

Quarterly MINO-VIEW

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Voice of Minorities & Oppressed People in South Asian Societies

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Sir Ganga Ram Heritage Foundation www.sgrhf.org.pk

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Editorial

Human Rights Defender is a term used to describe an individual, group or association who works to protect the human rights. They work for elimination of all violations of human rights and fight for basic freedom of people. Globally and especially in India, human right defenders do not get recognition or protection from the state but instead get labels as "criminals", "foreign agents", "anti-nationals" and "terrorists" and are portrayed as hindrance in the way of development or traditional values. They are considered as threat to national security and national interest, because they stand up against injustice. According to the latest report released by Amnesty International, India is among the deadliest countries for human right defenders, particularly for Dalit human right defenders. Their study reveals that journalist, human right activists and those who support ethnic and religious minorities are always at high risk in India. Human right defenders, their families and people around them are always at a risk of being targeted in India. They are threatened, harassed and face caste based discrimination. General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 by consensus. Nearly every State in the world including India has accepted the declaration and it is the responsibility of every State to implement and respect all the provisions of the declaration. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides specific rights, support and protection of human right defenders in the context of their work. It does not create new rights but articulate the existing rights in a way that makes it easier to apply them to the practical role and situation of human right defenders. But instead of that India has been in spotlight for not protecting human right defenders especially under the supremacist government of Narendra Modi. Human rights defenders are facing live threats in India. Human right defender and journalist Gauri Lankesh was shot outside her home in Bengaluru in September 2017. Gauri was a champion of the right to freedom of expression, an outspoken critic. Similarly, Professor Kancha Ilaiah who is a political analyst, human rights activist and one of India's most prominent Dalit thinker is receiving threats to his life and liberty for his writing. Human Rights Defenders Alert-India (HRDA) a national network of India for the protection and promotion of human rights defenders, appealed for the protection of Professor Kancha Ilaiah. The state government of Andhra Pradesh has neither provided him protection, nor took any action against those who threatened him. In majority of cases, the human rights defenders received numerous threat calls before their death to which authorities turned a deaf ear. India will have to respond to queries on its human rights bad record especially religion based discrimination, minorities, stigmatization of Dalits (a burning issue) and violence against them in the name of cow protection. The crushing of dissent and attack on human right defenders, and violence against women have become a norm in India. Lives of human right defenders can be saved if Indian State takes its human right obligations seriously as per UNO charter and Universal Human Rights Declaration.

Editor



I am a strong woman now and I am changing my community for the better



Mayawati was illiterate for much of her life. As a Dalit woman, she faced discrimination and was ashamed of who she was. With support from our partner Feminist Dalit Organization (FEDO), Mayawati joined a women-led group and completed training courses. This helped her to realise how important her voice is.

"Before I joined FEDO I was illiterate, I couldn't even write my name. I wore my shawl to cover my face because of the way people treated me as a member of the Dalit community. People would judge me if I showed my face so I couldn't let anyone see it; I hid it from my neighbours, my mother and father-in-law and the entire community. Covering my face made it difficult to do anything including the household chores!

In 2013, FEDO formed a group for Dalit women to help us set up a savings account so we could become economically empowered. I heard about the group and the training courses FEDO was offering. When I attended the group, I felt great, I knew I wanted more from life and knew I needed to make a change. I didn't want to live in the shadows anymore, covering my face, not having any dignity and being scared of the people who discriminated against me.

I took part in leadership training with FEDO, and now I **know how to stand up and speak out**. I learnt how the local funding for Dalit people is distributed to the local Village Development Committee (VDC). It gave me the confidence to show my face for the first time and the strength to stand up and be myself. I was oppressed by my husband and his parents for so long, I had to obey them, they controlled me. **I no longer obey their oppressive and unfair rules, now, I finally feel free.**

Through attending the group and the training, I heard

about the Ward Citizen Forum (a joint multi donor funded programme implemented by the Ministry of Local Development, supported by 6 UN agencies). I was invited to participate in it, which was a big step for me. I now feel my voice is being heard and I can talk about my problems and the problems in my community; things like electricity, sanitation and lack of citizenship cards for Dalit people. Thanks to FEDO, we know about the budgets available from the Government for Dalit women - we have seen many positive changes now that we know our rights.

Women in the Dalit community are economically poor they can't afford to send their children to school. We can take out a bank loan but the interest rates are so high and leave us in terrible debt. It is important that we are in control of our finances. Through the savings scheme FEDO run, I now have money for seeds so I can earn a living from agriculture. This means I can pay the school fees for my child, so they can live above the poverty line.

It is important for the next generation of Dalit women to form groups like this and unite to protect their rights. Before, I was scared to do or say anything, now I am able to express my views and fight for them. I want all the Dalit women to have this strength so we can unite. **I am a strong woman now and I am changing my community for the better as I speak up and create change."**

Source: Womankind

INDIA



Human Rights Defenders at serious risk in India and across the globe



A new report released by Amnesty International paints a grim picture of the situation for human rights defenders across the globe who face death, persecution and harassment for carrying out human rights work. The report raises particular concern for Dalit human rights defenders in India.

