

# Quarterly MINO-VIEW

Vol: 04 Issue: 04  
Oct-Dec. 2016



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## Editorial

Justice delayed is justice denied. Majority of the people who are suffering of legal discrimination are the Dalits and Muslims. They are facing discrimination in all spheres of life, including civil, political, social and economic exclusion and also of their legal rights. In India excess to justice for dalits and other minorities is dismally low. More than half of under trials are Dalits, Muslims and Tribals. The share of Muslim convict and under-trials in jails is higher than their share in the population. Muslims, Dalits and Advasis-three of most vulnerable section of Indian Society make up more than half of India's population. Data shows Muslim under trial lodged in jails are more as compared to their population. One India despite being the largest democracy has two glaring different justice systems. One for Dalits and other minorities, any of their crime will have swift punishment from the state, there will be instant justice meted to them. But if violence takes place against Dalits and minorities, perpetrators would never be found. State will play the games of inquiry commission. Undertrials in the jails are from poor section who cannot afford bail or lawyer. Data analysis is conducted about financial and political status of under trials and who get convicted and those who do not.

Rich and affluent get early positive result and poor languish in jails for petty crimes. In India the life of Muslims, Dalits and Tribals are going through difficult times due to illiteracy and partisan attitude of upper and middle class. The prison statistics report shows that the proportions of Muslims, Dalits and Advasis have remained unchanged over past 15 years indicating problem in the system. The rich employ the best lawyer and stay out of jail even after conviction. There is an increasing number of under trials and huge pendency cases.

Indian judicial system is degrading for Dalits for the biases of court judges. The Indian justice system needs immediate reforms and examine allegation critically without biases. This issue of Mino-View also includes India ban on foreign funds shut down Dalits charity. Charities, especially foreign-backed aids came under scrutiny by the BJP government led by PM Narendra Modi ever since it has come to power. In Bangladesh Dalit women face threefold discrimination on the basis of caste, gender and economic status. Caste oppression exits among Sri Lankan Tamils but is kept under wraps. A photo exhibition "Dalit: A Quest for Dignity" in Nepal reflects Nepali Dalits history and life. British Indian divided over anti-caste law. Supporters say victims of discrimination deserve legal clarity, while critics say it will create friction within society. The 9th International Seminar on Dr B.R. Ambedkar on the topic "Ambedkar's philosophy: Path to Social Justice in South Asia" was held on at Al-Razi Hall, University of Punjab, Lahore. Renowned scholars and intellectuals from Pakistan and India participated and delivered their papers.

Editor

PAKISTAN



Organized by



Sir Ganga Ram Heritage Foundation, Lahore



Centre for South Asian Studies, P.U.

# AMBEDKAR'S PHILOSOPHY Path to Social Justice in South Asia

## 9<sup>th</sup> International Seminar

on

## Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar

Founder of Secular Democratic India

15<sup>th</sup> December 2016



## 9th International Seminar on Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

The 9th International Seminar on Dr. B. R. Ambedkar on topic "Ambedkar Philosophy: Path to Social Justice in South Asia" was held on December 15th, 2016 at Al-Razi Hall, New Campus, University of the Punjab, Lahore. Chief Guest of the program was Siddiq-ul-Farooq Chairman Evacuee Trust Property Board. Vice Chancellor Punjab University was also present at the seminar. Director Sir Ganga Ram Heritage Foundation delivered the welcome address. Among the Indian guest speakers Miss Manjula Pradeep, Social activist Ahmadabad, Dr. Anand Teltumbde dalit scholar from Goa, Parmod Kumar professor of English at Indra Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, delivered the paper. All Indian guests were of the view that the popularity and significance of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in all over India is increasing day by day. From Pakistan Dr. Mujahid Mansoori and Muhammad Munir Shirwani Radio Pakistan also delivered the paper in the seminar. Finally V.C Punjab University Dr. Mujahid Kamran and Chief Guest Siddique-ul-Farooq addressed the seminar. In the end souvenirs were distributed among the participants by the chief guest. The hall with capacity of 200 people was fully occupied by the audience, Deans, professors, media persons, minority representatives and students were among the audience.

### DR. ANAND TELTUMBDE

Dr. Anand thanked SGRHF for organizing the program on Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and inviting him on this auspicious occasion. He praised Dr. Ambedkar as a remarkable and most educated person of the subcontinent of his time. He said the philosophy of Baba Sahib is like Ambedkarism in India what the people call and there are lots of Ambedkarites who are formed by the philosophy of Ambedkar. The philosophy of Ambedkar can be put into a single word Democracy. For him Democracy was not a system of government but it is well being of an ideal society. An ideal society is based on three things liberty, equality and fraternity. The meanings of these three words, means to be understood. Liberty is the freedom of every individual of the society and not the freedom of the exploiter to exploit others, freedom of the capitalist and freedom of the landlord to exploit. It emphasizes equality. Democracy is the government for, by and of the people. But his definition of Democracy actually is far beyond the sensible government. It was not





