

QUARTERLY

# MINO-VIEW LAHORE

Vol: 03 Issue: 03  
July-Sept 2015

Voice of minorities and oppressed people in South Asian societies

## Delhi is **Now** India's Rape Capital



### **Caste-Based** **Slavery** **In Pakistan**

### **Caste And Gender-Based** **Bonded Labour** **UN 2015 Side Event**



### **In Thy Name** **Ambedkar**

By, Anand Teltumbde



### **Dalit Children** **In Bangladesh**



### **Police Action Against** **Kathmandu Protest**



Produced by: Sir Ganga Ram Heritage Foundation, Lahore

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## EDITORIAL

Violence against women and girls is not confined to any particular political or economic system, but it is prevalent in every society in the world. It cuts across boundaries of wealth, race and culture. It is an expression of historically and culturally specific values and standards which are today still executed through many social and political institutions that foster women's subservience and discrimination against women and girls. In many parts of the world, rape is very rarely reported, due to the extreme social stigma cast on women who have been raped, or the fear of being disowned by their families, or subjected to violence, including honor killings. Up to 7 in 10 women around the world experience physical and/or sexual violence at some point in their life time. Rape and Violence against women are a massive problem in India. According to the National Crime Record Bureau of India, crime against women has increased by 7.1 percent since 2010. The number of rapes reported has also risen. Nearly one in three rape victims in India is under the age of 18. One in 10 is under 14. Every 20 seconds in India, women raped. According to UN report India, is third in rape cases, second in murder in the world. The yearly data of National Crime Records Bureau highlighted that in 2011, 24206 rapes were reported and in 2012 the reported cases were 24923. NCRB latest 2014 report shows that there were 33,707 reported rape cases in the country during the year 2013. 13.1% (4,427 out of 33,764) of the total victims of rape were girls under 14 years of age, while 26.3% (8,877 victims out of 33,764) were teenage girls (14–18 years). 46.1% (15,556 victims) were women in the age-group 18–30 years.

However, 13.8% (4,648 victims) victims were in the age-group of 30–50 years while 0.7% (256 victims) was over 50 years of age. The Indian Newspaper The Hindu published report in which Delhi declared as rape capital of India where in 2014 not only total number of rape cases but also the number of such cases proportionate to its women population was higher than for any other city or State. Mino-View also highlighted Caste and Gender-Based Forced and Bonded Labour UN 2015 Side-event. The new report 'Cotton's Forgotten Children, released by the Stop Child Labour Campaign and the India Committee on the Netherlands (ICN), finds that almost half a million children in India work as child labourers in the cottonseed production industry. Most of them are Dalits, Adivasis or other low caste children (OBCs). The report warns that most of these children are not in school and are subjected to hazardous work and harmful chemicals. Caste-based salary in Pakistan, dalit children in Bangladesh, dalit lawmaker and activists organized protest march against police action in Kathmandu is also included in this issue of Mino-View. We also thankful to Mr. Anand Teltumbde from India for his article "In Thy Name, Ambedkar". This current issue of Mino-View is a minor attempt to raise the voice for the cause of down trodden people. The main purpose for this magazine is to bring into limelight the brutal system i.e. oppression, atrocities and discrimination which low caste suffer. Through the platform of Mino-View we invite people all over that world to join hands and take positive step to end this inhuman system by showing global solidarity.

**EDITOR**



# PAKISTAN

## Caste-based Slavery in Pakistan



Pakistan has ratified a number of international covenants and conventions which proscribe slavery, forced labour, and debt-bondage. The Constitution of Pakistan forbids slavery and forced labour, and the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act of 1992 along with the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Rules of 1995 completely outlaw bonded labour. They also cancel all existing bonded debts and forbid lawsuits for the recovery of such debts.

### Worst forms of modern-day slavery

Yet bonded labour in Pakistan is widespread. The ILO assesses the problem of debt bondage in Pakistan as one of the worst in the world. Bonded labour is

particularly common in the areas of agriculture, brick-making, carpet-weaving, mining, tanning, cotton seed production, handicraft production, production of glass bangles, and domestic work, reports another ILO working paper.

There is no exact calculation of the number of bonded labourers. Research by the Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER) in 2000 estimated that the total number of sharecroppers (haris) in debt bondage across the whole of Pakistan was over 1.8 million people. Furthermore, surveys showed that more than 6.7 million people are involved in the practice of beggar, which refers to a traditional system of family labour which is unpaid, compulsory, and amounts to debt bondage.

Hence the calculated number of people kept in bondage based on the PILER study amounts to more than 8.6 million. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan in 1994 estimated that approximately 20 million are kept in forced labour.

The majority of the bonded labour community belongs to marginalized and excluded groups such as the scheduled caste Hindus, Christians and Muslim Sheikhs.

### Agriculture and brick kilns

The two most prominent sectors characterized by a significant use of bonded labour are agriculture and brick kilns. Research carried out by PILER in Pakistan in 2000 indicates that up to 1 million brick kiln workers in Pakistan are bonded. A 2004

survey of brick kilns in the Punjab district in Pakistan by the Federal Bureau of Statistics found that nearly 90 per cent of brick kiln workers were bonded. Also, surveys suggest that agriculture and brick kiln work are of the worst and harshest kinds due to the physical strain, social discrimination and hazardous working conditions. Human Rights Watch interviews with brick kiln forced labourers reveal consistent cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment, including physical punishment, detainment and denial of the right to organize.

### **Dalit Hindu minorities the main target**

Bondage both in agriculture and in brick-kilns includes severe forms of oppression. This ranges from physical restraints upon the movement of the workers and their families to beatings and sexual abuse of female workers. Dalits and other low caste Hindus bear the brunt of these abuses because of their minority status. The multiple disempowerment of being poor, low caste or Dalit as well as non-Muslim are the main contributing factors to the oppressive conditions of bonded labour in Pakistan claims a PILER report.