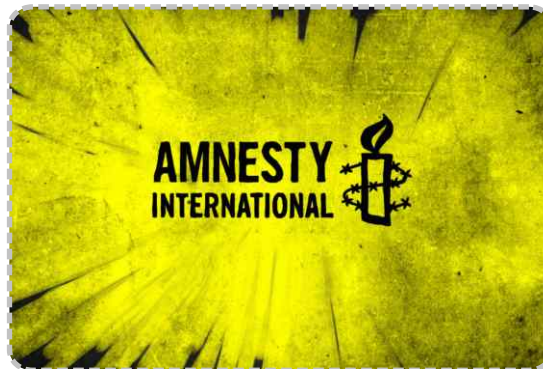
- 3,500 human rights defenders have been killed worldwide since 1998
- 281 HRDs killed globally in 2016 - a significant increase from 156 defenders killed in 2015 and 136 in 2014
- 48 journalists killed worldwide in 2016 according to the Committee to Protect Journalist
- India among deadliest countries for defenders of rights related to land, environment

The report, “Deadly but Preventable Attacks: Killings and Enforced Disappearances of Those who Defend Human Rights” includes testimonies from human rights defenders, as well as relatives and colleagues of human rights defenders who have been killed, and includes specific analysis of the situation faced by defenders in India. The report furthermore outlines the underlying caste discrimination and human rights abuses in India, that make the difficult circumstances faced by Dalit human rights defenders in

India all the more pertinent to address.

In India, journalists, land rights activists, and those advocating the rights of ethnic and religious minorities, Dalits and Adivasis are among those at risk of attack.

“Human rights defenders, instead of being recognized and protected by the state, are portrayed as 'criminals', 'foreign agents', 'anti-nationals' and 'terrorists', and painted as a threat to development or traditional values. Such labels are divisive, signal contempt for constitutional rights, and give a green light to further abuses,” said Asmita Basu, Programmes Director at Amnesty International India.



The cases from India include that of human rights defender and journalist Gauri Lankesh, who was fatally shot outside her home in Bengaluru in September 2017. Lankesh was a champion of the right to freedom of expression and an outspoken critic of hardline Hindu groups.

The report brings together stories from around the world to illustrate the rise in preventable attacks on HRDs and highlights a chilling pattern of impunity. The cases from India include that of human rights defender and journalist Gauri Lankesh, who was fatally shot outside her home in Bengaluru in September 2017. Lankesh was a champion of the right to freedom of expression and an outspoken critic of hardline Hindu groups. She had previously been threatened for her activism. Jailal Rathia, an Adivasi community leader in Chhattisgarh, challenged the irregular acquisition and

grabbing of Adivasi land. He died in March 2017 as a result of what his family suspect was a deliberate poisoning. He had been threatened on several occasions and told by local land mafia and the state police to withdraw the petitions he had filed.

In 2013, Dalit human rights defender Chandrakant Gaikwad from Maharashtra was shot and killed, allegedly by an individual against whom he had filed a complaint for committing crimes against Dalits. Gaikwad had supported victims of caste-based discrimination in accessing justice by helping them file and follow up on complaints with local authorities. He had been threatened repeatedly.



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The report outlines the underlying caste discrimination and human rights abuses in India, that make the difficult circumstances faced by Dalit human rights defenders in India all the more pertinent to address. Journalists, land rights activists, and those advocating the rights of ethnic and religious minorities, Dalits and Adivasis are among those at risk of attack.



“In many cases, the deaths of defenders had been preceded by a string of threats, which authorities turned a blind eye to. Lives could have been saved if states had taken their human rights obligations seriously and acted on reports of threats and other abuses,” Asmita Basu said.

Source: Amnesty International



Everyone Blames Me



New report of Human Rights Watch on barriers to justice for sexual assault survivors in India

Survivors of rape and other forms of sexual assault in India face severe barriers to justice and are not receiving the support that the State are obligated to offer them, finds a new report by Human Rights Watch. The report raises particular concern for 'low caste' survivors and other marginalised groups.

Rape survivors in India face significant barriers to obtaining justice and critical support services, Human Rights Watch said in a report. Legal and other reforms adopted since the gang rape and murder of a student, Jyoti Singh Pandey, in Delhi in December 2012 have not been fully realized.

“Five years ago, Indians shocked by the brutality of gang rape in Delhi called for an end to the silence around sexual violence and demanded criminal justice reforms,” said Meenakshi Ganguly, South Asia director. “Today there are stronger laws and policies,

but much remains to be done to ensure that the police, doctors, and the courts treat survivors with dignity.”

The 82-page report, “‘Everyone Blames Me’: Barriers to Justice and Support Services for Sexual Assault Survivors in India,” finds that women and girls who survive rape and other sexual violence often suffer humiliation at police stations and hospitals. Police are frequently unwilling to register their complaints, victims and witnesses receive little protection, and medical professionals still compel degrading “two-finger” tests. These obstacles to justice and dignity are compounded by inadequate health care, counseling, and legal support for victims during criminal trials of the accused.