government but something like associated living in this world; actually it is communication with the fellow beings so we exercise fraternity. It is a wake of life near Ambedkar. Ambedkar again emphasized Democracy as a system of transformation and achieving a human progress. Ambedkar define democracy as a form and method of government whereby revolutionary changes in the economic and social life of people are brought without bloodshed. For success of Democracy the first and foremost element is equality. Dr Ambedkar was of the opinion that political democracy must change to form a social democracy in order to develop state socialism. Ambedkar is associated with the constitution of India. He believed that Democracy is essential in imparting social justice. The coexistence of three democracies i.e. political, social and economic is imperative to achieve the goals of equality and fraternity as enshrined in the constitution of India. He criticized the parliamentary democracy which is running today because it has altered the principle of liberty and equality for highlighting liberty. Ambedkar attribute extensive meaning to democracy. Ambedkar proposed plan of state socialism according to which all the basic entities to be nationalized. Cultivable land be nationalized and owned by state and passed to communities and the land taken from land holders or property taken from capitalist would be compensated. He said India is India because of Baba Sahib's constitution.

#### PARMOD KUMAR

Mr Parmod Kumar said I have brought love, peace and harmony from my country India for you. It was time that nobody knew Ambedkar, but now everyone knows him. You are witnessing the powerful discourse that they are teaching him in different ways in programs around the world. It is the need of the time to follow Ambedkar. People in the world think that caste system is an organized system where there is division of labour. But Ambedkar says it is division of labourer. He was clear of his understandings. Ambedkar was a global and revolutionary person and should be adopted and acquired in our day to day life that is important. He has clarity of how the world operates. He had a great understanding of this world. The way Ambedkar challenged discourses in his life time are before us. He pointed out at the back stage banner of



the Seminar and SGRHF standee behind him on which Ambedkar slogan of equality, liberty and fraternity was mentioned. He said we have to understand these words and how to acquire them. When you study equality then you realize what equality is. Equality should reflect in each and every aspect of life. How can we claim democracy when there is a big inequality? Talking about social justice, he said education is the



first step towards social justice. Education is the only instrument that can transform situation and bring change. When speaking of social justice we take example of schools. Statistics in India shows, one teacher school, no toilets in schools and some are without roof. The schools are there for namesake. If we improve the level of education at primary level we are doing great service to Ambedkar. If we look at South Asia we can be proud of this area because it has largest youth potential population. There is a scope of transformation here. Statistics show 33 million of

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primary and secondary out of school students in South Asia in 2016. The dropout rate are even more and worse. Provision of basic education is in disorder and need remedy. Revolutionary pattern has to be adopted in our day to day approach and not to talk about in programs. The reform of educational system in schools should be the top priority, only then we can do justice to Ambedkar criteria of social justice. At the time of entry of the student in school system, we have to work on the retention of students and after they go out of school and college there have to be replacement related provisions for our students. We should have enhancement of community participation which

include education development strategy, reform and schooling as it is a must. This is the only way to do justice to Ambedkar great ideas of social justice. Development of Institutions, educational strategy and scheme of poverty reduction, dissemination of new formation of communication technology, production and use of indigenous softwares, Ambedkar has to be remembered not because he could see problems, articulate problems, not because he could visualize the kind of plan and strategy to challenge but he was seen achieving that also. He has passed 3 to 4 mantra to us to educate, agitate, and understand. So I understand that we can look at him and follow him.

### MANJULA PRADEEP

Manjula Pradeep said that the most famous quote of Dr. Ambedkar is “Educate Unite Agitate” meaning that to excess the path to social justice, people who have been discriminated for past several centuries due to their social origin have to first get educated then Unite and finally they have to agitate for their rights. I as a human rights activist, striving for human rights of one of the most discriminated communities in the world and in South Asia, I see Education as the first and foremost path toward social justice. For thousands of years, Dalits were not entitled to attain literacy and in Manu code of Law, it's said that “If a Dalit listen to the Sanskrit chants, then hot lead should be poured in

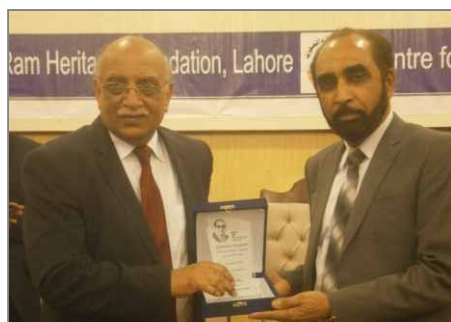


his/her ears. We have come a long way from being humiliated, disregarded, oppressed, and denied of our rights as human beings. At one time we were in the category of untouchables, unseeables and unapproachable. Although majority of us have moved out of the category of unseeables and unapproachable, but we still face untouchability and discrimination in varied forms.