Violations against sharecroppers are particularly acute in lower Sindh and in southern Punjab bordering India. The latter is also considered to be the main

geographical area of severe oppression against brick-kiln workers and their families. PILER estimates that these sharecroppers will be subjected to increased excesses of bondage because landlords in recent times have been facing adverse economic pressures.

The sharecroppers often live in camps, where they are also subjected to incarceration, and some report of being shackled and raped. As with the general scenario, children are even more vulnerable than their adult counterparts. Children in brick kilns report of being beaten with sticks and whipped to the point of injury. They do not receive compensation for their work, and are also sometimes kept as insurance to prevent the escape of adult family members, reports Human Rights Watch

### **Ineffective Legislation**

The Bonded Labour (System) Abolition Act 1992, created to eradicate this practice was initially considered a major intervention on the part of the State. However, 15 years down the road, bonded labour is far from abolished.

A recent report from Anti-Slavery International prepared in association with PILER in July 2008 stated that the Government had failed to implement the National Policy and Plan of Action (2001) for the abolition of Bonded Labour

and Rehabilitation of freed bonded labourers (an extension of the 1992 Bonded Labour System Abolition Act)(12).

In 2002, a Bonded Labour Fund was established as part of the law for the welfare of the children of released bonded labourers, the majority of whom are scheduled castes. Six years later a substantial portion of the funds remain unused and held by government and the released bonded labourers continue to live in subhuman conditions in temporary camps on the outskirts of Hyderabad according to a joint NGO alternative report for CERD (13).

### **UN Treaty body recommendations**

In its review of Pakistan during its 74th session in February 2009, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) addressed the persistence of bonded labour in the country. Some of its recommendations on this topic were:

1. The government should ensure that ethnic and religious minorities are adequately represented in all government services, especially the armed forces, superior civil services and judiciary.
2. The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act. 1992 should be applied and amended further to penalize

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# INDIA



The city reported 1,813 rapes in 2014, up from 1,441 in 2013. While Delhi continues to lead other big cities in the number of reported rapes, the increase in reported cases has tapered after a sharp spike in 2013

For the first time in history, Delhi is officially the “rape capital” of India. Even while the pace of increase in the number of reported rapes in the city has slowed down, the number of such cases proportionate to its women population was higher than for any other city or State last year. During the past years,

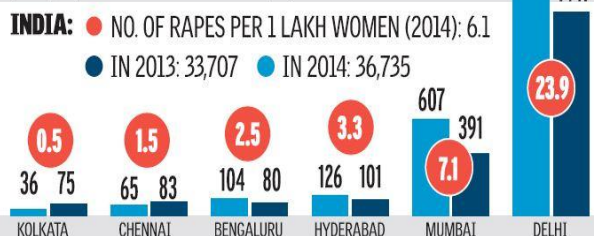
## Delhi is now India's Rape Capital, show NCRB Data

Delhi reported a larger actual number of reported rapes than other cities, but cities in Madhya Pradesh, including Gwalior and Jabalpur, reported higher numbers of rapes proportionate to their populations. This year, Delhi is higher in both absolute and proportionate terms, show data from the National Crime Records Bureau released on Tuesday. The NCRB Collects data from all first information reports filed in police stations across the country. The city

reported 1,813 rapes in 2014, up from 1,441 in 2013. While Delhi continues to lead other big cities in the number of reported rapes, the increase in reported cases has tapered after a sharp spike in 2013. In Mumbai, in contrast, while the number of reported rapes was comparatively lower, there was a sharp spike between 2013 and 2014, from 391 to 607 cases. Nearly all of India's custodial rape — 189 of 197 cases — was reported in Uttar Pradesh,



New Delhi continues to shock, as NCRB data shows the city tops in terms of number of reported rapes last year proportionate to its female population



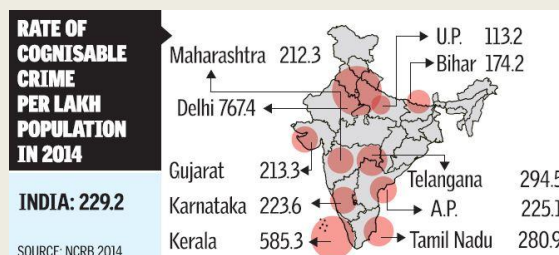
which along with Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh recorded the highest numbers of alleged gang rapes. For the country as a whole, as the number of reported crimes against women increased to over 3.3 lakh, or 56 incidents per lakh women, the rate of increase has tapered off. While the share of reported rape cases in which the offender was known to the victim remained significantly high at 86 per cent, it was substantially lower than in past years, when the

proportion was 94 per cent or higher.

There was a sharp rise in reported crimes against women between 2012 and 2013, as a result of increased awareness following the December 2012 gang-rape, but the increase was sharply lower between 2013 and 2014, the police say.

The new data all but establish Delhi as the country's crime capital; the rate of cognizable crime under Indian Penal Code charges, which grew by only a few percentage points for the country as a whole, nearly doubled for Delhi, to 856 per lakh population. This places the city next only to Indore in terms of cognizable crime proportionate to its population, but Indore's crime rate grew only marginally between the two years.

Contributing to the spike in Delhi was a sharp increase in cases of robbery, burglary and theft, especially auto theft. The capital now accounts for over a fifth of all crime in all big cities.



Nationally, the country recorded nearly 34,000 murders. The country recorded 66,000 incidents of riots, but the majority was classified as not sectarian, political or caste-based but as "others".

