

Quarterly MINO-VIEW

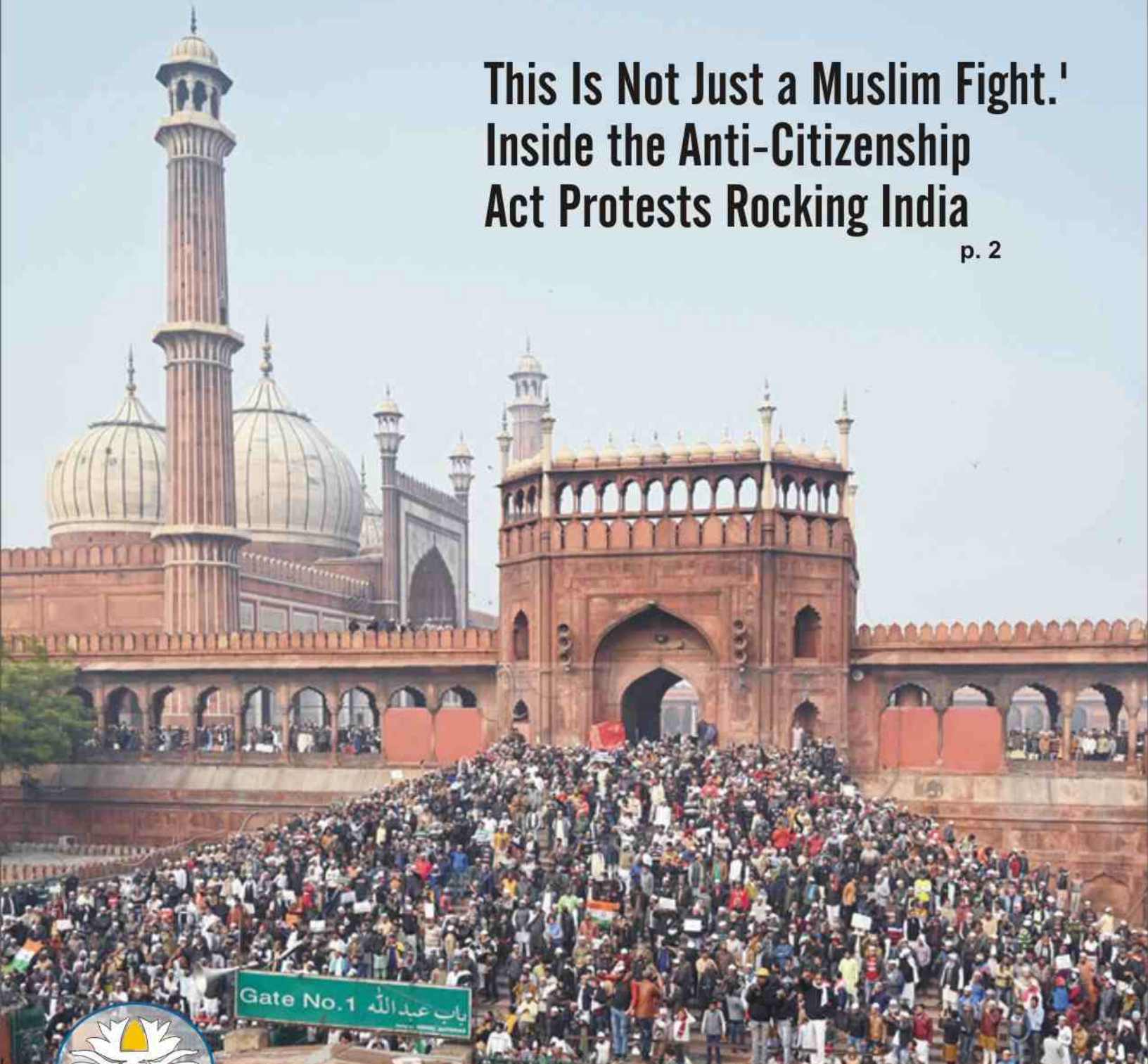
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Voice of Minorities & Oppressed People in South Asian Societies

This Is Not Just a Muslim Fight. Inside the Anti-Citizenship Act Protests Rocking India

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

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Editorial

We welcome you all to our new issue of Mino View. One more year ended with continuation of human rights violations and discriminations against marginalized and minorities groups in South Asia. This discrimination is particularly problematic when it intersects with other types of exclusion, for example, the marginalization mostly hits minority women the worst: with the conjuncture of economic exclusion, gender inequality and religious intolerance, they are amongst the most vulnerable groups in South Asia. But apart from that some positive highlights give us hope that Human rights organizations, defenders and publication who are voicing for the purpose. For instance, Positive news from Pakistan is that this year: Asia Bibi, a Christian woman convicted of committing blasphemy in 2010, has finally been cleared of her charges by Supreme Court. Another historical step taken by Pakistan province after 72 year, which were closed at the time of partition in 1947. The recent opening of the Kartarpur border for sikh community is the long awaited desire of Sikh community to be able to visit one of their holiest sites, the last resting place of Guru Nanak Dev in Pakistan has been fulfilled by opening the visa free Kartarpur Corridor at Kartarpur border on 9th November 2019 allowing Indian and worldwide sikh pilgrims to worship throughout the year at a Sikh Shrine in Pakistan's Punjab province. This is the pivotal moment in the history of India Pakistan relationship and will bring peace in the region. The present issue of magazine Mino View is a little attempt to promote justice and equality for the peace and stability of the region. It will act as a mirror reflector, reflecting the issues related to the identified minorities and other oppressed classes in the region. It will shed light on the darkest issues of our social system by voicing the concerns of minorities and other oppressed sections of the South Asian societies. We will welcome feedback from our respected readers and concerned quarter. We invite social forces from all over the region to join hands for adopting a way towards egalitarianism. In the end we are thankful for the support and appreciation from the readers across the world through letters which eventually give us the more and more strength to successfully complete one more year of this publication.

Editor

PAKISTAN: Thousands celebrate Guru Nanak's 550th birthday in Nankana Sahib

Thousands of Sikh pilgrims from all over the world, including India, actively participated in the celebrations of 550th birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak Dev Ji. A large number of pilgrims from across the world thronged at Gurdwara Janam Asthan in Nankana Sahib, the birthplace of Sikh religion's founder, to mark the 550th birthday celebrations. Strict security arrangements were made for Sikh pilgrims who expressed their full satisfaction over the security and other arrangements made for them by the Pakistan government.