The report details 21 in depth case studies across four states and two cities - Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi and Mumbai. It contains more than 65 interviews with victims, family

members, lawyers, human rights activists, doctors, forensic experts, government and police officers, as well as research by Indian organisations.

It highlights several cases where Dalit women or girls have been raped by members of a dominant caste and have been threatened by the perpetrators or police to withdraw their complaints. It also finds that the legislation in place to gain justice for survivors, including the Prevention of Atrocities Act, is not being adequately implemented. It also finds that despite laws to fast track cases delays are commonplace, leaving the victim and their family vulnerable to threats, abuse and pressure.

The findings in the report include poor police response, failure to provide access to adequate health services, lack of access to effective legal assistance and a lack of coordinated support services. The situation is found to be exacerbated when the victim is from a marginalised caste or group. The report also details a pervasive culture of blaming the victim of rape that is seen not only in the general population but also in the police, healthcare system and the judiciary.

Case example from the report

In several north Indian states such as Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and Rajasthan, unofficial village caste councils, called Khap Panchayats, pressure Dalit or other so-called “low-caste” families not to pursue a criminal case if the accused is from the dominant caste. Local politicians and police are often sympathetic or turn a blind eye to the councils' edicts, implicitly supporting the violence. This is despite the Supreme Court of India describing their actions as “wholly illegal” in April 2011.

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Kalpna, 30, a Dalit from Haryana, filed an FIR on March 10, 2015, saying that she was gang-raped by six men belonging to the dominant Jat caste. On March 28, the police filed charges including rape, kidnapping, and assault under the Prevention of Atrocities Act. However, with the trial delayed awaiting forensic results, a frequent problem because of insufficient forensic labs, the family said they began to be harassed and threatened by the Khap Panchayat.

Kalpna eventually turned hostile witness in court and all the accused were acquitted. She and her family moved away from the village.

In connection with the release of the report, IDSN member, Jan Sahas, and Human Rights Watch organized a panel discussion on 'Sexual Violence, Victim Blaming, and Access to Justice Enforcing Laws and Policies', in New Delhi on 8th November. Jan Sahas has facilitated access to survivors and key input for the report.

The report also offers a comprehensive set of recommendations on how to tackle and remedy the situation.

“Reporting rape should not contribute to the victim's nightmare,” said Meenakshi

Ganguly, South Asia director at Human Rights Watch. “It takes time to change mindsets, but the Indian government should ensure medical and legal support as well as counselling to victims and their families, and at the same time do more to sensitise police officers, judicial officials, and medical professionals on the proper handling of sexual violence cases.”

Source: Human Right Watch



Situating Bhima Koregaon after two Centuries

By: P. C. Das

The **Battle of Koregaon** was fought on 1 January 1818 (which is celebrated as Shaurya Diwas) between the British East India Company and the Peshwa faction of the Maratha Confederacy, at Koregaon Bhima. A 28,000-strong force led by Peshwa Baji Rao II whilst on their way to attack the company-held Pune, were unexpectedly met by an 800-strong Company force that was on its way to reinforce the British troops in Pune. The Peshwa dispatched around 2,000 soldiers to attack the force which sought entrenchment in Koregaon. Led by Captain Francis Staunton, the Company troops defended their position for nearly 12 hours. before the Peshwa's troops ultimately withdrew, fearing the imminent arrival of a larger British force.

Dalits are unanimous in drawing inspiration from the victory. In recent years, particularly in Maharashtra, since the Bhima-Koregaon Ranstambh Seva Sangh (BKRSS) was formed, Dalits regard the pillar as a site of positive memory of their valour and a symbol of their renewed political aspiration. Their denunciation of the Peshwas is strategic; it helps them relate to their social and political marginalisation in contemporary times. The debate here, however, is whether such invoking of history is effective in hoisting Dalit politics to a new level.

Certainly that place have had a history, perhaps a glorious history for few reasons. Firstly, Koregaon is situated very near to a small river called 'Bhima' where the mighty Peswa Bajirao II's Army fought against the relatively smaller army of the British who then were at their last leg to complete establishing the colonial empire in India. The Peswa's army were few hundred times greater in number than the army of the British mainly manned by the Mahars. The Mahars were invincible in war-fare and a legendry military genius was, Shivnak who even drew the attention of not less than a person but Dr. Ambedkar. The Peswas knew the



martial qualities of the Mahars but they failed to encash their such qualities due to untouchability.

Secondly, the Koregaon battle was won by the British on first of January, 1818 two hundred years before from now mainly because of the Mahar troops and it was the death blow for the Peswas as their army were defeated and completely annihilated by the Mahar heroes. To commemorate the Victory, the British had erected a pillar at Koregaon known as "Koregaon War memorial" for which, Dr. Ambedkar used to pay his visits since January, 1927 while he was the barrister in Bombay High court and a leader of the Down-trodden communities. Dhananjay Keer, his Biographer in his book, Dr Ambedkar: Life and mission, wrote, " The new year opened with a meeting at the Koregaon war memorial held by the Depressed Classes..... prominent leaders from the Depressed Classes attended the ceremony. Ambedkar addressed the meeting at the memorial and told the audience that hundred of fighters from their community had fought on the side of the British....." Since then the Dalits of Maharashtra, and adjoining areas pay their visits every year to commemorate the heroic roles and supreme sacrifices made by the Mahars whose names have been inscribed in the war memorial situated at Koregaon.