*Source: National Crime Records Bureau, NCRB & the Hindu*

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# INTERNATIONAL



## Caste and Gender-Based Forced and Bonded Labour

UN Human Rights Council 29<sup>th</sup> Session SIDE-EVENT - 18<sup>th</sup> June 2015, 17.00-18.30



“Successful fight against stigmatization and deeply entrenched discrimination necessitates the involvement of all, which is only possible by means of broad awareness raising, increased social consciousness and denouncing of continued discrimination based on caste, gender and other factors that undermine human dignity and violate human rights. Events such as this one are an important part of it.” *Urmila Bhoola, UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery*

## Bonded labour · Report – Caste and Gender-Based Forced and Bonded Labour – UN 2015 Side-event

Opened by a statement from the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, Urmila Bhoola, the event highlighted the strong links between caste and slavery and uncovered recommendations for ways forward both within the United Nations framework and beyond.

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possible by means of broad awareness raising, increased social consciousness and denouncing of continued discrimination based on caste, gender and other factors that undermine human dignity and violate human rights. Events such as this



one are an important part of it.” *Urmila Bhoola, UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery*



Coen Kompier, Senior Specialist in international labour standards from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) offered insight into the realities of Dalits working in forced and bonded labour and the many challenges to their successful rehabilitation. He warned that the UN and the ILO need to do more to support Dalits in their struggle and also need to diversify internally when hiring new staff. Mr. Kompier also raised a sharp critique of the global negligence in addressing caste discrimination.

“Caste-based discrimination is globally the most neglected form of discrimination, which seems to be accepted by countries and the UN through a lenient approach of cultural relativism instead of a firm stand against a most devious way of discrimination.” *Coen Kompier, Senior Specialist, ILO*

Laura Dolci-Kanaan, Secretary of the Humanitarian Funds (for Victims of Torture and Victims of Slavery), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

,moderated the event and echoed the concerns of Coen



Kompier that despite rehabilitation efforts, if the underlying stigmatization and discrimination is not addressed, Dalits will be forced to relapse into these inhumane labour conditions.

Ms. Manjula Pradeep briefed participants on the issues of manual scavenging and forced prostitution, two specific examples of inhumane forms of labour forced on Dalit women and girls due to intersecting caste and gender discrimination.

“Ms. Pradeep explained that approximately 1.3 million Dalits in India were engaged in manual scavenging, the removal of human waste from dry latrines by hand and tools such as a broom and basket”. While there were no reliable figures on the amount of Dalit women and girls kept in Devadasi temple prostitution or other forms of caste-based prostitution in India and Nepal, this was a widespread problem, she said.

*Manjula Pradeep, Director of Navsarjan Trust, India*



Speakers working directly with the issues on the ground in South Asia included Durga Sob (Nepal) and a statement read out from Zulfiqar Shah (Pakistan). These speakers gave examples of the intersection of caste and gender in forced prostitution, manual scavenging, work in construction and textile industries and agricultural work including the Haliya practice in Nepal.

Meena Varma, of the Dalit Solidarity Network in the UK also spoke of how to create change through multi-stakeholder initiatives and about Dalit girls working in forced labour under the Sumangali scheme in India's textile industry.

All speakers called for more action by the UN and highlighted the need for comprehensive research and a multidimensional approach to address the lack of implementation of legislation and policies; they further recommended endorsement by the States of the UN Draft Principles and Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination Based on Work and Descent.

Source: International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN)

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# INDIA



The new report 'Cotton's Forgotten Children', released by the Stop Child Labour Campaign and the India Committee on the Netherlands (ICN), finds that almost half a million children in India work as child labourers in the cottonseed production industry. Most of them are Dalits, Adivasis or other low caste children (OBCs). The report warns that most of these children are not in school and are subjected to hazardous work and harmful chemicals.

The report also finds that workers are paid far below minimum wages and are often working to repay their parents debts. The children are made to work 8-12 hours a day. Most are school drop-outs and those who do attend school in the off season

## Low **caste** children suffer in **India's** cottonseed industry

struggle to keep up with their school work. Two thirds of the children are girls, who are also found to receive lower wages than the boys. It is furthermore found that around 70% of the children are hired or trafficked from other states. As previously documented in reports on child labour in India, Dalits and other minority groups in India are particularly vulnerable to labour exploitation due to the multiple discrimination against them. The report, covering Andhra Pradesh,

Gujarat, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, finds an increase in the number of children working in child labour in the cottonseed industry while finding a slight decline in the amount of child labour in the industry, relative to the size of the industry. The increase in the amount of workers is due to rapid growth in the cottonseed industry in India, while the report stipulates that the relative decline in child labour may be due to an increased awareness following campaigns.

Nonetheless, the report finds the problem alarming and detrimental to the children involved.

The data clearly indicate that across all states there is a



steady growth in the proportion of family labour in the total workforce.

The proportion of family labour to the total workforce in 2014-15 is highest in Rajasthan with 48.8%, followed by Gujarat with

36.8%. The proportion of family labour to the total workforce increased significantly since 2006-07 in Gujarat (from 17.6% in 2006-07 to 36.8% in 2014-15) and Tamil Nadu (from 14.7% in 2006-07 to 25.5% in 2014-15). The trends in employment of seasonal migrant workers clearly indicate that, except in Andhra Pradesh, there is a steady decline of seasonal migrant workers working on cottonseed farms since 2006. The decline is very large in Gujarat. The proportion of seasonal migrant workers to the total workforce declined from 83.4% in 2006-07 to 47.8% in 2014-15.

The report has detailed statistics from each state and offers a number of concrete recommendations to help combat child labour in India's cotton-seed industry. The recommendations include companies monitoring all links in their supply chain for child labour



and the payment of minimum wages to employees; knowledge sharing across companies to help end child labour; urging the Government to take action to ensure the minimum wage and live up to the 'duty to protect'; ensuring effective grievance mechanisms and addressing the many interlinked issues.

*Source: International Dalit Solidarity Network & Cotton's Forgotten Childrens.*

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## NEPAL

A scheduled and broadcasted protest rally on August 4 2015 in Kathmandu, organized by the Joint Dalit Struggle Committee including the Coalition of Dalit Constituent Assembly (CA) Members, Dalit civil society and the Joint Political Dalit Struggle Committee, ended in a violent altercation with police. The Dalit activists were calling for Dalit rights to be secured in the new draft Constitution and demanding proportionate representation with additional compensation in the central and provincial governments and legislature.