Education is a tool for empowerment and that's what Ambedkar believed in. She said that the vulnerability, that a Dalit woman faces due to her identity based on caste and gender is unimaginable. She goes through all forms of caste and gender discrimination and many times faces caste and gender violence. Due to her gender, she is forced into inhumane caste based

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occupations, like manual scavenging, temple prostitution, bonded labour, child labour etc. She also suffers from caste and gender violence including domestic violence, unnatural death, human trafficking, mass/gang rapes, forced conversion, etc. One of the famous quotes of Dr. Ambedkar is “I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved”.







## India: More than half of undertrials are Dalits, Muslims and tribals

More than 55 percent of under trials in India are either Muslims, Dalits or tribals, according to official data.

By Anmol



More than 55 percent of undertrials across India are either Muslims, Dalits or tribals, according to new prison figures from the country's National Crime Records Bureau for 2015.

This rankles when one looks at the demographics: Muslims, Dalits and tribals together account for 39 percent of India's population.

Speaking to Al Jazeera, Kancha Ilaiah, one of India's most prominent Dalit scholars, explained the "double burden".

"Crimes against Dalits do not get registered owing to biases at every level and even if they do get registered, the upper-caste offenders tend to get bail easily from the judiciary," said Ilaiah.

According to the 2011 Census, Muslims make up 14.2 percent, Scheduled Castes 16.6 percent and Scheduled Tribes 8.6 percent of India's population

### .Persecution of Dalits

In India, Dalits have long faced persecution. For generations, low-caste Dalit people were considered "dirty" in the Hindu caste system and were not allowed to eat, marry or mix with higher castes.

"Historically, the upper castes are

exempt from punishment. Punishment is supposed to be given to lower castes according to ancient Hindu law. The law has now become secular but handling of the justice system remains biased" Ilaiah said.

So dire is the situation that earlier this summer, the Chief Justice of India's Supreme Court stressed while addressing Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the country's failure to appoint enough judges to deal with the huge backlog of pending cases.



**More than 22 million cases are currently pending in India's district courts. Six million of those have lasted longer than five years. Another 4.5 million are waiting to be heard in the High Courts and more than 60,000 in the Supreme Court.**

According to the Crime Records Bureau, more than two-third of all Indian jail inmates are undertrials.

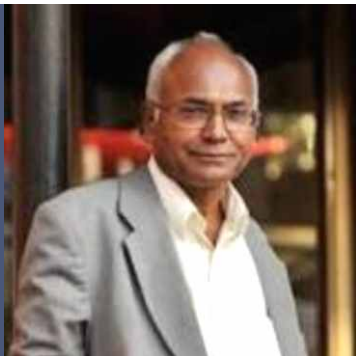
The government allocated only 0.2 percent of its 2016 budget to the law ministry, one of the lowest proportions in the world.

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### Rising figures

In a country like India that is steeped in economic disparities, the means to prevent incarceration





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among its poor populace is also limited.

"The consequences of even minor crimes, of course, are much more severe among poor people. Rich people or the upper castes will just pay the fines, bribe some officials. But for poor and persecuted communities, this proves to be a real hardship," said Ilaiah.

The scenes outside any court building in India are vastly similar: long queues of people, many of them from the most oppressed classes, waiting without any guarantee of getting a complete hearing. Identity markers like caste and religion compound the problem.

A new Economist report earlier this week delineated the growing estrangement of Indian Muslims including the starkly disparate fates of a Hindu and a Muslim man accused of spreading religiously insulting material.

"The issue of these higher figures of incarceration among India's lower castes and Muslims is a political hot potato. At a time when Indian politicians are wary of being accused of 'pandering to votebanks', it will be left to embattled civil society groups to agitate and demand accountability" said Tanweer Alam, researcher at Oxford University.

With the growing number of undertrials and the huge pendency of cases, the Indian justice system needs immediate reform, one that will also critically examine allegations of inherent biases. Anmol Saxena is the bureau chief of Al Jazeera English in India and is based in New Delhi

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*Source: Al Jazeera News*





## A review: US State Department Report on human rights in India

Department  
Of  
State



The US State Department published its Report 2015 on human rights practices in India, which provides a comprehensive overview of the human rights situation in the country. The report covers areas of deprivation of life, detention, torture, trial procedures, violence, freedom of speech, assembly and religion, cultural rights, freedom of movement, refugees, political rights, workers' rights and discrimination against vulnerable groups, including women, Dalits, indigenous, LGBTI, children, people with disabilities and those affected by HIV/AIDS.