Punjab Governor Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar, Federal Minister for Interior Brig (e) Ejaz Shah, Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Pir Noorul Haq Qadri and Parliamentary Secretary for Minority Rights Sardar Mahindar Paal Singh also participated in the birthday celebrations at Janam Asthan. According to details, thousands of Sikh pilgrims and groups from India, UK, Canada, America and other countries participated in the 550th birthday celebrations of Baba Guru Nanak and performed their religious rituals there. All the Sikh pilgrims were more than happy regarding the 550th birthday of Baba Guru Nanak as well as opening of the Kartarpur Corridor.

Speaking on the occasion, Punjab Governor Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar said that issuance of multiple visas for Sikh pilgrims had been started so that Sikhs coming from across the world to Pakistan for their religious rituals could also go to India conveniently.

He said that Pakistan had presented the gift of Kartarpur Corridor to the Sikh community on the eve of 550th birthday of Baba Guru Nanak and Pakistan had taken all decisions for Sikh community in full consultation with Sikh organisations/associations. He said that as per the wishes of Sikh community, Darbar Kartarpur Sahib had been constructed on over 42 acres of land, while another 62 acres had been allocated for agricultural purposes. He added that Pakistan had opened its door to the Sikh community living across the world and they would have no problem whenever they wanted to come to Pakistan. He was of the view that the government had tried its best to preserve the Sikh monuments in Pakistan while consulting all the stakeholders of Sikh community during the Kartarpur Corridor construction.

"I have a lot of respect for the Sikh community and the doors of Governor's House would remain open for them always," he added.

Federal Interior Minister Brig (r) Ejaz Shah said that there was no such example in Pakistan's history regarding the measures taken by Prime Minister Imran Khan for Sikh and other minority communities. Islam advocates love, peace and fraternity and Baba Guru Nanak had also talked of love and peace, he said. He said that the Kartarpur Corridor was an important step towards regional peace. "I am in love with every street and corner of Nankana Sahib and it became a district due to my personal efforts in 2005," said Ejaz Shah, who got elected as MNA from Nankana.

Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Pir Noorul Haq Qadri said that he paid great tribute to Punjab Governor Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar, who was also head of Religious Tourism and National Heritage Committee, for making great arrangements on the occasion of Baba Guru Nanak's birthday. He said that Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar had done years' work in months and today, Sikh pilgrims coming from all over the world were expressing their happiness. He said that Indian aggression and human rights violations in Occupied Kashmir and shameful measures against its minority communities were all exposed before the international community. On the other hand, Pakistan had given respect to its minority communities and ensured protection to their lives and properties, he said. "We are providing security and other facilities to Sikh community and InshaAllah Pakistani people would also come up with the same spirit of moving head while taking along the minority community."

The elders of the Sikh community also spoke on the occasion and paid gratitude to the government for making arrangements for them. A very colourful procession carrying the 'Palki' of Guru Nanak Ji was also carried by a large number of Sikh pilgrims, while they also performed their religious rituals at the gurdwara. According to the district administration, around 40,000 pilgrims participated in the 550th birthday celebrations of Baba Guru Nanak.

Source: Daily Times



This Is Not Just a Muslim Fight.¹ Inside the Anti-Citizenship Act Protests Rocking India

As tense protests about India's new citizenship law rocked the nation's capital last weekend, four women tried to form a human shield around their male classmate as police beat him with sticks. Shaheen Abdulla's face was bloody as he yelled at his friends to "go inside." The women locked eyes with police officers, pointing their fingers at them, urging them to "go away" and leave Abdulla alone.

As a video of the encounter went viral on social media, Abdulla and his friends quickly became a national symbol for resistance. But he insists that "a lot of heroes came out that night" - rescuing each other and sheltering friends. "We are the only people who were caught on camera," he tells TIME.

The viral video highlighting police brutality gave further momentum to the wave of protests spreading across India. Involving thousands of people at universities and cities all over the country, the demonstrations are the most widespread since Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) first came to power in 2014. Protests in Delhi began over the weekend in response to a controversial new law that critics say could turn Indian Muslims into second-class citizens.

India's supreme court said it would not intervene to stop the Act coming into effect. And as protests intensified, the government banned public gatherings in several areas of the country including Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state and cut internet access to parts of

the capital. Several prominent protesters were also detained, including historian Ramachandra Guha. He was among more than 200 peaceful protesters detained in the southern city of Bengaluru on Thursday.

Students in at least 50 colleges and universities nationwide have taken to the streets to protest since the Modi government passed the Citizenship Amendment Act on Dec. 12. The Act smooths the path to gaining Indian citizenship for people from three neighboring countries - provided they are not Muslims. Activists say it's just the latest move in the BJP's broader agenda of creating a "Hindu nation," with the government's recent revocation of the special status of the Muslim-majority state of Jammu and Kashmir and plan to build a Hindu temple at the site of a mosque demolished by a Hindu nationalist mob in 1992.

Critics also say the law is an affront to India's secular constitution, which guarantees different religions equal treatment by the government. "The very soul of the Indian freedom struggle and constitution was the idea of equal citizenship for people regardless of their faith," Harsh Mander, an activist and former civil servant, told TIME before he was detained. "And it's this that they are destroying."

Protesters defied police restrictions in the cities of Bengaluru, Delhi, Hyderabad, Chennai and Ahmedabad, as well as the state of Uttar Pradesh. Some protesting at Delhi's famous Red Fort were loaded into buses and driven away by police. Meanwhile, the Delhi metro closed 19 stations as police barricades caused traffic jams in the city. Outside Jamia Millia Islamia university, near where Abdulla was beaten by police, Muslim protesters prayed, with a human chain of Indians from other faiths surrounding them.

"It does not seem as of now that the government is planning to back down," says Nazia Erum of Amnesty India. "We don't see any signs of backing down from anybody. That is why the protests are growing in number. Every day we are seeing a new university or a new section of people joining in the protests."

Meanwhile, large protest marches against the Act are into their second week in the northeastern state of Assam, amid fears it could result in waves of immigration from neighboring Bangladesh. At least

four people have reportedly been killed by police there, and hundreds more have been injured.