### Police action against Kathmandu protest organized by Dalit lawmakers and rights activists

During the rally, police allegedly used excessive force against protesters and Durga Sob, President of the Feminist Dalit Organization (FEDO) and a number of other Dalit activists and CA Members were injured.

On August 5, following appeals from among others, the Chair of the CA and FEDO, the government announced that it would form a committee to investigate into the alleged police excesses. The police claim that the use of force was

required to place the situation under control after the protesters turned violent.

The demonstration was triggered by a deep concern of Dalit activists for the dilution of Dalit rights in the new constitution-making process. The rights secured in earlier drafts appear to have been watered down in the new constitution. Dalit activists have therefore been demanding to ensure that their rights are secured in the new constitution-making process. The new draft

constitution does mention non-discrimination, the elimination of all forms of caste-based discrimination and untouchability. However, concern has been raised with regards to some of the actual provisions including the sections on women's rights, Dalit rights and rights to inclusion, equality and social justice. Dalit activists have, among other things, called for guaranteeing equal proportional and additional representation of the Dalit community in legislative

bodies. Specifically, activists are calling for an additional 10%, 5% and 3% at the local, regional and national level respectively along with proportionality, as was secured in previous drafts of the Constitution.

Across the board, the application and enjoyment of a number of fundamental rights (Article 45 of the draft constitution) are restricted by the addition of the clause 'as provided by law.' In effect, the application and enjoyment of certain rights are subjected to the enactment of relevant legislation. Thus, until and unless, relevant legislation is enacted, these rights, including those relevant to the Dalit community, will not be secured.

In terms of the National Women's Commission

(NWC) and the National Dalit Commission (NDC), the new draft Constitution lacks mention of the quasi-judicial powers that they require in order to function as investigating and monitoring institutions and remains silent with regards to their coordination and complementarity with the National Human Rights Commission. Additionally, the NDC continues to lack an independent status as well as Dalit women representation. Furthermore, and contrary to the UN Paris Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions, the draft constitution lacks a provision securing diversity during appointments of Chairpersons and members of the commissions. Further, mention of the human rights mechanisms at the provincial level is lacking and the

National Inclusion Commission lacks mention of Dalit representation.

According to Dalit activists, merely highlighting non-discrimination as a right and not guaranteeing other rights related to life, dignity, representation and participation and following a human rights approach throughout the constitution-making process will be inadequate in addressing the rights of Dalit people. The majority of national organizations including FEDO have appealed for their concerns to be addressed, underlining that unless the new constitution addresses the marginalized and particularly the Dalit community, ownership and finally the legitimacy of the constitution is at risk.

*Source: The Kathmandu Post*

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# INDIA



## Anand Teltumbde

*Is a writer and civil rights activist with the Committee for the Protection of Democratic Rights, Mumbai*



There is a rush for memorials dedicated to Ambedkar. The Sangh Parivar is leaving no stone unturned to appropriate Ambedkar who, given his vitriolic comments on Hinduism, should have been their greatest enemy. At the same time, the gap between the Dalits and non-Dalits continues to widen and atrocities against Dalits continue with impunity.

Now, there shall be an international memorial to Babasaheb Ambedkar in London. Ambedkar used to live in this house in the early 1920s, when he was a student at the London School of Economics. Bureaucratic

## In Thy Name, Ambedkar

bungling over the issue was revealed in the third week of August when the current owner of the house issued an angry ultimatum. This was too embarrassing for the braggart ministers of Maharashtra, who had declared, months ago, that they had acquired this house. Things moved fast after the ultimatum and it appears that the deal is clinched so far as the acquisition of the 2,050 sq ft house for £3.1 million is concerned. In India, Narendra Modi has already laid the foundation stone for a grand

Ambedkar international convention centre at Janpath in Lutyen's Delhi. Another memorial would be constructed at 26, Alipur Road in Outer Delhi, Ambedkar's residence when he was heading the constitution drafting committee. The memorial is touted to be grand enough to thrill aerial viewers. Still another memorial is slated to come up at Mahu, where he was born when his father was in the British army. In Mumbai, yet another, and

perhaps the grandest of all memorials is planned at the premises of Indu Mills. This is where the Republican Sena had erected a makeshift memorial after forcefully occupying the premises on 6 December 2011, unleashing a competitive spurt of Ambedkar- bhakti. The Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment Thawar Chand Gehlot has already declared the Modi government's resolve to develop all important places related to Ambedkar's life. So, there could be a memorial in New York, if not in Bonn, and perhaps at all the places if one could discover them—where Ambedkar stayed while he was living on a paltry scholarship from the Baroda state. Beyond memorials, the government has already declared that the entire year that brings up his 125th birth anniversary shall be celebrated with several programmes, provoking the rival Congress to launch a grand rally in Mahu, along with a conference of Dalit intellectuals, to celebrate the centenary of Ambedkar's graduation from Columbia University. The “three Dalit Rams” who played Hanuman to Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) during the last elections can rightly claim credit for all this. Indeed, what more could Ambedkarites ask for? The only person who would be sad at these developments, however, is Ambedkar himself. Sadly, his followers, intoxicated with identitarian

pride, will never understand this ruling class ploy to blind them to their own reality.

### **Mystery behind Memorials**

There is no issue about Ambedkar deserving these memorials and perhaps many more, notwithstanding he himself was against hero worship.