The report's summary states: ***'The most significant human rights problems involved police and security force abuses, including extrajudicial killings, torture, and rape; corruption remained widespread and contributed to ineffective responses to crimes, including those against women, children, and members of scheduled castes or tribes; and societal violence based on gender, religious affiliation, and caste or tribe.'***

The report's notable achievement is in its ability to reflect the significance of the issue of caste-based discrimination on Dalit communities in India. It notes that regardless of special quotas and benefits Dalit communities continue to face impediments in education, jobs, access to justice, freedom of movement, access to institutions and services. ***'Crimes committed against Dalits reportedly often went unpunished, either because authorities failed to prosecute perpetrators or because victims did not report crimes due to fear of retaliation.'***

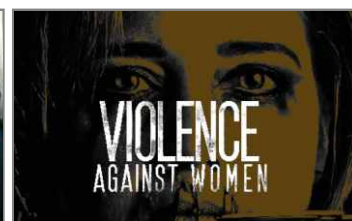
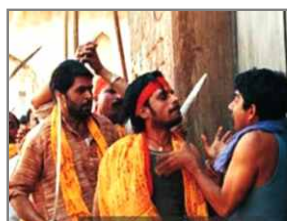
Due to the lack of implementation of the existing laws to protect Dalit communities, they continue to face violence

and significant discrimination in access to services i.e health care, education, temple attendance and marriage. "Untouchability" practices prohibit ***'Dalits from walking on public pathways, wearing footwear, accessing water from public taps in upper-caste neighbourhoods, participating in some temple festivals, bathing in public pools, or using certain cremation grounds'***.

The report alarms of the situation of Dalit women, who are disproportionately affected by the poor health infrastructure, denied the right to own land by tribal systems and face disturbingly high rates of rape incidents (five-fold increase in Gujarat from 2001-14). The report also highlights that in spite of legal prohibition a disproportionate number of Dalit community members work as manual scavengers and the majority of sumangali-bonded labourers came from Scheduled Castes, yet of those, Dalits were subject to additional abuse.

The US State Department has also referred to caste-based discrimination in its 2015 reports on Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The Department makes a significant reference to caste in its report on Nepal, outlining restrictions that Dalit communities experience in access to legal representation, post-earthquake relief, lack of political representation, discrimination in employment opportunities and intersectional discrimination faced by Dalit women. The report on Pakistan noted that low-caste communities are among the vulnerable groups and the report on Bangladesh highlighted that Dalits ***'had restricted access to land, adequate housing, education, and employment'***.

Source: International Dalit Solidarity Network







# CEDAW

## review of Bangladesh

On 7 and 8 November, Bangladesh was reviewed under the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Prior to the review thirteen civil society organizations submitted alternative reports, outlining various issues that women and girls face in Bangladesh. Two of them highlighted concerns about the intersecting discrimination affecting women and girls, including caste-based discrimination.

Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM) and International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN) noted that Dalit women in Bangladesh usually face threefold discrimination on the grounds of caste, gender and economic status. 'They are discriminated by the dominant caste and other groups in society. While other groups of women and some Dalit men are moving forward in education, economic empowerment, access to justice and government services, Dalit women are left behind'. FIAN International also outlined that Dalit women in Bangladesh face 'a triple burden, as women, as part of a minority community and minorities within minorities'.

BDERM and IDSN were present during the review in Geneva. On the 7th November, Afsana Amin from BDERM, presented her oral statement to the CEDAW members. She emphasised that the lack of disaggregated data on gender and caste in Bangladesh results in the lack of

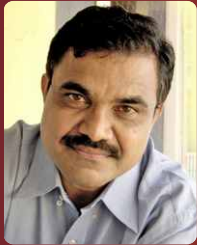
programmes addressing the disadvantages that Dalit women face in education, political participation and access to basic services.

During the constrictive dialogue with the state delegation the Committee posed a number of questions on Dalit women. One committee member asked for a concrete timeline in passing the new Anti-Discrimination law to protect the rights of Dalit women. A committee member also requested information on the current measures taken to protect Dalit women and girls against social and physical violations and ensuring access to health services, housing, water and land.

BDERM and IDSN are hopeful that the CEDAW concluding observations will include recommendations encouraging the government of Bangladesh to undertake effective measures to address the situation of Dalit women and girls.

*Source: UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women*





## Fire of Una Ignites Saffron Udupi

By: Anand Teltumbde



For the first time in a long time Dalits have mobilised en masse for issues concerning their livelihoods. The uprising in Una has shaken the political establishment in Gujarat and has spread to other parts of India as well, including saffronised Udupi in Karnataka.

The Dalit struggle in Gujarat sparked off by the public flogging of a Dalit family by the gau rakshaks has caught the imagination of the Dalits all over the country. By no means is it the first incident of its kind. As for tormenting the Dalits on account of the suspicion of cow killing, a far more horrific incident had taken place on 15th October 2002, the Dussehra day, near Jhajjar in Haryana. A Hindutva mob caught five Dalits who were carrying animal hides to Karnal, near the Duleena police chowki, lynched them, gouged their eyes out, mutilated their bodies and set them on fire. There were more than 47,000 atrocities that were officially recorded in the country the previous year, which yields an average of more than two Dalits murdered and five Dalit women raped every day. The difference the Una protest made was to raise the issue of land which would liberate the Dalits from their traditional humiliating vocations like scavenging and dealing with dead cattle. Another distinction was that it happened in Gujarat which was being flaunted as the model of development created by Narendra Modi over the years. It is this propaganda that hugely contributed to his image as the development man, catapulting him to the top post. Una squarely nailed this lie for the world to see.