What is the Citizenship Amendment Act?

Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) says the Citizenship Amendment Act will make it easier for "persecuted minorities" from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh to claim Indian citizenship.

But it specifies that to be eligible for expedited citizenship one must be Hindu, Sikh, Jain, Parsi, Christian or Buddhist. In a statement, Amnesty India said the Act "legitimizes discrimination on the basis of religion and stands in clear violation of the Constitution of India and international human rights law... while inclusionary in its stated objective, [the Act] is exclusionary in its structure and intent."

The move has provoked heightened anxiety among India's 200 million Muslims because of its relation to another BJP plan: making a list of all the legal citizens of India. Modi's Home Minister Amit Shah says the so-called National Register of Citizens will root out "infiltrators" from India - a term many Muslims see as a dog-whistle for themselves.

A trial run of the NRC was completed in the northeastern state of Assam earlier this year. The state's 33 million residents were asked to prove they had been residents of India since at least 1971, and 1.9 million were left off the list in August, when they could not. (Many people who have lived in Assam for generations were left off the list, for example because of misspelled names on official documents or because they were forced to flee their homes, leaving papers behind.) The government began constructing detention camps to hold those who fail to prove their citizenship at an appeal. But to the dismay of local BJP politicians, when statistics emerged about those left



off the list, it turned out that a substantial proportion were Hindus, not Muslims.

Shah has repeatedly said he wants to roll out the NRC across the rest of India at an unspecified time in the near future. And many protesters and advocacy groups fear the Citizenship Amendment Act is a way for Modi's Hindu nationalist government to guarantee expedited Indian citizenship for Hindus left off a future nationwide list of citizens, while denying that citizenship to Muslims who cannot prove they are Indian. In a statement released by her publisher, Arundhati Roy, one of India's most famous writers, compared the Citizenship Amendment Act and NRC to the Nazis' 1935 Nuremberg Laws, which blocked Jews from German citizenship.

"The Act definitely cannot be seen in isolation," says Erum, of Amnesty India. "The fact that it will precede the NRC across India has to be taken into consideration. The Act essentially weaponizes the NRC against Muslims."

Farhat Ali Khan, a student protester studying literature at Jamia Millia Islamia university in New Delhi, tells TIME that he believes a potential India-wide NRC program, the kind the BJP wants to implement, would end up being blatantly anti-Muslim. He thinks a Hindu without documents would likely be allowed to stay, while a Muslim could eventually end up in a detention camp. "What is bothering the Jamia students is these damn camps," Khan says. "This generation has never thought India would come to this day and that's why we're protesting."

I'm shivering when I talk about this."

Widespread protests and police brutality

The Citizenship Amendment Act was signed into law by the BJP-dominated Indian parliament on Dec. 12, igniting protests at colleges, universities and cities across the country.

It was at two historically Muslim universities, Aligarh Muslim University and Jamia Millia Islamia university, where the police response was most violent - firing tear gas and beating students, according to testimony heard by TIME and video footage posted online.

Abdulla, who was beaten by police in the video that went viral, is a student at Jamia Millia Islamia. Ladeeda Farzana, a Muslim from the state of Kerala and fellow student, was one of several women who formed a human shield around him. "I don't have any fear of safety because I am fearing only my God," Farzana tells TIME. Farzana says she was struck on her back when shielding Abdulla. It still hurts. "I feel pain but it's fine," she says.

Delhi police maintain that they used "maximum restraint, minimum force" while responding to protests at Jamia.

But Mohammad Mustafa, a student there, said in a video statement he was studying in the library when police beat him until he fell unconscious. "I don't have anything to do with the protest. I'm just here to study," he recalls telling them. Mustafa says both his arms were fractured and that police deliberately broke his laptop.

Mustafa said it appeared police were specifically targeting Muslims. Police asked him: "What's your problem with Modi and Shah?" before telling him to recite the kalima, a Muslim confession of faith sometimes said on one's deathbed, he said in the video statement. During the crackdown at Aligarh University, police allegedly shouted "Jai Shree Ram" - a Hindu slogan meaning "victory for Ram" - while beating students. The phrase has frequently been used by the BJP and their supporters.

Mohammad Minhajuddin, another student at Jamia, said he was studying in the university's central library when he was beaten so badly by the police that he was left blinded in one eye and may soon lose visibility in the other. "It could be that I may be completely blind. Who is responsible? What did I do wrong?" Minhajuddin said. "I want justice." He tried to protect



himself by putting his hand to his face; two of his fingers were fractured.

Several women were also attacked during the protests. Saima Anjum, a second-year law student at Jamia, tells TIME that she and many other students on campus were beaten by police. She recalls seeking shelter in the university's reading room from the tense protests with other students. They bolted the doors and sat under tables before officers in blue uniforms burst through the door, she says. "They started beating all of us," she says. "Five to six policemen were beating one single student. They dragged me also." One officer started hitting her when another interjected, saying "leave it, leave it, she's a girl, let her go." She watched as one of her friends was beaten brutally before he ran away and sheltered himself in a mosque.

"It was a terrible thing that happened," Anjum says, her voice starting to break. "It was a terror attack." She says she can't sleep at night and feels "very disturbed." "It was very horrifying," she says. "It was not at all like police were trying to control the situation. It looked like they were taking revenge or something. I don't know."

A lawyer who appeared to be representing some Jamia students detained after the protests alleged in a statement that police sexually assaulted students at Jamia, switching off the lights so as not to be caught on CCTV.

Police also stormed the university's library, firing tear gas at students barricaded inside. Some students hid in the women's bathrooms and police entered, began beating people and broke the mirrors, students said. "Students were lying bleeding inside the washroom," one student who was present told TIME.



No deaths have been confirmed at the protests at universities around the country. But many students are missing. More than a dozen students from Aligarh Muslim University are still unaccounted for after police cracked down on protests there, leaving more than 100 reportedly injured. And at Jamia Millia Islamia University, at least 35 students were arrested.

Mander, the activist and former civil servant, was one of more than a dozen advocates and journalists who went on a fact-finding mission to Aligarh Muslim University. He tells TIME that several students suffered "frightening injuries."