Memorials symbolize gratitude of people and also serve as beacon for future generations to emulate people who worked beyond their selves for others. Even communists who vehemently hold people to be the creator of history have memorialised their heroes. In the case of Ambedkar, right after his death in 1956, his disciples erected a modest structure in Mumbai at Dadar Chowpatty at the place where he was cremated with their humble donations. The structure in the shape of a Buddhist stupa symbolized the culmination of his life-long struggle for annihilation of caste and was named Chaitya Bhoomi. That small structure attracts a stream of people from all over the country. The crowd swells to over 2 million on 6 December, his death anniversary. Beyond it, there was no memorial to Ambedkar until recently. No political party or the state showed even sympathy when Dalits struggled for one. It is only after the mid-1960s, when electoral politics became competitive with the emergence of regional parties floated by the newly empowered populous middle castes that the political

parties began realizing the power of Ambedkar as an icon to mobilize Dalits to vote for them. The first-past-the-post type of election that we adopted amplified the sponsored by Norway and Denmark. importance of even a small vote block beyond proportion. With 84 reserved seats in Lok Sabha (and reserved seats in state assemblies and local bodies) and being relatively more organised than other castes, Dalits became a cost effective target for all parties to woo. The first party to reflect this attitudinal change was, of course, the Congress which unleashed its co-optation strategy in 1965. The construction of Ambedkar iconography became a part of this strategy. Suddenly Ambedkar statues began dotting cities, and towns and roads were named after him. Even then, there was no memorial to Ambedkar. After Chaitya Bhoomi, the most important places to commemorate Ambedkar should have been his two rooms in Dabak Chawl in Parel where he lived until 1931 and Rajgruha which was his home—and also houses his library—until he shifted to Delhi in 1942. The former is largely forgotten but Rajgruha should have been made a memorial. But it got caught in the cobwebs of Maharashtra politics and stands ignored although Dalits visit it every day. One day, this important monument is going to be lost forever to the people. With



the ascendance of BJP to power, the competition to claim Ambedkar has intensified and this clamour for memorials is a mere manifestation of this comedy.

### **Erect Memorials, Bury the Mission**

Memorials may make sense if the mission of the man also is respected and progressed. Ambedkar's mission was annihilation of caste, so as to usher in a society based on "liberty, equality, fraternity." However, the display of love for Ambedkar appears directly proportional to the disdain for his dreams. Forget castes, untouchability, outlawed by the Constitution, lingers—in even its crudest form. From the dawn of the 21st century, three major surveys, the Action Aid survey (2001–02) of 565 villages in 11 states, Navsarjan survey of 1,589 villages in Gujarat (2007–10) and the recent National Council of Applied Economic Research report of November 2014 reveal shocking incidences of untouchability.

Untouchability is an aspect of castes. With caste surviving, untouchability can never disappear. Ambedkar's ideal of liberty, equality, fraternity is of course light years away, and is getting distant with each passing day. Liberty has been a chimera for a vast majority of people, gripped with basic livelihood concerns and additionally fettered by the police state that has effectively stifled their voice. Equality no more

survives even in public discourse; its place has been usurped by the World Bank's concept of inclusion and the Hindutva brigade's notion of *samarasata*. India today ranks among the most unequal societies in the world! Fraternity anyway was inconceivable in the caste society; it is much so in the newly casteised post-1991 India. The state of Dalits for whom Ambedkar worked his entire life could be another parameter to assess the love of memorial makers for Ambedkar. There is no development parameter on which the gap between Dalits and non-Dalits (unfortunately it includes Muslims whose state also is as pathetic as Dalits thereby dampening the statistics) is not significant. Take any yardstick—poverty, urbanisation, employment, mortality rates (infant, neonatal, child), occupational distribution, anaemia (children, pregnant women), body mass index, literacy, enrolment (at various levels of education), dropout rates, and access to various public amenities—Dalits are way behind the non-Dalit population. The most worrying feature of this gap is that it appeared to be reducing, albeit slowly, in the first four decades after independence. But after the adoption of the Social Darwinist neo-liberal reforms, the gap has been widening rapidly. These policies have hit Dalits hard and marginalized them on

every possible front. If atrocities are taken as the proxy for caste consciousness, then one can hardly escape the conclusion that the latter has risen with unprecedented pace and intensity during the past nearly two-and-a-half decades of neo-liberalism. Around 40,000 cases of atrocities against Dalits are registered every year. The persistent trend of acquitting the perpetrators of atrocities—Kilvenmani (1968) where 44 Dalit women and children were burnt alive, massacre of Dalits in Karamchedu (1985) and Chundurur (1991) in Andhra Pradesh and the Dalit massacre cases in Bihar (Bathani Tola in 1996 where 21 Dalits were killed, Lakshmanpur-Bathe in 1997 where 61 people were butchered, Miyanpur in 2000 where 32 people were killed, Nagari Bazaar where 10 people were killed in 1998, and Shankar Bigha where 22 Dalits were massacred in 1999)—has clearly established that casteist criminals enjoy state backing against Dalits.

### **Defiling Legacy, Disfiguring Icon**

It is interesting to note that on one hand the Sangh Parivar and its BJP government are waxing eloquent over Ambedkar but on the other hand they are systematically defiling his secular legacy. His vitriolic comments on Hinduism and Hindutva should make Ambedkar the greatest enemy of the Parivar.

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## SOUTH ASIA

## DALIT WATCH

**Dalit woman gang-raped near Bhilwara**

Jul 18, 2015

AJMER: A Dalit woman was gang-raped by seven youths in Kanechen village of

Shahpura block of nearby Bhilwara district. The victim was hospitalized and is undergoing treatment. All the accused are

absconding. According to police, two youths Rahul Kumar and Sager lured the woman and raped her. Later, five more drunk youths reached the spot and raped the victim and left her in the jungle. Later, the victim reached main road and via a roadways bus went to Shahpura police station. She was admitted to government hospital. [Source: The Times of India](#)