Thirdly, the question does arise if it was a simple commemoration of the 'past', mainly by the Mahars then why the Caste Hindus, particularly the Marathas attacked the Mahars? It is not to be taken on its face-value. Today in India the Dalits are a formidable force not only in Maharashtra alone almost everywhere and the fact has to be admitted both by the Governments and others who still think that the Dalits could be taken care of with easy manipulation. If we look back the past it could be understood that the Peswas were responsible to deny the minimum and basic civic rights to the untouchables on ground of untouchability. In the latter years, the British even stopped appointing the Mahars because of the 'Swavarnas' protest. Even Lokmanya Tilak did the mistake as he suggested the British not to appoint



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the Mahars as they pollute other Hindus in their army. Apparently it seemed that the appointments of the Mahars were barred in the British Army due to their untouchability, but it was much more deeper than untouchability--it was in fact the economic reason which inspired Bal Gangadhar Tilak to give such suggestion. It is an established fact that to empower a community or even a Nation, the support of sound economy is a must. Entry of the Mahars in the British army should have entitled them to receive regular salary which in turn could have given them a place in the Maharashtra society.

That was stopped by Tilak and other Caste Hindus.

Fourthly, today's Dalits exaltations are seemed to be regarded as 'Dalits outrages' towards the Caste Hindu society unable to be endured. They want that the Dalits should be ready to serve their 'Bhudevas' and others and should not protest at all. The days of Manu again should prevail over the Constitution? How foolish it is to think such absurd equitation! Those days are gone and perhaps dead. Therefore, it is our duty to maintain peace, tranquility and constant prosperity giving equal opportunity, liberty and fraternity to each and every body. There is no other way, absolutely no way, to dither and differ than the path established by our Constitution. Sooner 'we' understand it is better for us. Let us have the truth prevail on us.

The visible politicisation of Dalits against Hindutva, particularly after the Una violence in Gujarat, has been a cause of concern for those who propagate the latter. The Elgar Parishad helped consolidate their apprehensions against the politicised Dalits. The new political articulation of the Dalits (by equating Hindutva with the Peshwai) has annoyed the right-wing forces and exposed the fault lines we are seeing today.

P. C. Das is a civil servant presently working in the government of India. He has contributed articles both in Hindi and English to prominent Journals and Newspapers. A public intellectual, his efforts are dedicated to the poor and helpless people for their dignified life and empowerment.



Hindus demand increase in welfare funds for minorities

All Pakistan Hindu rights Movement chairman Haroon Sarb Diyal suggested that the government should allocate some funds for the religious minority communities so that they may overcome some of their problems.

On the occasion of Diwali, Diyal said that the religious festival was being celebrated by the Hindus at their homes with the usual fervour but there was no public ceremony being held for the same.

The Hindu community complained on the occasion that the government had failed to arrange the event on the official level as people were only celebrating the festival individually.



Diyal said that the provincial government had allocated Rs 7 million for the welfare of the minority groups but it was insufficient and an increase was necessary. He added that the minority groups in Peshawar had been continuously raising their voice for rights but those in the rural and remote areas did not have any access to the administration.

Diyal said that the previous governments used to celebrate the event officially and it had now become a tradition but this year it wasn't arranged by the government.

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Source: Christian Time



INDIA



By: Manjula Pradeep

Valmiki Women a Social Category Looking for Recognition

The picture of Valmiki women as a social group comes in our mind is most of the times of a woman with a broom and a basket; a woman who is sweeping the streets, cleaning toilets, collecting left over food.

Many people are not able to understand the term Valmiki so one has to use the derogatory name, which is imposed on them, and most popular in the Indian society and that is “Bhangi” a term mainly used in the northern belt of India. They are called with different caste names in the southern part of India. But most of them are forced into the caste-based occupation of cleaning filth and excrement.

In the caste ladder the Valmiki as a community stands as the lowest caste. Therefore they are not only oppressed and discriminated by all the other castes, but also by other the other Dalit sub castes, as these sub castes are above the valmiki communities in the caste hierarchy.

The Dalit women are seen in the Indian society as discriminated amongst the discriminated communities meaning that they not only suffer from oppression based on their caste identities, but also being a woman. But again Dalit women are not a

homogenous social group so the issues of women with Dalit sub castes differ. Hence it's very important to understand the issues and challenges of the lowest caste women in India, i.e. the Valmiki women.

My first experience of understanding their problem was when I was in my teenage and I tried to give water to a valmiki woman in a glass from my kitchen. This led to a strong argument between my mother and me.