Mander recalled one student telling him his hand was amputated after injuries he sustained from a stun grenade. "It's just so heartbreaking," Mander says. Another 19-year-old said that he had been taken to the police station and beaten while naked with a belt. He showed the fact-finding team belt marks on his body but said he did not make a complaint because he is frightened, Mander says, adding that 26 boys were formally detained by police and kept in custody for 24 hours. Some students said they hid for hours behind curtains in the mosque, Mander says.

In the aftermath of the crackdown, students are fearful of registering complaints in case there are consequences. "Students got a very clear message from their faculty and police that if they registered complaints they would be expelled from the university and they would have cases filed against them," Mander said after speaking with students, school officials and doctors at hospitals where injured students were taken. He estimated that about 50 students were injured, with about a dozen hospitalized and suffering from serious injuries. Nandini Sundar, a sociology professor at Delhi University, said after visiting Aligarh Muslim University that at least 70 students with minor injuries did not register an official complaint "because they were scared of being targeted later."

Non-Muslims have joined the protests, too. Sreekanth Sivadasan, a photographer and student at Jamia, notes that he is not Muslim but many of his classmates and friends are. "They are trying to alienate one community from another," he says. "This is not just a Muslim fight. If my Muslim brothers and sisters are fighting, I will not let them fight alone."

Source: Times

Dalits Constitute 220 Million of 260 Million People Worldwide Who Face Discrimination Based on Work and Descent



Dalits residing in South Asia constitute 220 million out of 260 million people worldwide who belong to communities that are discriminated against based on work and descent, said a report. Of these 220 million Dalits, 201 million are residents of India, constituting 16.6% of the country's total population.

The report was unveiled in India during a press conference--Global Forum to Address Traditional and Modern Forms of Slavery, Casteism and Antigypsyism--in New Delhi on Friday, October 11. The speakers present at the conference were Thol Thirumavalavan, Lok Sabha MP and member of International Parliamentarian Forum on Discrimination based on Work and Descent, Paul Dibvakar, Chairperson of the Global Forum on DWD, Beena Pallical, executive director of Asia Dalit Rights Forum and Dr V A Rameshnathan, general secretary of National Dalit Movement for Justice.

Recently, the International Congress on Discrimination based on Work and Descent, Casteism, Anti Gypsyism and Contemporary forms of Slavery (ICDWD) was held in New York from September 20 to

23. DWD is estimated to affect over 260 million people worldwide, constituting over 3.45% of the global population, in Africa, Asia, Europe, South America and North America.

The United Nations (UN) defines DWD as "Discrimination based on work and descent in any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on inherited status such as caste, including present or ancestral occupation, family, community or social origin, name, birthplace, place of residence, dialect and accent that has the purpose of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, or any other field of public life".

A report presented at the ICDWD pointed out that in India, caste is used as a social mechanism to organise people into caste groups, wherein their status in society is determined as immutable by and from birth. It said, "Based on the concept of purity and pollution, Dalits are engaged in the most unclean and menial occupation. There are over 1.2 million Indians

Report presented at the ICDWD pointed out that in India, caste is used as a social mechanism to organise people into caste groups, wherein their status in society is determined as immutable by and from birth. It said, "Based on the concept of purity and pollution, Dalits are engaged in the most unclean and menial occupation. There are over 1.2 million Indians involved in manual scavenging; of these, over 95% are Dalits, who are compelled to undertake this inhuman and degrading task under the garb of traditional occupation."



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The ICDWD, which took place concurrently with the UN General Assembly, was attended by 114 delegates from 21 countries, including activists, academics, community leaders, parliamentarians and human rights organisations, who gave a call demanding a UN declaration on the elimination of discrimination based on work and descent. The Global Forum on DWD was constituted at the Congress.

Paul Divakar, the convenor of the forum, said, "The inequalities experienced by the DWD communities span all spheres of their lives, viz. education, hunger alleviation, health, water and sanitation, employment, voting rights, equal access to land and housing, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation and environmental health, which are represented in the SDGs through definite goals. It is long overdue that the member countries bring forth a UN Declaration for elimination of Discrimination based on Work and Descent."

The declaration calls on the states to:

1. Establish, implement and strengthen various legal and policy frameworks, administrative and judicial instruments in order to accelerate equality and justice for all;
2. Eradicate all forms of direct or indirect discrimination against DWD communities and women in particular;
3. Enact and strengthen national laws and policies that promote gender equality and prevent gender-based discrimination and violence;

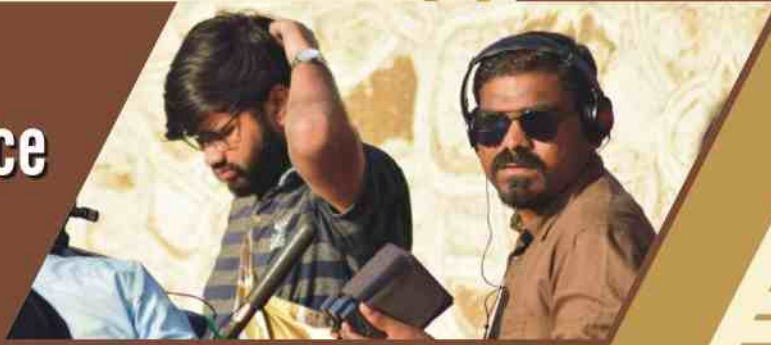
4. Ensure accountability of all crimes against women and to end the culture of impunity;
5. Promote rights and entitlements of children and youth of DWD communities in order to develop their potential to grow as full-fledged citizens;
6. Ensure equitable and proportional representation in governance to members of DWD communities, especially the women;
7. Evolve and implement plans, policies and programs in public and private sectors aimed towards sustainable economic empowerment of DWD communities;
8. End all including state sponsored violence and repression against DWD communities to ensure they live a secured life of equality and dignity;
9. Establish an independent body of members of DWD communities in order to monitor and review the implementation process of Sustainable Development Goals, 2030.

Thirumavalavan said at the press conference, "The Indian government fails to realise that casteism is a real issue being faced by millions of people in this country. We, Parliamentarians, should raise these issues nationally and globally, only then will steps be taken to eradicate DWD."

Divakar said, "Unlike most other countries with communities facing DWD, India has a legal framework to eliminate caste-based discrimination. However, it is the responsibility of the government to implement these laws. And it is our duty to make sure that the government does that."