The first Una-inspired Dalit agitation erupted somewhat expectedly in Karnataka. It all began with the discussions of Una on social media that led to an impromptu meeting being called at Bengaluru, to which over 300 youth turned up. They decided to enact Chalo Una by taking a march from Bengaluru to Udupi, one of the dens of the Hindutva forces, where in August 2016 one Praveen Poojary, belonging to a backward caste, was beaten to death by 18 Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal activists camouflaged under the banner of Hindu Jagarana Vedike after they found him transporting two cows in a vehicle. Interestingly, 29-year-old Poojary was himself a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) member and pleaded with them that he was just transporting the calves for his friend. It, of course, did not matter as he became the victim of the obnoxious cow vigilantism of the Sangh Parivar.

### Hindutva South of Vindhyas

Karnataka has been competing well with Gujarat, the acknowledged laboratory of Hindutva, over the last two decades. After the demolition of the Babri Masjid, the Hindutva forces began aggressively claiming possession of Muslim properties, with disputed ownership. On 15th August 1994, Uma Bharti had attempted to fly the national flag in the Hubli Idgah Maidan despite the fact that the issue of its ownership was subjudice. In 1998, they chose the dargah of Baba Budan Giri in the hills of Chikmagalur, a well-known Sufi shrine of great antiquity. It typically represented syncretization of Shaiva, Vaishnava and Sufi faiths, and so was visited by lakhs of Hindus and Muslims. For

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centuries the custody of the shrine was with a family of Muslim sajjada nishins (hereditary administrators) who claimed descent to one Syed Shah Tanaluddin Alamgaribi, who had been appointed as the custodian of the shrine during the reign of Adil Shah of Bijapur. The controversy over its ownership arose in the mid-1960s, when the Karnataka Waqf Board notified its custody. It was disputed by the Muzrai department, the commissioner of religious and charitable endowments in charge of Hindu temple trust in the state.

The rounds of the courts did not change the custody of the shrine. From 1990, however, the Hindus began celebrating Dattatreya Jayanti by performing pooja by a Brahmin, which became a three-day affair from 1997. The next year, the Bajrang Dal and the VHP organised five rath yatras that toured various parts of Karnataka, converging at Baba Budan Giri on 1st December 1998. The secular forces comprising left and Dalit activists under Karnataka Komu Souharda Vedike resisted it with counter campaign. At the shrine, the rath yatris put up saffron flags and even attempted to install an idol of Ganesha inside the dargah but it was stalled by the police intervention. The controversy paid rich political dividends to the BJP, which came to power in May 2008.

Within months of the ascension of the BJP government there were orchestrated attacks on churches by Bajrang Dal activists. There were incidents of moral policing by right-wing activists who attacked boys and girls for violating their “Hindu” code of behaviour. One could cite innumerable other instances of violence by the Hindutva outfits like Sri Ram Sena of infamous Pramod Muthalik, Hindu Jagaran Vedike, Hindu Janajagruti Samiti, Sanatan Sanstha etc. They used bombs (for example, bomb blasts in Hubli court in May 2008) and firearms to create communal tension and ignite riots (Sharma and Sanjana 2010). In 2012,

explosives were seized from a car near Brahmavar near Udupi from an activist of a Hindutva outfit. They deliberately committed anti-India or anti-Hindu acts such as hoisting Pakistani flag at Sindagi (Kadkol 2012), and in the Tipu Sultan circle; or defacing a statue of Vivekananda or desecration of a temple to foment communal anger against Muslims. The complicity of the state was stark and naked.

### **Saffron Udupi Turns Blue**

On 4th October 2016, the Chalo Udupi rally, which spontaneously brought together Dalit, minority and left activists, began from Freedom Park in Bengaluru and travelled over the next five days to Udupi, holding meetings and performing programmes against the fascist onslaught of the Hindutva forces at Nelamangala, Kunigal, Channarayapatna, Hassan, Belur and Chikmagalur. As it reached Udupi on 9th October, it was welcomed by a thunder shower. By noon, the rains stopped and people began to trickle into the Ajjarkad ground with their placards and banners. A small stage with a banner of “Chalo Udupi” drenched in rains was wiped clean. By the time the meeting began, the crowd swelled to 10,000 people overwhelming saffron Udupi with its blue flags. The

rally expressed its solidarity with the struggles of Gujarati Dalits and the Dalit Mahila Swabhiman Yatra which took place in Rajasthan from 1828 September organised by Dalit women. The entire protest had a dominating imprint of women's assertion although they were still a minority, just three in a 10-member core committee.