I cannot forget the words of young Valmiki girl named Sangita who dropped out from the primary school

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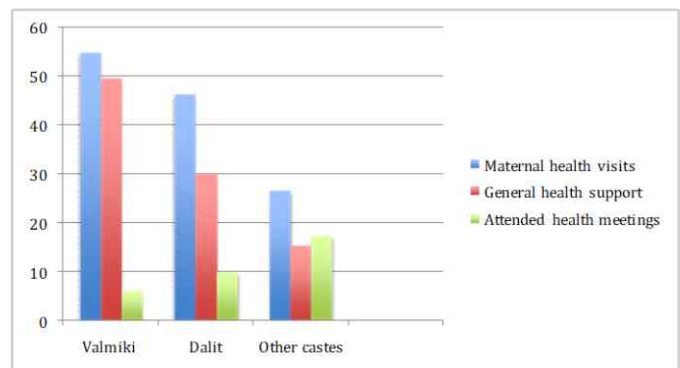
because she was discriminated by her classmates and teachers in the village school. Sangita in the documentary Lesser Humans says, "I wanted to become Nurse or Doctor but all my dreams have failed." Sangita was later married off at a very early age.

The other incident, which I remember, is of a young Valmiki woman named Koki who wanted to do something different than manual scavenging. She said "I will sell blouses and clothes but will never touch the broom. Her own community men laughed on her saying that who will buy from you? Their question can be taken for granted or could be thought seriously.

The entire issue of untouchability and discrimination needs to be understood as when we talk about caste system we do talk about untouchability and its manifestation. Navsarjan conducted a study on Understanding Untouchability in 1589 villages of

health workers namely ANM and ASHA workers for antenatal and postnatal care.

- Mothers reported never receiving support of any kind from community health workers.



When the Valmiki community women are put with the other Dalit sub castes women, then it takes away the entire aspect of height of discrimination which



Young Valmiki girl named Sangita who dropped out from the primary school because she was discriminated by her classmates and teachers in the village school. Sangita in the documentary Lesser Humans says, "I wanted to become Nurse or Doctor but all my dreams have failed.

they face vis-à-vis the other Dalit women.

Gujarat, which was released in 2010. 98 forms of untouchability practices were identified and studied. The interesting aspect of this study was that it also identified 99 forms of discriminatory practices amongst the Dalits and that were also studied.

This is just the glimpse of how different the analyses would be if the Valmiki women are seen as a separate and independent social category.

In the findings one thing was evident that the Valmiki community faced majority of discrimination in comparison to the other dalit communities. Later on Navsarjan conducted a pilot study with East West Management Institute on "Measuring discrimination in the maternal health services in rural communities in India" which was released in early 2013. This study was done of 833 mothers from 101 villages, which included women from all castes and communities. Two of the most important findings of this study were:

But currently not much has been done by the State and the civil society organizations to address the issues of Valmiki women holistically. All the indicators of development whether its economic, social, educational, health, political, etc need to be relooked in the frame work of caste based discrimination and therefore its very important to have disaggregated data and figures relating to not only Dalit women but within that its important to recognize that Valmiki women need to be given further consideration which can lead to their overall development and well being.

- Pregnant and new mothers left unvisited by the

Ms Manjula Pradeep has been involved in human rights work for the past two decades and is one of the foremost women leaders of the Dalit movement from Gujarat, India.



BANGLADESH

Press reports on 'Situation of the Dalit community in Bangladesh in the context of SDGs

Anti-discrimination law demanded to protect rights of Dalits



Rights activists said the discrimination against the Dalits was still high in absence of any law to protect their rights.

In a discussion on the Dalit community in Bangladesh in the context of SDGs, speakers also called for immediate enactment of the proposed Anti-Discrimination Bill 2014 to protect the rights of the marginalised community.

Mentioning the law a tool to curb discrimination against the Dalits, human rights activist Hamida Hossain said, 'Many laws have been passed in last few years in parliament, but why has the proposed anti-discrimination law not been passed yet?'

National Human Rights Commission member Meghna Guhathakurta in her keynote speech said that discrimination against the Dalits would not stop without formulating a new law and thus Bangladesh would fail to achieve the goals of Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations.

She also said that most of these people were landless.

Nagarik Udyog executive director Zakir Hosain said there was no data on Dalits in 2011 census and it revealed that the Dalits were not specified.

PRIP Trust executive director Aroma Dutta said the Dalit people were losing their traditional jobs to the mainstream people. She also stressed the inclusion of Dalits in the local governance, through which they could be empowered.

CPD distinguished fellow Mustafizur Rahman said without the development of these people the overall development would never come. 'Bangladesh is stepping into the phase of a middle income country from least developed country but still Dalit people are earning so less than the average income of a poor person in the country,' he added.

Sharing the information that government had asked the job-less Dalits to leave the government houses they had been occupying for generations, Dalit leader Moni Rani Das said, 'On one hand, mainstream people are taking up our jobs leaving us jobless and on the other hand, the government asks us to leave the houses as now many of us do not have jobs.'