**Lantern rally for Dalit rights**

2, August 2015

KATHMANDU :Dalit Rights Struggle Committee (DRSC) on Saturday organised



a lantern rally to protest against the draft constitution and create pressure on political parties to ensure their rights in the new constitution. The rally that started from Maitighar Mandala converged into a gathering at New Baneswor in front of the Constituent Assembly (CA) building where leaders lashed out at the draft constitution. Dalit leaders including CA member Biswendra Paswan, central member of Nepal National Dalit Liberation Front Khim Bahadur Biswokarma, among others, criticised the leaders for cutting out all the rights of the Dalits. They have also demanded secularism in the country besides their proper representation and warned that they wouldn't accept the new statute if the draft constitution

was not amended. Binod Pahadi of DRSC said

the Committee demanded at least three percent reservation in the federal parliament, five per cent in the provinces, 10 per cent in local bodies, and proportional representation of Dalits. [Source: The Himalayan Times](#)

**50 Dalits in Haryana convert to Islam**

9 August 2015

New Delhi: Nearly 50 members of the

Dalit community of Haryana's Bhagana village on Saturday converted to Islam during protest demonstration at Jantar Mantar in the National Capital. The demonstration, organised by Bhagana Kand Sangarsh Samiti (BKSS) was against the alleged persecution faced by the Dalit community at the hands of upper caste Jats. At the heart of the conflict in Haryana is the struggle over land and its use and ownership by the poor Dalits which has been grabbed by the dominant castes. Speaking to dna 45-year-old Ved Pal of the BKSS said that the



movement to convert to Islam has been gaining pace ever since the brutal gang rape of four Dalit girls in Bhagana village in 2014. The girls were going out to fetch water in the evening and they saw a white colored car rushing towards them and grabbed them inside the car. The girls, aged between 13 and 18 years, belong to the landless Dhanuk caste, and worked for upper caste landowners. Ved Pal said the khap panchayat had imposed a social boycott against the caste group, forcing 250 families to leave their homes and flee the village. "The villagers had to leave our village facing total boycott. Barbers not cutting hair, kids being removed from schools and denying entry into temples is a common happening," Pal said. On Saturday afternoon, around 50 people, all of them men, gathered for demonstration and after brief speeches of community leaders converted to Islam. The protesters recited verses of Quran and offered prayers as well. The development comes after almost a year of holding a sit-in protest at Jantar Mantar. Previously, in a written statement, the victim families had said some of the victims have already converted to Islam in protest against the atrocities of upper caste Hindus. Satish Kajla, was among the men who converted to Islam on Saturday. While speaking to reporters said that by becoming Muslims he hopes

that other Islamic nations would raise voice against the persecution the Dalit community faces. [Source: DNA](#)

### **U.K. Dalit groups question Modi's silence on Cobrapost revelations**

25 Aug 2015



**New Delhi:** Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the United Kingdom, four U.K.-based Dalit organizations have written to Mr. Modi expressing dismay at his silence over the revelations made by news portal Cobrapost on the alleged involvement of senior BJP leaders in the massacre of Dalits in Bihar. Their letter questions why Mr. Modi has neither spoken out against the self-confessed killers and their accomplices nor taken any action against the senior BJP politicians allegedly involved in the massacres of some 144 Dalit men, women and children in Bihar. In the August 19 letter, the groups have urged Mr. Modi to act as his "lack of action on this issue gives the shocking message that Dalit and oppressed caste lives do not matter in India." The groups are: the Dalit Solidarity Network; the Federation of

Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organizations, U.K.; the Caste Watch U.K.; and the South Asia Solidarity Group. The letter condemns BJP leader Giriraj Singh for having earlier described the slain Ranvir Sena leader Brahmeshwar Singh, known as 'Mukhiya', as "Bihar's Gandhi" as the Cobrapost documentary exposes the man to be the mastermind of the killings of Dalit men, women and children. It has also noted with concern that the Amir Das Commission, which was set up in 1997 after the Laxmanpur Bathe killings to investigate these massacres, was disbanded in 2005 by Nitish Kumar, then in alliance with the BJP, "in order to appease and shield his erstwhile BJP allies." Raising the question whether such horrific violence could be tolerated in a democratic country, the letter demands that all the politicians including senior BJP leaders named in the Amir Das Commission report be dismissed from their posts. It has also demanded that the Army and ex-Army personnel who allegedly trained and armed the banned Ranvir Sena members be brought to justice.

### **Amnesty plea on khap rape diktat gets over 2.6 lakh signatures**

6, Sept 2015

**MEERUT:** An online petition to Uttar Pradesh





chief minister Akhilesh Yadav by human rights group Amnesty International, seeking protection and justice for two Dalit sisters allegedly threatened with rape by a khap panchayat in Sankraund village of Baghpat district has so far gathered over 2.60 lakh signatures, mostly on its British website since the petition was launched last week. Meanwhile, from the vernacular press to the national media and even British public broadcaster BBC have reported that no such kangaroo court was held in Sankraund. The story of ordering the rape of two Dalit sisters because their brother eloped with a Jat woman gained international attention after Amnesty International published a petition to save the girls. Meanwhile, the villagers of Sankraund village, across all the castes including Dalits reportedly said that no such panchayat had been held at the village. Amnesty International launched its petition on August 24, in which it says: "Two Dalit sisters were ordered to be raped and paraded naked by an unelected all-male village council in Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh. Their house was ransacked and they are now in New Delhi, too scared to go home. Why are they being punished? Because their brother eloped with a married woman from a Jat (dominant caste) family." Himanshi Matta from Amnesty International India told agencies that the petition called on the government to

take all steps to ensure the safety of the family so they can return home and for an investigation into the rape order and prosecution if necessary. According to Amnesty International, the petition to CM Akhilesh Yadav has so far attracted the attention of over 2,60,000 people. Only 17 people had signed the petition on Amnesty's India site till September 3, said Matta. Meanwhile, BBC expressed its disappointment over the issue stating that the world is concentrating on something that did not happen instead of young people who cannot choose who they marry. The BBC reached out to Amnesty International only to discover the human rights organization did not confirm the story before they set up a petition. "We have not been on the ground, we have not visited the village," explained spokesperson Gopika Bashi to BBC. Amnesty, however, stated that it has no plans to withdraw the petition. "We will continue to push for protection for the family," Bashi said. [Source: The Times of India](#)