The meeting was attended by Jignesh Mevani, the face of the Una struggle, who exposing the hollowness of much flaunted Gujarat model, recounted how Dalits were the single largest group among the victims after the Muslims and also among those arrested for the 2002 riots. The speeches resounded their slogan



**Jignesh Mevani, the face of the Una struggle, who exposing the hollowness of much flaunted Gujarat model, recounted how Dalits were the single largest group among the victims after the Muslims and also among those arrested for the 2002 riots.**

of "Food of our choice, land is our right." Jignesh promised to return to Udupi for a three-point agenda: to ban all gau rakshak groups, to ask the Karnataka government how much revenue land it has given to the Dalits and tribals according to the state land grant rules of 1969, and to enter the maths in Udupi that observed pankti bheda against the Dalits.

After the rally, the incorrigible Hindutva forces, interestingly under the banner of Yuva Brigade (formerly Namo Brigade), named after Narendra Modi, who was forced by the Una Dalit agitation to deliver his famous dialogue "If you want to shoot, shoot me but not my Dalit brothers," decided to perform a purification programme on 23rd October with the tacit support of Vishweshwara Tirtha Swami of Paryaya Pejavar Math. Paradoxically named Kanaka Nede, after a Shudra saint Kanaka who having been denied entry to the temple, forced the god Krishna to create a kindi (window) in the wall for him, they claimed the people including Dalits would perform the ceremonial purification. The contradiction was hopeless: on the one hand they accused the march of being a leftist ploy and on the other they performed shuddhi! The Dalit-Damanitara Svabhimani Horata Samiti, the organisers of Chalo Udupi decided to resist it and the resultant tension compelled the police to deny permission and thwart the consequences. However, it is reported that the purification around the math was done on 9th October itself by the Yuva Brigade against which a police complaint was filed by the Samiti.

### **Paradigm Shift in Dalit Politics**

The Dalit movement has taken a turn for the better with Una. The last time Dalits had taken up an issue concerning their livelihood was during 1953-65, when three land satyagrahas happened on prompting from none other than Babasaheb Ambedkar. Towards the end of his life, Ambedkar had realised that all he had done benefited only a small section of the educated

Dalits and that he could not do anything for the vast majority of rural Dalit masses. While the first two satyagrahas took place in Maharashtra in 1953 and 1959, the last one was countrywide on an unprecedented scale in which hundreds of thousands of people including women and children courted arrests over a month and created tremors in ruling-class circles. The Congress had responded with its co-optation strategy that ultimately opened the floodgates for opportunist Dalits, leading to eventual decimation of the Dalit movement.

In order to express their anger against and isolate the degenerate Dalit leadership, the Dalits have been spontaneously coming on streets sans leaders in recent decades. It manifested in 1997 in response to gunning down of 10 innocent people in Ramabai Nagar, Mumbai and then significantly, after Khairlanji. But they could not articulate the long-term direction for themselves. Una for the first time has achieved it by going beyond the atrocity that sparked it off. It could transform their weakness that produced their humiliation into their strength. They collectively resolved that they would not perform their caste-ordained vocations like scavenging, dragging dead animals and flaying cattle skins. They demanded land instead. It has already shaken the citadel of Modi, impelling the state administration to initiate measurement and effect the actual handing over of the plots of land. The Una-inspired Udupi march extended it to "food of our choice," challenging the obsessive beef ban by fascist governments unleashing food and employment crises for the majority of people. They have all the potential to flower into a widespread anti-fascist movement in the country, which all progressive people in the country should come out of their shell and support.

*Anand Teltumbde is a writer and civil rights activist with the Committee for the Protection of Democratic Rights, Mumbai.*







## UN Special Rapporteur on Minority issues completed her visit to Sri Lanka



The UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, Rita Izsák-Ndiaye, just completed her official 10 days visit in Sri Lanka. In her statement on 20th October the SR urged the government to take concrete steps to protect Sri Lanka's minorities. She noted that there were "remaining challenges" within Tamil and Muslim communities, including return of occupied land, missing persons, demilitarization, release of security-related detainees, poverty, violence and discrimination against women, and caste-based discrimination.

She was concerned about the lack of protection of "up-country Tamils" who live in the central highlands. They face hardship, poverty and 'all their socio-economic and health indicators are much below the national average, including infant mortality rate, literacy or access to water'. In addition to that, they are subject to caste discrimination from the rest of the community in their access to employment and services.

Previously, in her thematic annual report on caste-based

discrimination, presented to the Human Rights Council in March 2016, the SR outlined that caste discrimination is found within three parallel caste systems in Sri Lanka -Sinhala, Sri Lanka Tamil and Indian Tamil groups.

Lowercaste groups within the Sinhala system suffer extreme poverty, low levels of education and continue to be pressured to perform hereditary caste occupations, such as removing dead animals and dirt. Low-caste groups within the Sri Lanka Tamil caste system have been disproportionately displaced in the Jaffna peninsula, due to war and the 2004 tsunami. She highlighted that low-caste groups in Sri Lanka, as well as other countries in South Asia, suffer 'from acute caste discrimination throughout all the phases of disaster response, from rescue to rehabilitation' and are most affected by climate change.

The Special Rapporteur will present her detailed report of the visit in March 2017.

