or Darjee (tailors) or Sunars (gold smith). In fact, Nepal's Dalit commission should look into the gradation of untouchability and decide about it. I do not know whether Vishwakarmas or Sunars in UP and Bihar were ever untouchables because it is these regions which are bordering Nepal and share almost same caste order and traditions. No doubt, Kamis are around 30% of the total Dalit population followed by Sunars and Darjee. The fact is most the leadership in all sector also

emerged from these communities too. If all the communities and particularly the most marginalized one do not get fair representation in political structure and government jobs the Dalit movement for a cohesive identity will not grow resulting in the non-represented communities aligning with the power elite becoming pawn in the political chessboard. Nepal will have to focus on communities which are engaged in degraded traditional practices such as manual scavenging, cremating the dead bodies, Badis which is engaged in prostitution and Mushahars. A majority of these communities are completely landless and non-represented. They suffer from internal untouchability too and are thoroughly isolated.

Mr Sita Ram Mandal, the acting chairman of Nepal Dalit Commission actually conceded to me in an interview that many of the marginalized communities are not represented anywhere in Nepal. Mushahars have a fairly large presence in Nepal but highly under represented. He also pointed out that the Mehtar community exists in Nepal but could not provide me any data about their numbers in the entire country. It is important to note whether Nepal has manual scavenging practices or not. It is great if Nepal does not have manual scavenging but if it has then it is the biggest failure of the social movements in Nepal for their inability to get deep into the practice and how to eliminate it.

There is an acceptance of Dr Baba Saheb Ambedkar in the Dalit movement in Nepal and many claim themselves as Ambedkarite but there are very few among them who want to convert to Buddhism as a change. Most of them want to remain with their caste identities or fight without being religious. Dr Ambedkar had visited Nepal in 1956 to attend World Buddhist Conference and was very disturbed to see the plight of the untouchables there. He visited many villages and basties in Lalitpur and Deopatan area of Kathmandu and expressed his disappointment. One of the great Dalit leaders Late Mohan Lal Kapali took Dr Ambedkar to various places where living conditions were utterly pathetic. According to Om Prakash Gahatraj, a leading Ambedkarite in Nepal, 'When Baba Saheb visited Dalit Basti (Area) and saw the worst condition of Dalits; he became angered against the attitude of Nepal Govt. towards Dalits of Nepal. Seeing the anger mood of Baba Sahib, the liaison officer who was associated on behalf of Govt. in the visit reported the anger of Baba Saheb to the Prime Minister of Nepal (Mr. Tanka Prasad Acharya). After the return of Baba Saheb to the Guest House (Sital Nivas), Then Prime Minister Hon. Acharya invited Baba Saheb to his residence to talk about this matter. When Baba Saheb showed his reluctance to go in his residence, Hon Acharya himself came to the Sital Nivas and assured to Baba Saheb to give due attention to the development of Dalits'.

The Dalit movement has not grown independently in Nepal with a clear debrahmanised ideological shape. It will have to ally with other likeminded groups. There is another factor which is religious too. Nepal has remained deeply entrenched to Brahmanical ritualistic beliefs which have become part and parcel of people. There are some regions for defeat of Communist movement as in India because none of them led the social revolt against Brahmanical hierarchy. In the absence of such unambiguous agenda, many times movement falls in the hands of those who may talk of liberation in purely 'political terms' but not challenging the social hierarchy and cultural practices which Baba Saheb Ambedkar felt the root cause of oppression of the Dalits.

Maoist leaders like Tilak Periyar accept Ambedkar's contribution but not ready to accept all his views particularly related to religion. Actually, during my all interaction, I found, this was the most uncomfortable question to all the leaders which they felt that Buddhism has done nothing to emancipate Dalits. The Marxists blamed Ambedkar for failing to understand Marx and taking a religious route ignoring completely the great speech he delivered in Kathmandu in 1956 where he found the point of convergence between Buddha and Marx as well as their differences. Obviously, this issue needs to elaborate separately.

The positive side is that the growth of the leaders particularly women in the Dalit

movement. Obviously Nepal is developing two ways. One side, political representation and other side the civil society. The Maoists decry the NGOs as the agent of imperialism but then very much participate in their activities too in the name of social movements. The National Commission for Dalits needs to be strengthened and more resources need to be allocated to such commissions so that they can do independent studies to find out the status of various untouchable communities.

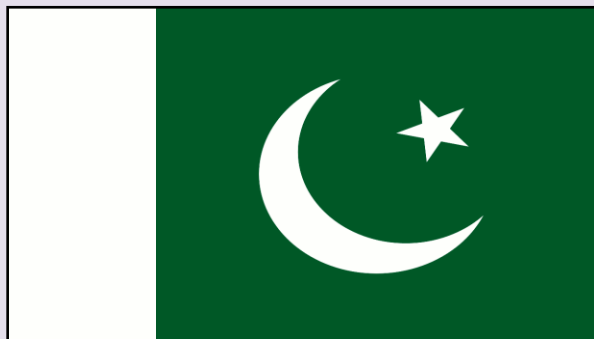
Nepal's government has been very positive for an international law against caste discrimination unlike the government of India which has always blocked and defamed the organizations. In fact, India never agreed internationally that untouchability exists. This is brazen shamelessness. Whether India or Nepal, they will never shine unless and until all forms of untouchability cease to exist. Dalits in Nepal have no other option than to stand up and seize the opportunity and compel the political forces to accept to their demand and bring strong provisions for protecting their rights and for that they will have to make ideological alliances who stand with their issues through thick and thin leaving aside their 'political' manipulations. Most of the people are frustrated with the political class who they feel are compromising to community interest and promoting themselves. Such practices will only go if the movement is strong and compel political forces to act according to

community needs and desires. India is shining example of both success stories and failures of the Dalit movement. Nepal can learn from our successes as well as failures.

Such alliances are necessary as political changes in India affect Nepal too and at the moment right wing Hindutva forces too are operative in Nepal. Their agenda is to use the political uncertainty for their purposes and pitch the Dalits against the religious minorities. The VHP chief Ashok Singhal's statement of converting Nepal to a Hindu country is very much in the minds of people. Therefore, it will be important for the Dalit social movement and political parties to reach beyond mere identity politics and focus on ideological similarities as the circumstances in Nepal are much more favorable towards the Dalits movement and their ideological allies than in India. The political churning and various struggles has created situation whether they will have to come together with likeminded people without losing their identities and ideological positions but with a common minimum programme.

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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**