Source: News Click

How Vinod Kamble Mined His Experience As A Dalit Man To Make 'Kastoori'



There is a rather meticulously directed shot at the end of Vinod Kamble's debut feature *Kastoori* (The Musk) in which the film's protagonist, Gopi, chucks a bottle of ittar into a drain. The bottle breaks open, unclogging the muck and filth that's clogging the drain. As the water begins to flow, it gets clearer, the grime washes away in the current. The ittar that has trickled out of the broken bottle floats on the surface, never mixing with the water. In this brilliantly conceived shot, Kamble encapsulates the essence of the film, his own life and conveys much more than is visibly apparent.

Kastoori follows Gopi (a strikingly sincere Samarth Sonawane), a Class 8 student who belongs to a Dalit family and assists his family with work--cleaning public toilets and sweeping at the local government hospital. These are demanding tasks that require hard work and a strong stomach. When Gopi's alcoholic father loses his job, Gopi has to shoulder the responsibility of his family. He steps in for his father and assists in performing autopsies at the hospital. The idea is revolting for Gopi and the viewer -- a 14-year-old being pulled out of school and made to assist in performing autopsies. But like the film's setting and its characters, *Kastoori*'s horrors are based in reality.

When Gopi is recognised by a classmate while doing his job, he instantly becomes the target of shaming and bullying. The stench of the toilets and the morgues that he cleans pervades a significant part of his life and clings on to him even when he's away. It becomes a marker of his social position and an excuse for kids to tease him. Gopi sets out on a mission to find the elusive fragrance, *kastoori*, when he hears about its mythological and miraculous origins, as a means to quell the stench that stems from his surroundings and brings him shame.

The film handles its themes with a matter-of-factness, never sensationalising the issues or events it depicts. The self-awareness comes from director-writer Vinod Kamble for whom *Kastoori* is a work of autobiographical self-realisation. Kamble belongs to a Dalit family of sanitation workers and grew up in

Maharashtra's Solapur. His father was a sweeper and growing up he found himself in similar situations as Gopi. Like Gopi, Kamble was keen on getting an education. *Kastoori* had its world premiere at the MAMI Mumbai Film Festival 2019. Speaking to Huffpost India about the film, Kamble reminisced about his past life, how it was irrevocably changed by cinema and how he decided to tell his own stories on the big screen.

"When I reached Class 10, my father asked me to quit school because it would be of no use when I took over his job," Kamble said. "In fact, being too educated would impede me from following in my father's footsteps." Gopi faces a similar situation in the film. "I resisted it because by that age I had already started to feel guilty and ashamed of doing that work. The way people looked at me and addressed me, I could feel their judgment. And so, I decided to carry on with my studies and for the first time someone studied science in my family. I finished school and even went on to do engineering. That really helped build back my lost confidence."

Kamble became the first engineer from his family and thereby was naturally expected to be the breadwinner. While he was applying for jobs, Kamble once wrote down a script at the back of question paper during an exam in Pune. That's when the realisation hit him. "I felt that I was sitting in the wrong place. I knew that I had to get out of there and do something. That was the last exam I ever took," he said as he reminisced about the moment when it first dawned on him that what he really wanted was to be a filmmaker.

"There's this scene from the film *3 Idiots* which has sort of stayed with me. Her friends have come to rescue Kareena Kapoor on her wedding day. As she stands ready to take the pheras and complete the wedding, she is told that there is a car waiting for her. If she gets in the car her life will take a completely different turn and if she doesn't she will be stuck in that same life forever. That day in the exam hall, I could see the car in front of my eyes. I just decided to jump in," Kamble said.

His decision was met with stark opposition from his family. "My father wanted to throw me out of the house," Kamble said. "He said the way a father feels desperate when his aged daughter doesn't get married, he feels desperate about his son when he doesn't get a job. That's how he felt about me. I was a burden. And while I was a bit angry at them, I knew eventually they would embrace me and be proud of me."

Kamble was passionate about cinema even as a child. He watched movies tirelessly, sometimes even peeping into other people's homes through the open window to watch something that was playing on TV. "There was a scrap dealer in our area that my father used to sell some scrap to from time to time. Every once in awhile I would steal some of the junk that my father had about the house, old bottles and stuff and just go to the scrap dealer and sell it to him. With the money he gave me I'd watch a movie at the theatre that was right opposite to his shop."

Kamble spent his days as an engineering student watching films from all across the world. Among his most notable influences are Aadish Keluskar's *Kaul* and Anurag Kashyap's films that he felt drawn towards because of their realism. Kamble was an avid reader of the novels written by Annabhau Sathe, as well as books and speeches by Dr B.R. Ambedkar. But it was when he watched Nagraj Manjule's *Fandry*, a stirring Marathi drama about caste-based discrimination, that he realised there were other voices like him telling their stories. Maybe it was time he did too.

Kamble returned to his hometown in 2014 and joined a theatre company. "I started working on plays and later assisting on films. I learned a lot during that period. I also did a month-long course in film appreciation from FTIL. And by then I was ready to make my first short film. It was the one I had written on the back of that question paper. The film was titled *Grahan*, it was completely shot on location and had no dialogues. The film won an award in 2016 and that gave me the validation and encouragement I needed."

It was then that he stumbled upon a newspaper article about Sunny Chavan, a boy who assisted doctors at a government hospital in conducting post-mortems. "I felt there were a lot of common strands in our personal stories. Yet, whatever he had to go through was way more gut-wrenching and horrifying than anything I'd ever heard. Imagine, a young kid doing post mortems day in and day out. When I met him, I was so surprised to learn that he never drinks or smokes or does any form of drugs before he goes in for the post-mortem. He is completely sober, absolutely aware and in control. He

has stopped getting fazed by it and now he is completely numb to it. Imagine what it does to a child's sensitivity for so many years that he becomes absolutely emotionless when cutting up human bodies," Kamble said. "Today he is 25 years old with a masters' degree. But he couldn't find any work and still carries out the post-mortems. He has performed it for about 6,000 odd people so far."