Source: United Nation



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## British Indians divided over anti-caste law

The British government is yet to announce details of its planned consultation on incorporating protection against caste discrimination into the U.K. equality law but within the Indian community the debate is already in full swing.

On Wednesday evening, the Indian Forum on British Media held a public debate in a House of Commons committee room with the aim of providing a "balanced picture" of the issues at hand. The packed meeting was a testament to the strong feelings the planned legislation has garnered

House of Commons committee room with the aim of providing a "balanced picture" of the issues at hand. The packed meeting was a testament to the strong feelings the planned legislation has garnered.

"The issue of legislation on caste has generated more interest and more involvement [from the U.K. Indian community] than any other issue I have ever encountered," Bob Blackman, the Conservative MP for Harrow East, and chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for British Hindus, told the gathering. Mr. Blackman, who argued against the need for legislation, warned that it would lead to a "completely unnecessary interference" and a "bureaucratic nightmare of proportions the Hindu community would not want to see."

### Scant evidence

Others who supported his view included Trupti Patel, President of the Hindu Forum of Britain, who told the group that surveys conducted by her organization had found scant evidence of discrimination and that the legislation would - by making young people in particular aware of their caste for the first time - create segregation, as well as encourage people to make unfounded complaints against their employers.

Her thoughts were echoed by Satish Sharma, general secretary of the Council of Hindu Temples, who argued that the legislation would be a "recipe for disaster", creating friction within the Indian community.

Speaking in support of the legislation was Satpal Muman, chair of Caste Watch U.K., who criticised "the lies" that were being told about the implications of the legislation, and pointed to efforts by a Hindu group dissuading the diaspora from voting for the Labour Party in the general election last year.

"No piece of equality legislation has been the subject of a frenzied attack like this. This is not about invading the religious and cultural space. It is purely targeted at discrimination in the public sphere."

"Caste discrimination is a human rights violation" he added, stressing that even if a small section of people believed in the caste system it had an impact on the lives of people. "Victims of caste-based discrimination deserve legal clarity."

Saundevan Aparanti, a London-based actor and activist, challenged the argument that discrimination wasn't taking place in the U.K. - pointing to instances such as a wedding venue refusing to host a reception because of the caste of the participants or healthcare workers refusing to care for an elderly woman because of her caste. "Britain will send a strong signal to the world that it does not tolerate discrimination."

### Struggle for dignity

George Kunnath, a lecturer in Modern Indian studies at the University of Oxford, pointed to the entrenched nature of the caste system and its ability to travel across both religious and geographic boundaries to profoundly impact communities across the world. "It might express itself in different ways but caste discrimination is there" he said. The campaign for the legislation was not an "anti-religion stance" but about the "Dalit struggle for freedom and dignity".

The British government announced the consultation at the start of September - a move treated with scepticism by supporters of the legislation, given that Section 9 of the Equality Act 2010, amended by Parliament in 2013, already required the government to introduce secondary legislation to make caste an aspect of race and caste discrimination a form of race discrimination. The consultation is expected to begin before the year-end and run for 12 weeks.

"The government may be hoping the consultation will allow them to point to popular opinion to justify them refusing to introduce legislation required of them by Parliament and the UN" says Keith Porteous Wood, Executive Director of the National Secular Society.

"The longer the Government procrastinates, the greater the risk it will be humiliatingly required to do so by the U.K. courts.

*Source: The Hindu*



NEPAL



## A photo exhibition “Dalit: A Quest for Dignity” reflects Nepali Dalits' history and life

On 27 September, at Patan Museum and its partners opened a photo exhibition- Dalit: A Quest for Dignity, exploring the various meanings of dignity for Nepali Dalits. The exhibition includes more than 80 historical and contemporary photographs from 20 different contributions, including personal and institutional archives. It emphasizes the need to document Dalit experience in Nepal.

The organizers stated that: The photographs bear testimony to the history of economic, social, political and intellectual disadvantage that Nepali dalits are up against. But they also show how dalits make resource of their own cultural pasts to create a new and respectable identity. Activist Uma Devi Badi, who is the subject of one of the displays, says this on the topic of dalit dignity: “Until and unless dalits can live with self-respect in this country, our dream of ending the inequality that exists between people will remain impossible.”

Dalits are a particularly vulnerable group and of whose visual records are very scarce. Dalits have also been susceptible to poor representational practices that have not been attentive to the complexities of their lives and their ambitions. This exhibition hopes to create a more complex picture of dalit history in modern Nepal by portraying dalits as not just victims of caste hierarchy but also people with agency.

The curator stressed that: When it comes to dalit experience specifically, we know how important ways of looking and ways of representing are with regards to how the caste system in Nepal thrives as well as to how it has been challenged. As I hope the exhibition will reveal, there is a strikingly visual dimension to caste discrimination.