GED member of the planning commission Shamsul Alam said the government had many financial and social security allowances for the Dalits, while information minister Hasanul Haq Inu chaired and CPD distinguished fellow Debapriya Bhattacharya moderated the discussion



Source: New Age



We are now entering into a phase which can put us in the company of ISIS and Taliban



By:
Vidya Bhushan Rawat

A man was burnt to death in Rajasthan on December 6th when we were moaning and remembering the 25th year of the assault on our constitution. Afrazul was brutally hacked to death in Rajsamund, Rajasthan and his 'story' was shown live and now available everywhere on social media. His fault was that he was a poor Muslim working as labor. The other man who committed the barbaric crime was Shambhu Lal Raigar, though not a crime worth discussion at 'machhi-bazar' of the 'official trolls' where they were discussing about and how Congress Party has inflicted a self goal in Gujarat. It need thick skinned absolutely shameless morons and thugs to ignore such a calamity and converting a non issue into a hot prime time debate just because they are determined to maintain status quo in Gujarat. It would be sacrilegious to suggest that it is 'media' and that 'journalists' are discussing something of national importance, when the entire country should have been feeling the pain and ashamed of what has happened but then the paid trolls had deliberately found a way to ignore this heinous crime and push on their prime time issues which is more to help their funders and less with the issue of probity in public life and level of political discourse. If they are worried about the falling standard then they should actually debate as who and why is the level degraded and can the Pradhan Sevak be rescued from being



Rajasthan is one state where the condition of Dalits is worst. They are not even allowed to ride on the horse during marriage. At many places, the Dalits even today, have to walk barefoot if they pass through the houses of the Manuwadi Hindus.

analysed and debated.

I am not among those who would call this barbaric act as "aberration". Few years back, I wrote that we are in fact a barbaric society and those who are pretending about our 'tolerant' past just betraying the truth. The fact is that we are violent society unable to tolerate dissent, diversity. Our constitutional forefathers knew these differences and yet they weaved a constitutional India, allowing each of us to have our own faith, and right to choices. Yes, I can say, till 20 years back, we were still much respectful but the Hindutva's sinister campaign has unleashed a wave of hatred and violence. We are now entering into a phase which can put us in the company of ISIS and Taliban. We should not say that it is an exaggeration but the fact is we are moving in that direction. When the state abdicate its duties and shamelessly encourages those perpetuating these ghastly crime then, we need to worry. The worry is whether this constitutional India will survive or it will become anarchic.

Whether the constitutional India they want to build will be under the boots of tyranny of the thugs who distort news, construct false stories and spread absolutely distasteful, hateful and poisonous narratives among the common masses.

We have not heard a single sentence of condemnation on the horrific



incidents which has happened from those who claim to represent 125 crore Indians. I would have greatly appreciated the media had spared half of the time to discuss this criminal act and shown even 1/4th of the outrage the media showed towards a Mani Shankar Iyer's statement. Not that we support the statement by a feudal Tamil Brahmin whose class caste prejudices are well known.

Why are things happening at the constant pace and what is the reason that the government is not acting. Is the government encouraging them or is it helpless in front of a cadre that it has built on the basis of hate narratives. I am saying this because, I feel, India is moving in a stage when people will take law into their hand unless the government effectively sends a message that it want to control and suppress them. And for that, it is not merely being proud of your might military but more as building the mindset. India can never be a great country or a powerful unless its people live in harmony and contribute to the nation building. It can't use people for nation building unless its minorities, marginalised people are ensured a respectful place in all walks of our national life.

A few days back, we were witnessing war cries from Rajasthan about a Rajput pride. We know each community in India today feel hurt on 'history'. It is not merely a Sangh Parivar's narrative. Sangh has cleverly built up narratives which link history to pride and it is not merely Rajputs who want to feel great about their past but all the other communities. The only thing is that they will only react when things come. Why has this happened because as a society we have not yet learnt to respect individuals and their choices. We are creating false narratives to suit our political interest. In the chessboard of politics, the nation, its societies are made to fight and kill each other. Can anybody be victorious in such hatred.

The Rajasthan episode is a clear indication of how the

hate propaganda has reached and how it kills our sensitivity. How, the narratives are nothing but justification. He succeeded in his motives as we have promoted his videos and I can bet, it will not decrease. The fact is that the perpetrators of crime are making



20 years back, we were still much respectful but the Hindutva's sinister campaign has unleashed a wave of hatred and violence. We are now entering into a phase which can put us in the company of ISIS and Taliban. We should not say that it is an exaggeration but the fact is we are moving in that direction. When the state abdicate its duties and shamelessly encourages those perpetuating these ghastly crime then, we need to worry.

videos and circulating it themselves because they know it well that nothing will happen to them. They have the full backing and even if they are caught and arrested, they know it well that the 'message' is passed. Shambhu Lal Raigar has sent a chilling message to all that Muslims are not wanted. If you find an innocent person who is a Muslim, then built a narrative to justify your crime. That is what happening. Shambhu Lal hacked Afrajul, who came from West Bengal as a labor in Rajasthan, on December 6th when we feel ashamed of an incident that broke our constitutional edifice. Shambhu Lal added another crime which the Hindutva story narrator would definitely term as 'valour' or 'shourya'.