Kamble first portrayed Chavan's story through a short film called *Post Mortem*, funding it with the help of his friends. It was very well received. It was even screened at the Cannes Film Festival in 2017 and festivals in Poland and Mumbai. After that he decided to expand upon this story and take it to feature length. He wrote the film for over a year, across about 15 drafts of the screenplay. Once he was ready, he looked for producers to back his vision. Fortunately, that was not too difficult thanks to the solid script. His film was on the floor soon.

The idea of *kastoori* comes from lore. It is about a male blackbuck that has a special pouch in his body which produces a heavenly fragrance called deer musk which spreads throughout the jungle. The deer is transfixed by that smell and wants to find its source, unaware that it is coming from inside him. He roams the jungle but never locates the source, never realising it was him all along.

Kamble said, "Everybody has a different *kastoori* in their life. Something that's their own which they are unaware of. Something which defines them and reminds them of themselves. For me, my *kastoori* is the smell that used to come from my father's hands when he would lovingly pet us after he got home. It was a horrible smell, reeking of the toilets and sewage, but somehow over the years, I came to associate my father's love with the smell of his hands."

While shooting a scene for *Kastoori*, where a man entered a manhole, Kamble realised that the actor was not dirty enough. "Without telling anyone I straightaway rushed to him and slathered some muck from the manhole on to his body wherever I needed it. I washed my hands and came back to the monitor to see the shot. At some point, involuntarily, my hand touched my face and my hand smelled exactly how my father's hands used to. I was instantly transported back 20 years to when I was a kid and felt so emotionally overwhelmed. No one around me knew or understood. This smell is my *kastoori*: the smell of my father's labours that he did for years just to provide for us and nurture us. It is what defines me and it is what drives me," Kamble said.

Source: Huffington Post

Discrimination and violence against ethnic minorities are increasing day by day; and if such a situation persists, the country will not have any such group of people left, said Dhaka University Prof Robaet Ferdous yesterday.

Bengalis and the indigenous communities fought side by side during the Liberation War to get rid of the age-long oppression and misrule, but fate of these communities remains almost unchanged even after 48 years of independence, he added.

The noted academician made the observations while presenting a keynote paper on the ethnic minorities' rights situation at a discussion in the capital.

Indigenous Peoples Development Services (IPDS), a non-government organisation, in association with British High Commission Dhaka, organised the event titled "Enhancing Political Participation of Indigenous Peoples in Bangladesh" at The Daily Star Centre.

Prof Ferdous said many countries -- including Australia, India and even Pakistan -- progressed significantly in terms of ensuring rights of minority communities, but Bangladesh -- on the other hand -- is lagging far behind.

In Bangladesh, land, houses, temples and even burial grounds of these communities are being grabbed along with forests, on which their livelihood mostly depended, he said.

Those are being occupied by influential people, forcing them [people of minority communities] to leave the country.

"Indigenous people have become minorities in their own land," he added.

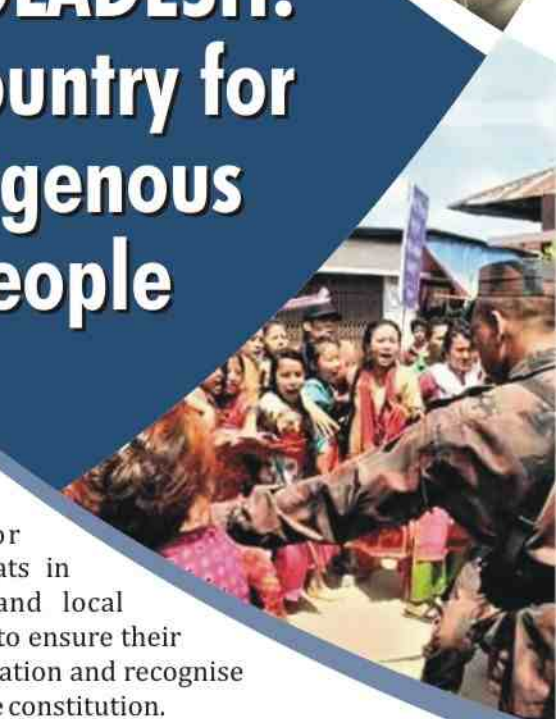
Blaming the government for the situation, Prof Ferdous said these people have been pushed into a process of becoming landless in the name of development.

If such a situation prevails, no indigenous person will be left in Bangladesh. From minority, their number will turn to zero. They will only be found in researches, archives and museums, he said.

To protect rights of these communities, he suggested



BANGLADESH: No country for indigenous people



that the government formulate a separate act for them; reserve seats in the parliament and local government polls to ensure their political representation and recognise their identity in the constitution.

Speaking as chief guest at the discussion, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon said the rights of indigenous people could not be established yet as the state has a different mindset towards them.

He urged people to continue the fight for their rights and take part in mainstream politics, which will help uphold their demands.

Convener of the Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous People Fazle Hossain Badsha said, "We don't want to see a Bangladesh divided by religion and ethnicity, as it is against the spirit of the Liberation War."

Lawmaker AKM Fazlul Haque, IPDS President Sanjeeb Drong and Jatiya Adivasi Parishad President Rabindranath Soren, among others, spoke at the programme.

Source: The Daily Star

At least **7 killed** in UP in clashes with police during **anti-CAA protests**

*Violence
across Meerut,
Muzaffarnagar
and
Bijnaur*



After clashes between protesters and police in Kotwali area of Meerut several vehicles were set on fire on Hapur road. Heavy stone pelting allegedly took place at the protest outside City Hospital and unconfirmed reports say that the police fired live rounds. According to Amar Ujala four people have reportedly died as a result of this.

Violent clashes were also reported from Bijnaur where there was extensive damage to public property on account of stone pelting and arson. Two people were reportedly killed when police allegedly opened fire on protesters. Protesters allegedly set fire to a police vehicle in Nahtaur and also vandalized vehicles parked along the street. Stone pelting here led to a stampede that left dozens injured. One person is said to have died in police firing here.

The protest in Muzaffarnagar began on a peaceful note at Meenaxi Chowk, but things took a turn for the worse when protesters allegedly started pelting

stones and vandalising public property. They also allegedly set fire to half a dozen two wheelers parked nearby. It is also alleged that angry protesters set a makeshift police chowky on fire.