Records are anyway typically tools of oppression, techniques of power. They are means by which the rich have exploited the poor and the powerful have dominated the powerless. For the poor, picture-taking and document-making happen at the points of encounter with the state or other forms of authority. And when we think of archives as a collection of such records, we have to think about why our archives are the way they are, why they hide more than they show. Archives are linked to power, so when it comes to building a history of the marginalized, the silenced and the oppressed, it is never simply a matter of discovering good sources. Making the subaltern speak in history is necessarily a political project anchored in the present.

*Source: International Dalit Solidarity Network*



INDIA



## India ban on foreign funds shuts down Dalit charity

An Indian charity running schools for Dalit children will close down after the government banned it from receiving foreign funds over alleged threats to national unity, officials said Friday.

Charities, especially foreign-backed aid organisations like Greenpeace India have come under increased scrutiny since a Hindu nationalist government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power in 2014.

KS Dhatwalia, a spokesman for the national home ministry, which revoked the license for the Navsarjan Trust last week, told AFP that "the law of the land was followed."

The ministry in its order accused the charity, which runs three schools in Modi's home state of Gujarat, of engaging in activities detrimental to national unity.

The charity has come to adverse notice for its undesirable activities aimed to affect prejudicially harmony between religious, racial, social, linguistic, regional groups, castes or communities," it said.

The charity laid off more than 100 employees on Thursday and will shut its schools at the end of the current academic session in March, following the cancellation of its foreign funding license.

"We had no option left as foreign funding was the major source of

running our operations," Martin Macwan, managing trustee of the charity founded in 1988, told AFP.

He said the charity would challenge the order in court.

Dalits formerly known as "untouchables" are among the most marginalised groups in India and are at the bottom of the country's deeply entrenched caste hierarchy.

Tensions erupted in July when seven Dalits were brutally beaten by right-wing Hindu activists for skinning a dead cow, prompting protests across the country. The cow is considered sacred in Hinduism.

"For decades we have worked for the cause of Dalits and when we take a stand against continuing caste discrimination we are branded as anti-nationals," said Manjula Pradeep, the executive director of Navsarjan Trust.

More than 10,000 charities have either lost their operating licenses or been barred from receiving money from abroad, following a government crackdown.

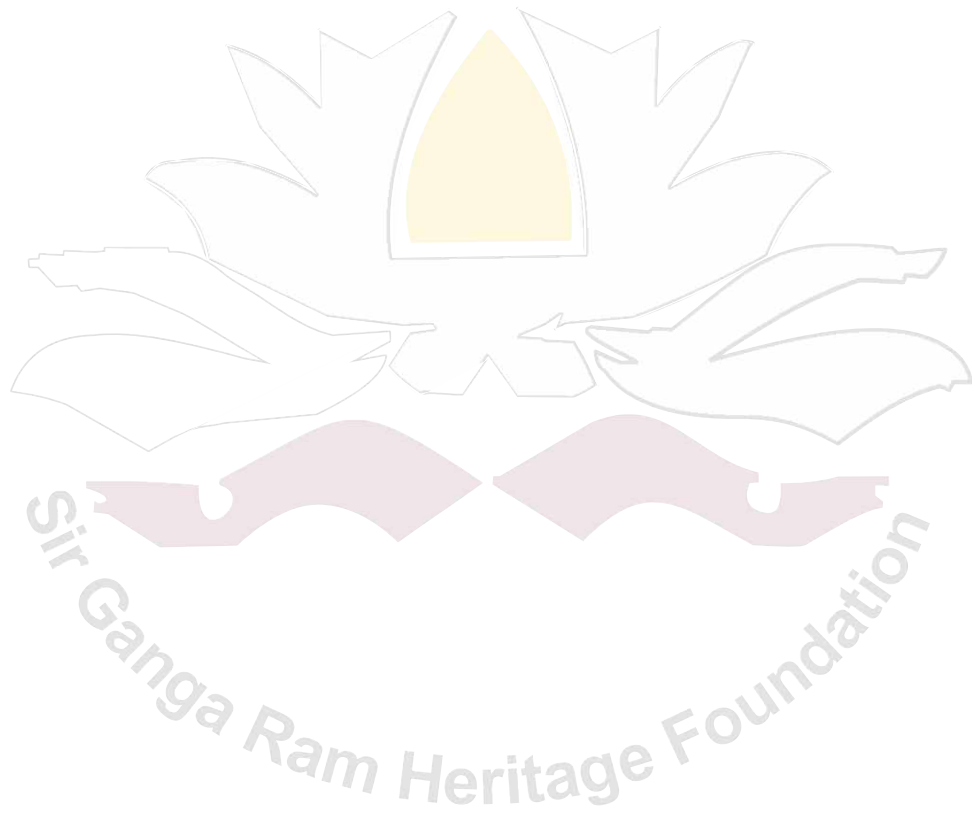
Greenpeace India lost its license and US-based Ford Foundation and Christian charity Caritas were put on a watch list, although the orders were revoked later.

Source: The Star



**"For decades we have worked for the cause of Dalits and when we take a stand against continuing caste discrimination we are branded as anti-nationals,"**  
*Manjula Pradeep*





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