Rajasthan is one state where the condition of Dalits is worst. They are not even allowed to ride on the horse during marriage. At many places, the Dalits even today, have to walk barefoot if they pass through the houses of the Manuwadi Hindus. I dont know what makes people proud of their heritage which cant eliminate such violation

of human rights of a community and make them subservient. Shambhu Lal Raigar belong to the most isolated and marginalised section of our society. The other side, Afrazul hailed from West Bengal and was a labour, so a Pasmada Muslims, may be belonging to the tribe of Shambhu Lal only. What was Afrazul's fault? Was he competing with Shambhu Lal or was there a business animosity? Nothing. What forced Shambhu Lal, wearing saffron and a red tilak on his forehead? Today, everyone is asking this question as how a Dalit can do it ? Why should Dalit kill Muslims when a huge number of Dalits actually embraced Islam elsewhere to get rid of the tyranny of the brahmanical system of discrimination that discriminate people on

the basis of their birth?

But then brahmanism in India worked on the contradictions between communities. Some of the Dalit communities have become politicised and many have not yet but demanding positions in power. Today, the Sangh Parivar narrative does not want to blame Manusmriti and brahmanism for the social isolation and subjugation of Dalits but the entire blame is now on the Muslims. That narrative cleverly crafted and inked in saffron is now being spread everywhere. Temples are being built, history is being glorified, 'heroes' are being created from each community which feels betrayed for being lagging behind. So who to blame? BAMCEF and Dalit Bahujan activists may be speaking against brahmanism but frankly except for working with the already organised communities, they have not gone further. RSS with its massive money and religious power has spread and today, both the Dalits and OBCs have been brought into the greater varna dharma not by any compensation to them or assuring social harmony but purely on the narrative built around Islam as the sole reason of their backwardness, subjugation and oppression. Khap Panchayats and Love Jihad terms are planted so that each community confines its youngsters inside the community. Brahmanism never wanted any intermingling as that will continue to protect caste and its purity while blaming Muslims and then perpetuating violence against them.

In January 1999 the Hindutva activists burnt Graham Stains alive in Odisha along with his two innocent children. Dara Singh, who was a goon, was glorified and new narratives were being spread to spread discord between the Dalits and Adivasis. Today, spreading hatred has become easier in the 'gossip mongering' whatsapp University with the hugely paid mythologists narrating new stories and building new castles of lies on the edifice of the Dalit Bahujans.

What is the way out in these extremely painful and disturbing circumstances when our social fabric is completely collapsing and people don't feel pain in things unless that belong to their community or religion. Politics and social work, once upon a time, was the job of dedicated people of whatever ideology but today it is the real estate agents, dalal street brokers, retired bureaucrats, bollywood stars, cricketers, and business dealers. In a way, politics has depoliticised and industries create a brand to win the elections so people's issues don't matter. The brand is important and not his ideology and work. That is why

so many film stars continue to win elections without doing any work. It shows the maturity level of our voters and our democracy.

All of us have to think now. This country can be saved either by people's movement or fair and unbiased implementation of the constitution. I have mentioned many times that we might have fought on various matters, differed but this country's heritage of being together. That is being shattered today. We will only have to blame ourselves if we don't understand the designs of these forces who want to rule and enjoy the anarchy on the ruins of people and communities. India is still in the transition phase and democracy is under the severe threat from those who are using religion and fear psychosis to build their castles. Time is slipping out of our hand as the country's psychosis is being converted into violent mode. We need to stop it. We need to unconditionally condemn such incidents. The farcical pride on the lies of the golden past must be exposed and people must be told about the dangers of such narratives. Secondly, none can be punished for the mistakes or wrongs of others who belong to the same communities. Third, history cannot be corrected, it is the chronicle of events that has happened at certain point of time. We can only learn lessons from it. Fourth, varna vyavस्था was not created by Muslims or British but by the brahmanical system. Sixth, constitution is the only guarantee of our unified India. Implement it without any prejudice. Seventh, introspection time for all Ambedkarite Bahujan activists too as how such things happening. Eighth, Rajasthan need deep political mobilisation and an anti caste anti patriarchy struggle but it will also need clear line of thought from those claiming to secular parties as how different they are from the Hindutva party. Ninth, political parties must raise this issue in Parliament and NHRC and other national bodies must act. Lastly, it is time to move together and build our own narratives. It is not to score a few brownie points in the debates but think seriously of future which is being shattered before us. Nothing will come out of the blame games as that only helped the Hindutva's brahmanical forces to cleverly inject their narratives among the Dalit Bahujans. It is not their victory but our failures to reach the people and ignite them but it is still not late to act again and save the country.

Vidya Bhushan Rawat is New Delhi based, working as a full time human rights defender. Have made several documentaries and also written books on the issues of human rights, Dalits, women and minorities.



UN Expert criticizes India's sanitation drive for exacerbating manual scavenging

The UN Expert on Water and Sanitation, Léo Heller, has stated that the failure to end the practice of manual scavenging in India coupled with the construction of more non-flush toilets, is contributing to an increase in the discriminatory practice of manual scavenging, where the lowest castes are made to undertake the duty of cleaning excrements from non-flush toilets by hand. The statement forms part of Mr. Heller's official statement on his November 2017 mission in India.