National Herald reported that two young boys were shot in the head in Muzaffarnagar's Khalapar area. While one died on the spot, another succumbed to his injuries later. Lawyers who plan to file a petition before the Allahabad High Court in the matter told National Herald that the violence escalated due to instigation from local BJP leader Sanjeev Baliyaan. The lawyers also alleged that at least 200 vehicles, mostly owned by Muslims, were damaged by the police at midnight and that police damaged several houses and gates of Muslim residents close to the GT Road. Two mosques were also allegedly damaged and over 200 people were detained or arrested by the police. There are unconfirmed reports that the car of former MP Saiduzzaman was set on fire.

Police resorted to tear gas shelling and lathi charge at Meenaxi Chowk. According to Amar Ujala, three people have been injured in these clashes. Clashes also took place at Mahavir Chowk where heavy stone pelting took place.

Meanwhile protest remained peaceful in Deobandh Khanakaha Chowky from where a protest march began. It ended at Darum Uloom and no violence was reported here. Internet services remained suspended across most of Uttar Pradesh.

Source: Sabrangindia



NEPAL: Nearly half of Nepali children still malnourished

Nepal registered one of the most dramatic reductions in undernourishment among children and women after the government and international agencies took action in recent decades to reverse shocking statistics that showed half of under-5 mortality in the country was due to insufficient nourishment.

"Nepal is the best country to showcase how political will can implement a multisectoral nutrition program," says Brenda Kellen, director of Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN), which is holding a global nutrition conference in Kathmandu this week.

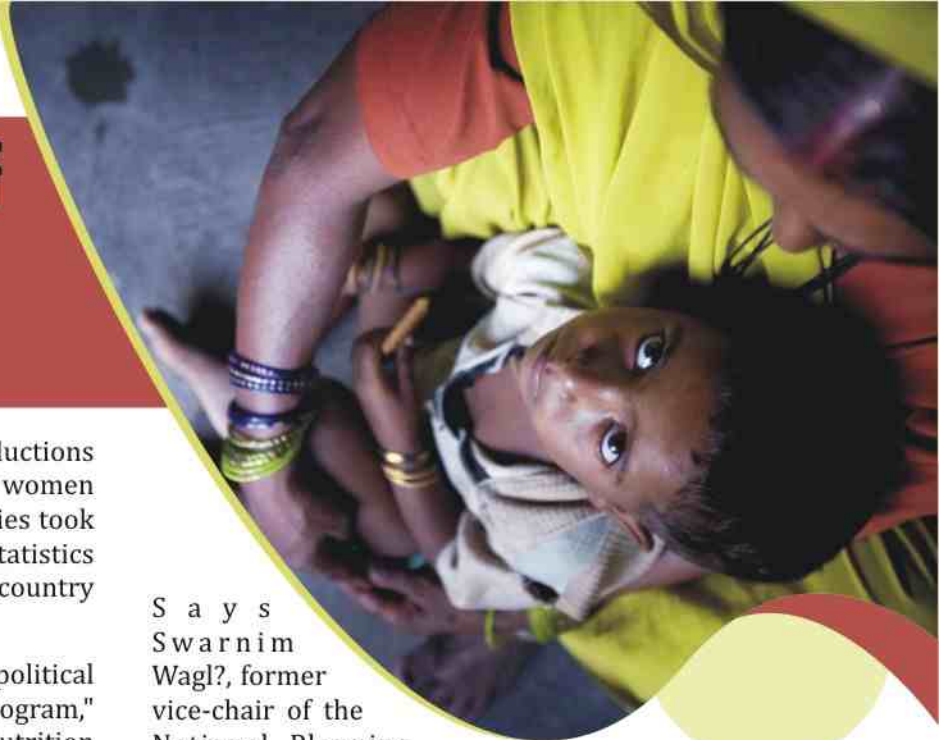
"From being one of the countries with the highest malnutrition in the 1990s, with stunting at 57%, to have reduced it to 36% -- Nepal can offer lessons for the rest of the world and its model can be replicated elsewhere," says Kellen, who added that holding the fifth SUN global gathering in Kathmandu was recognition of this achievement.

Over 1,000 delegates from 61 countries are attending the conference to discuss the progress, challenges and priorities ahead to ending malnutrition by 2030, a target set by the United Nations' World Health Assembly.

However despite initial progress, figures for stunting, wasting and anaemia in Nepal have plateaued. UNICEF's report, State of the World's Children 2019, released last month, stated that 43% of children under five in Nepal were malnourished.

"Malnutrition is still very much prevalent in Nepal, mainly among young children, adolescents and new mothers. We are not satisfied with the progress and there is still much to do," says Anirudra Sharma at UNICEF Nepal.

According to the 2016 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) wasting (low weight for age) among Nepali children under 5 still hovers at 10% -- a mere 1% decrease from 8 years ago. The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) require Nepal to reduce wasting to less than 5% by 2030. Stunting needs to be well below 15% in 10 years to meet the global target -- it is about 36% now.



S a y s Swarnim Wagl?, former vice-chair of the National Planning Commission who helped draw up Nepal's Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Plan: "While a 20% reduction of chronic malnutrition in two decades is quite impressive, 36% stunting is still very high and unacceptable in this day and age. Conventional approaches will not help achieve targets."

Anaemia among Nepali women has always been very high, but instead of declining it actually increased from 35% to 41% between 2011 and 2016. Anaemia in children below 5 rose dangerously in that period: from 46% to 53%.

Exclusive breastfeeding in the first 6 months also declined and is now 65% against a target of greater than 90%. There has been no significant change in low birth weight either, which declined only 2%, to 27%, in five years. The SDG target is below 5%.

"Improvements in nutrition levels are stagnant because we have not reached the most vulnerable communities such as Dalits and people in remote far western Nepal," says public health expert Aruna Uprety. "I see no reason to boast about our past achievements when the present level of chronic malnutrition is so serious."

Nutrition levels are affected not just by food intake, but access to safe drinking water and education about the right selection of food. Underweight children in cities and the rise in obesity are a result of the proliferation of junk food replacing traditional nutrient-rich grains. Childhood obesity has decreased from 1.4% in 2011 to 1.2% but the figure needs to drop below 1% to meet the target.

An article in The Journal of Nutrition earlier this year



found that infants in Kathmandu were getting 25% of their calories from junk food and instead of being fat, those who consumed the most junk food were on average shorter than their peers.