### Caste clash in Patan village

21, Sep 2015



AHMEDABAD: The spectre of the ongoing Patidar quota stir turning into an inter-caste conflict looms large over the

state. On Sunday, police lobbed teargas shells near Ladva village in Patan district to disperse members of Patidar and Chaudhari communities as they resorted to stone-pelting over a minor incident. Patan SP A G Chauhan said about 100 Patidar women had gathered on the road clattering plates with spoons to block traffic. "Just then a Chaudhari family travelling by car urged the women to let them go as there was an emergency. However, a minor altercation took place and soon Chaudhari members from the nearby Talaj village reached there and stone-pelting resulted," added Chauhan. On Saturday, a group of agitating Patidar women in Ramol had confronted members of Rabari community. On August 25, there was a conflict between residents of Thakorevas and Patidars in Vadaj area. Police officials said they rushed to the spot soon and dispersed the crowds which by then had resorted to minor stone pelting. "We had to lob 3 tear gas shells to disperse the mobs" added Chauhan. Chauhan said they then called leaders of both community and made them sit together. "They too responded well and compromised never to indulge with each other" added Chauhan. However as news of the incident reached DGP office in Gandhinagar, senior police officials were worried and directed their subordinates to calm the situation. [Source Times of India](#)

## IN Rape Cases, Even Filing an FIR is Difficult: Dalit Women

27, Sep 2015



**Madurai:** Many of the 30-odd dalit women who attended a public hearing meeting in Arasaradi in the city said they had been subjected to sexual harassment, including rape, but had been unable to take the legal path for justice due to pressure and discrimination. The meeting was held by Madurai-based NGO Evidence so as to provide legal assistance to dalit women who had faced

atrocities. Director of Evidence A Kathir presided over the meeting, called 'Dalit Women Speak Out'. Saradha (name changed), a 47-year-old mid-day meal worker from Thirupuvanam, said she was raped by a 24-year-old man while she was returning home from the school. "Everyone asked me to settle the issue without registering a police complaint to protect the honour of the village," she said. "On February 1 2014, my 17-year-old daughter was raped by a gang of four men, who later dumped her in a garbage site in our village. It has been a year since we last went to the village, because the villagers

accused my daughter of being in love with a boy outside our caste. The accused were also later released on bail," said another dalit woman from Ottanagampatti. According to statistics given by Evidence, around 923 rape cases were registered in Tamil Nadu in 2013 and a whopping 10,565 cases were registered in 2014, of which 1,110 were cases of rape of minor girls. Of these, one of the most vulnerable groups was dalit women, who face several hindrances right from the time of filing a complaint in the police station to getting medical checkups done, they said. **Source: The Time of India**

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## BANGLADESH



*The alternative report on Dalit children in Bangladesh is written by the International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN) and submitted to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child for the 70<sup>th</sup> Working Group session (14 September –2 October 2015). The report examines the current situation of Dalit children and provides information about the implementation gaps in the enforcement of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, and makes recommendations for the Committee's examination. The observations are based on independent studies and reports, case documentation, and recommendations by other UN human rights bodies*

### Dalit Children in Bangladesh

Caste discrimination affects both the Hindu and the Muslim populations in Bangladesh, and perpetuates the poverty trap the country is caught in. Dalits exist far below the poverty line with extremely limited access to health services, education and employment. They live in 'colonies' with very poor housing and work almost exclusively in 'the service sector', doing unclean jobs in urban areas such as street sweeping, manual scavenging and burying the dead. The lives of Dalits are particularly harsh due to the practice of

caste discrimination. They are frequently prevented from entering the homes of non-Dalits and are often met with discrimination when trying to bury members of their family at public graveyards. A large number of child labourers in Bangladesh are Dalits. Members of minorities, most of whom are Dalits, hold almost no official positions. The estimates of the number of Dalits in Bangladesh vary from 3.5-5.5 million. They have been much overlooked in the development and rights discourse and have only recently been able to raise

their voices. Having started to engage with government and international donors, they have now managed to place the issue of caste discrimination on the agenda. Girls and women from Dalit communities in Bangladesh often fall victim to prostitution and trafficking of bonded labour. They are deprived control, not only over property, but also over their own bodies. They are excluded from political participation, community development and employment, and have faced violent attacks when trying to vote. Dalit children are even more vulnerable than their adult counterparts and face discrimination in education and are particularly vulnerable to child labour.

Moreover, Dalit girls suffer multiple discrimination at the intersection of caste and gender discrimination.

### **Education, leisure and cultural activities: Dalit children in Education**

Despite the Government's efforts to promote the right to education, most Dalit children do not complete formal education, with the majority attending for only one or two years. Poverty and caste discrimination within schools from both teachers and students are key reasons why Dalit families choose for their children to work rather than attend school. According to one study, 64% of Hindu Dalits and 61% of Muslim Dalits have no education at all. School enrolment rates

are as low as 10%, with dropout rates of those that did attend school at around 95% compared to national enrolment rates of 85%. Over 80% of Dalits surveyed experienced discrimination in admission to schools, with some Dalit parents being actively discouraged by teachers from enrolling their children. Further, 82% of Hindu Dalits and 84% of Muslim Dalits had experienced discrimination by the time they had started school and many experience discrimination in schools, for example being forced to sit on the floor or to clean toilets.