In his statement, the UN Special Rapporteur explains that while he commends the vision of the Clean India Mission to end open defecation he has found that this mission is not being implemented through a human rights-based approach, which is having detrimental effects.

As an example, he states that he has heard reports of the widespread persistence of the practice of manual scavenging, which is a violation of numerous rights as well as the dignity of those forced to do this 'work'. The UN has on many occasions expressed grave concern for the persistence of the practice of manual scavenging in India, despite it being outlawed.



states that he has heard reports of the widespread persistence of the practice of manual scavenging, which is a violation of numerous rights as well as the dignity of those forced to do this 'work'. The UN has on many occasions expressed grave concern for the persistence of the practice of manual scavenging in India, despite it being outlawed.



“Manual scavenging is not a career chosen voluntarily by workers, but is instead a deeply unhealthy, unsavoury and undignified job forced upon these people because of the stigma attached to their caste. The nature of the work itself then reinforces that stigma” stated the former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, following a visit to India.

During his visit Mr. Heller took part in a community consultation in India organised by IDSN member Jan Sahas. At the consultation he heard cases of many 'workers' that had died while carrying out their 'duties' where no legal action had been taken and no relief or compensation had been made. He also heard that workers engaged in cleaning sewer lines, septic tanks, and manholes are not provided with safety gear at all despite the legal obligations and that sanitation workers are largely unprotected. Jan Sahas also informed the expert that not a single labour law is applicable and ensures their protection and basic social security.

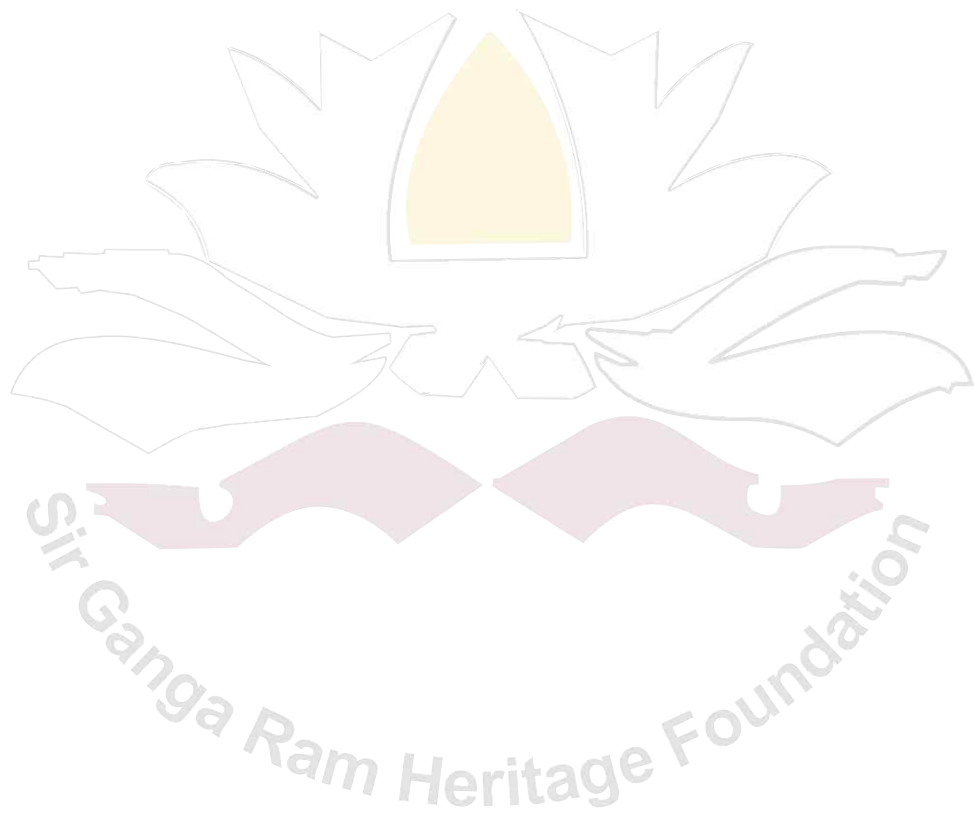
The emphasis on building toilets should not “contribute to violating fundamental rights of others, such as those engaged in manual scavenging, or ethnic minorities and people living in remote rural areas,” Mr. Heller said in this statement.

According to Reuters the Indian Government is in denial of the fact that manual scavenging is still a widespread problem in India, that is not being curbed by the 'Clean India Mission', launched by the Government in 2014, but potentially exacerbated by it.

“This is not the first time the government has rejected statements made by UN experts on the need to address caste-based discrimination as a root cause of many human rights violations in the country, and it is very disappointing that the Government is choosing to dismiss the concern rather than tackling it head on,” said Meena Varma, Chair of the IDSN board.

The rapporteur will release a full report on his mission to India at the 39th session of the UN Human Rights Council in September 2018.

Source: International Dalit Solidarity Network



Sir Ganga Ram Heritage Foundation