Brenda Kellen agrees that while there is a lot of concern about hunger and food security, there is not as much awareness about whether food is nourishing or not.

"Let's look at all the tools available to reduce malnutrition. Fortifying foods can mean that people get micronutrients but it should go hand in hand with promotion of locally produced foods," Kellen says.

Nutritionists believe that Nepal is on the right track, but it needs to make nutrition a political priority, scale up its programs throughout the country and target groups susceptible to malnutrition.

UNICEF's Sharma says: "Nutrition should be universal, households should not be left behind. The government has to increase national investment on raising nutrition standards."

Private sector for nutrition?

Do the private sector and nonprofits have a role in reducing malnutrition? Does their involvement allow the government to shirk its responsibility of ensuring equitable nutrition?

The issue arose this week at a global conference on nutrition in Kathmandu. Among the 1,000 delegates attending the global gathering are representatives of Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Business Network, which tries to build strong alliances between the private sector and government to reduce malnutrition.

"There are many small scale enterprises that are looking for opportunities to provide local solutions to nutrition-related challenges," says Brenda Kellen of the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement, which is behind the global gathering in Kathmandu, 4-7 November.

In fact, Nepal's Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Plan 2018-2022 underlines the need for government to partner with business. Experts say that while it makes sense to involve food manufacturers and traders to improve nutrition, there is an inherent contradiction between

businesses that are out to maximise profits and the need to ensure nutrition for communities that cannot afford adequate food.

Nutrition activist Aruna Uprety is against private sector involvement in ensuring proper nutrition for all. "If you involve businesses they will look first for profit, not adequate nourishment. It is 100% the government's job to reduce malnutrition."

Uprety says last week she left the Baliyo Nepal Nutrition Initiative, which is supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMFG), because it would mobilise Nepal's private sector food companies to raise nutrition levels among Nepalis. Baliyo Nepal was launched by President Bidya Devi Bhandari on 1 November

Baliyo Nepal's Chair Swarnim Wagl?, former vice-chair of the National Planning Commission, says the organisation is not trying to take the place of the government but complement its efforts precisely because of the persistence of chronic malnutrition in the country.

Baliyo Nepal was dragged into controversy recently after one of its backers, the Chaudhary Foundation, told the media that BMFG funding would be used to fortify its popular instant noodle brand Wai Wai. BMFG did test instant noodle fortification, but Wagl? says the initiative was not taken any further.

He told Nepali Times: "We are not touching any junk food. We want to make nutrition affordable for all Nepalis and collaborate with companies to meet the demand. We are creating a sustainable and independent approach to meet malnutrition targets."

Some experts argue that nutrient fortification of food brands has been successful in Nepal in the past. Iodisation of the Ayo Noon brand of salt helped eradicate goitre and cretinism in Nepal in the 1990s.

Whatever the merits of involving the private sector in ensuring nutrition for all, the real scandal is that one nearly half of Nepali children are still malnourished.

Source: Nepali Times

OPINION: Why we are calling on the EU to make tackling abuses in supply chains mandatory

By: *Chloe Cranston*
Anti-Slavery International



Voluntary corporate social responsibility initiatives have failed to protect people from modern slavery. It's time to change it.

When we buy and use every-day products, food, clothes or electronics, we should not worry that they could be implicated in modern slavery. However, currently there is no way of knowing whether they are, or rather more shockingly, it is quite likely that they can be.

At least 24.9 million people are estimated to be in conditions of forced labour worldwide, generating annual profits of \$150 billion. Of them, 16 million are exploited in the private sector, linked to the supply chains of international businesses supplying our goods and services.

Poverty, discrimination and weak rule of law are often recognised as driving forced labour. However, corporate practices in global economy also contribute to the prevalence of modern slavery across the world today.

Decades of voluntary “corporate social responsibility” initiatives have so far failed to protect people across

the world from modern slavery. They failed because the way global economy is set up favours businesses cutting corners for workers producing the goods.

Long and complex supply chains limits insight over who is working where and under what conditions and a drive for lower prices and short lead times increases the likelihood of exploitation. This is often compounded by a lack of freedom of association that prevents workers from securing their rights.

As the world's largest single market, founded on the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, the EU and its member states are in a unique position to assume global leadership and mandate companies to act to prevent slavery in their supply chains.

Services and goods linked to slavery have been continuously found in products and services in the EU. For example, the fisheries supply chains of Thailand are rife with forced labour of migrant workers and young children are forced to work in mines in Congo to produce cobalt used in our mobile phones. Forced labour is also present in the EU's own backyard, with reports Bulgarian migrants trapped in slavery in

French vineyards a recent example.

Yet, a systematic approach to tackling such human rights abuses in supply chains has so far been absent from EU policy and legislation. While some EU companies are taking positive steps, for example by committing to the living wage or working to prevent workers being trapped in debt bondage by reimbursing their recruitment fees, many others are failing to take action. Know The Chain, which benchmarks companies on their policies and practices to address forced labour, continues to find many large EU companies performing below average on their standards.

This is why we are calling for a new EU-wide law to require companies and financial institutions to proactively prevent abuses in their operations and supply chains. The legislation we're calling for would cover wider human rights and environmental abuses. Modern slavery doesn't occur in a vacuum and research is increasingly demonstrating that wider impacts of many industries can make people more vulnerable to exploitation and slavery. To effectively tackle slavery, we need systems approach that addresses the cross-cutting nature of human rights abuses.

Our call for action is joined by a wide coalition of NGOs and trade unions. The movement is growing by the day, for example, in at least 13 EU member states, civil society movements for mandatory human rights due diligence have formed.

And now leading global brands, such as Mars and Mondelez, have started to come out in favour of EU-wide legislation. Such businesses recognise that their efforts to ensure ethical practices are being undermined by competitors, who adopt exploitative labour practices, yet continue to reap the profit. It is only right that a level-playing field is created.

Tackling human rights abuses in global supply chains requires more than single state efforts, or efforts limited to a single sector. Overarching EU legislation is urgently needed and it should be a priority for the new European Commission which is expected to take up office on December 1st.

The tide is turning and the EU has a chance to set the tone for the rest of the world in tackling slavery in corporate supply chains. The time for action is now.

Source: Thompson Reuter Foundation News