Despite the Government's recent education policy which committed them to educate children in their mother tongue, this is still not being implemented. Further, there is no provision made for Dalit children to learn Bangla which is also a major barrier to them attending schools. In 2009, the CRC Committee strongly recommended that "the principle of non-discrimination, as provided for under article 2 of the Convention, be fully and vigorously applied by the State party and integrated into the implementation of all other articles to guarantee, without discrimination, the rights set out in the Convention. The Committee further recommended that the State party take the necessary measures to ensure that efforts to address persistent discrimination and reduce

disparities are adequate and effective in the family, schools and other settings, and in particular among marginalized and excluded children, including girls, children of ethnic minorities and refugee children. None of the government initiatives to achieve 'universal' access to primary education have had a specific focus on improving the literacy and educational levels of Dalits or countering the caste-based discrimination they face in schools. The implementation of even general educational measures to the benefit of Dalit students is not known in the absence of educational data that is disaggregated by social group.

### **Recommendations**

- National and local governments should take effective measures to reduce dropout rates and increase enrolment rates among children of caste-affected communities at all levels of public and private schooling, by providing scholarships or other financial subsidies, combating classroom segregation, harassment and discrimination against pupils of caste-affected communities and ensuring non-discriminatory access to such schemes, including through provision of adequate equipment, staffing and quality of teaching in public schools, as well as adequate means of physical access to schools for children living in dominant caste



neighborhoods and armed conflict areas.

- Governments should take all necessary measures to remove obstacles, including child labour, which keep children from regular full time education.
- Governments should also pay particular attention to the need of providing adequate education to children and adults who are unable to read and write because of lack of formal education.
- The government should constitute an 'Equity Working Group' within the Education Ministry to continually devise and monitor targeted education schemes for Dalits. These schemes should be devised in consultation with Dalit communities and CSOs. Schemes would include scholarships allocated for Dalit children in order to encourage their schooling and higher education.

#### **Economic exploitation: Child labour and Dalit Children**

Bonded labour and child labour represent a significant

human rights problem in Bangladesh among Dalit communities. According to one study, 26% of Hindu Dalits and 35% of Muslim Dalits are, to a larger or smaller degree, bound by loans from employers. The Constitution prohibits forced or compulsory labour. However, implementation is lacking. Also, laws, policies and programmes on forced, bonded or child labour currently being implemented by the Bangladesh government do not make reference to caste vulnerabilities to these forms of prohibited labour.

As per the national child labour survey 2002-2003 conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) the estimated number of working children in Bangladesh is 7.4 million. Out of these, 3.2 million children are considered as child labour, of which 1.3 million children are engaged in hazardous labour.

Again, many are likely to be Dalit children, given their poorer socio-economic conditions.

There are no specific measures and no disaggregated data available on the representation of Dalits among the country's populations engaged in bonded, forced and child labour. Without official tracking of the Dalit involvement in these forms of prohibited labour, the possibility to comment on the status of implementation vis-à-vis Dalits is very limited.

#### **Recommendations**

- The government should review its programmes to eliminate prohibited forms of labour - bonded, forced and child labour, including trafficking - and report on both how many Dalits are victims of these forms of labour as well as how many Dalits become beneficiaries of the various government efforts in this regard.

*Source: International Dalit  
Solidarity Network*

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# INDIA



## DISCONCERTING DATA

The number of murder cases and rape of Dalit women has gone up compared to 2013.

<b>1.4</b> crore	<b>1,546</b>	<b>10.7*</b>
Total Scheduled Caste population in Tamil Nadu	Incidence of crime against Scheduled Caste in Tamil Nadu	Rate of cognizable crimes

<b>77**</b>	Number of murders of Scheduled Caste persons	<b>52</b>	Number of attempts at murdering Scheduled Caste persons
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**Includes cases not registered under Prevention of Atrocities Act	* Rate of cognizable crimes = Total cases/total population X1,00,000
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Source: National Crime Records Bureau, 2014

Tamil Nadu saw a disconcerting rise in the number of Dalits murdered in 2014, even though the overall incidence of crime against the Scheduled Caste (SC) community has dropped.

## Steep Rise In dalit Murders in 2014

The latest crime figures released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reveal that the situation in Tamil Nadu is as bad as it is in several Northern States with respect to murder of Dalits, with 72 such cases recorded in 2014. This is higher than Bihar, which registered 56 murders, and just below Madhya Pradesh with 80 cases under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code. In 2013, 28 Dalits were murdered in

Tamil Nadu. There were also 52 SC victims of attempt-to-murder cases in the State. The data says the 72 murder victims came from 43 incidents, indicating prevalence of mob attacks or clashes. Bihar, for example, had 56 victims from the same number incidents. Thirty-three Dalit women were raped in Tamil Nadu in 2014, compared to 28 in 2013. There was a lone attempt-to-rape case.



### Overall picture

The overall picture though provided a positive trend, with the incidence of crimes against Dalits dropping from 1,845 in 2013 to 1,546 in 2014. The NCRB data used the Census 2011 figures for population of Dalits, which was pegged at 1.4 crore for Tamil Nadu.

### Underreporting

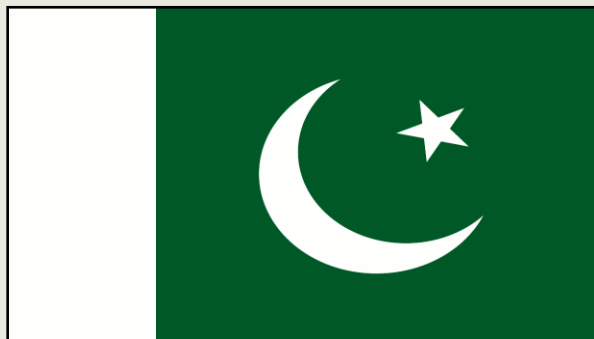
Calling the increase in murders of Dalits a “disturbing trend”, Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi leader D. Ravikumar said Dalits faced huge hardship in getting cases registered. At a recent public hearing conducted by the National Scheduled Caste Commission, many pointed

to a high rate of acquittals in cases registered under the Prevention of Atrocities Act.

“There have already been questions raised on the number of farmer suicides the NCRB reported. I feel there is a clear case of underreporting,” he said.

*Source: The Hindu*

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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**