

This NewsLetter Contains

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7. Leave No One Behind: Ensuring Inclusion of the most marginalized and socially excluded communities in SDGs in UN HLPF (Official Side Event), New York



Durga Sob (Nⁱ), Paul Divakar (I), Rita Izsak (UN Spl.Rapporteur), Jaffery Huffines and Martha on the dais at the UN HLPF (Official Side Event), New York on ensuring inclusion in SDG's – Leave no one behind.

CASTE INCLUSION IN QUALITY HIGHER EDUCATION (SDG4)

Education is one of the critical determinants of social and economic development of any person. However, this has not been so for the Dalit communities who have traditionally been discriminated from accessing education because of their unequal positioning in the social structure of the *varna* or caste system in Indian society. Dalits positioned at the very bottom of the caste ladder are called “untouchables”. This age old belief and practice explains why untouchability or purity-pollution based discrimination still continue to exercise overriding influence in social interactions than the concepts of equity and human rights enshrined in the Indian constitution. Evidence of this pervasive character of caste discrimination is the unwritten rule commonly mandated for Dalit students to sit in the back of the classrooms so as to prevent them from polluting the higher caste students. This is truer of Dalits moving upwards to access higher education. Nevertheless, higher education continues to be the monopoly of Brahmins and ‘upper caste’” (Shobhana 2015)¹.

¹Shobhana, Nidhin Donald. "'Excellence' through Expulsion : A Case of Arbitrary Merit versus Constitutional Mandate." Fact-Finding, National Dalit Movement for Justice , National Campaign for Dalit Human Right, New Delhi, 2015.



The Indian Constitution through articles 15(A), 21(A), 29(1) and 350(A) upholds the educational rights of the Dalit (Scheduled Caste or SC) and Adivasi (Scheduled Tribe or ST) students. Across the years, successive governments have also promulgated several policies and programmes for their educational development. However, consequently, according to official educational statistics², scheduled caste and scheduled tribe population continue to lag behind the other groups in the attainment of education, higher education particular.

Case studies testify to the reality of the Dalit and excluded communities facing multiple forms of discrimination in higher education perpetrated by the those in administration, professors, fellow students and others serving in the institutional structure. The causes range from low caste status to poor economic background, from being generation learners to originating from rural areas. In certain cases, the revelation or the knowledge of caste identity becomes a block for their professors and supervisors to provide guidance to the Dalit students, or for the latter to approach the former with confidence and ease. There are occasions when queries and rights assertions for such discrimination are met with stringent penalties, including expulsion. In fact, the expulsion rate of Dalit students are higher than other communities because of their assertive response to the enormous physical and psychological discrimination they face in the institutional set up.

1. IIT Roorkee: 90% of expelled students over the years are said to come from the SC/ST and OBC (Other Backward Class) background. In 2015, 73 first year students from BTech/IMT/MSc were issued memorandum during summer vacation when none of the students were on the campus. Mostly seniors informed them of their expulsion and no official notice was issued on the grounds that they could not secure minimum CGPA score. No remedial classes were given to the students afterwards (Shobhana 2015)³.
2. Vardhaman Mahavir Medical College: in 2012, 35 Dalits students were expelled from the Institution on the alleged basis of poor performance. However, the SC/ST Enquiry Committee set up by National Commission of Scheduled Caste led by Member of Parliament Prof. Balachandra Mungekar submitted their finding, which stated that the expulsion was based on their social status and recommended that the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act to be filed against the Principle and three professors for promoting caste based discrimination in the campus. (Neel Kranti Media, 2012)⁴
3. AIIMS Report on Discrimination: All India Institute on Medical Sciences is the premier medical institute in India, but discrimination based on caste is said to be rampant in the institution. A report by the Enquiry Committee⁵ on the differential treatment of SC/ST students has highlighted multiple forms of discrimination faced them in such situations as assessment and examination, teacher-guidance in consultations and interactions, evaluation in theory and practical papers, segregation in hostels, ragging and participation in games and cultural events, etc. It was found that senior residents and Dalit faculties also faced various forms of discrimination.⁶

Accessibility, availability and affordability of the development services are the main determinant of social and economic upliftment for the Dalits and marginalized populations. The availability of higher education is always hindered the Dalits with the question of affordability. With special provisions for ensuring the inclusion of Dalits in

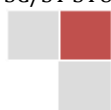
²Union Expenditure Budget Volume II, Department of Higher Education, Union Budget 2013-2016

³Shobhana, Nidhin Donald. "'Excellence' through Expulsion : A Case of Arbitrary Merit versus Constitutional Mandate." Fact-Finding, National Dalit Movement for Justice , National Campaign for Dalit Human Right, New Delhi, 2015.

⁴Neel Kranti Media has done research and published its finding in the Round Table India website: http://roundtableindia.co.in/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5722:caste-discrimination-is-rampant-in-varidhman-mahavir-medical-college-national-commission-for-scheduled-castes&catid=119:feature&Itemid=132

⁵Committee was set up under the chairmanship of Prof S.K. Thorat which brought out report: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE TO ENQUIRE INTO THE ALLEGATION OF DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT OF SC/ST STUDENTS IN All India Institute of Medical Sciences, 2012; www.nlhmb.in/reports%20aiims.pdf

⁶Source: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE TO ENQUIRE INTO THE ALLEGATION OF DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT OF SC/ST STUDENTS In All India Institute of Medical Science, Delhi: www.nlhmb.in/reports%20aiims.pdf



the developmental process in the country, the government has ensured special component plans through targeted budgeting.

The department of Higher Education under the Ministry of Human Resource Development are required to earmark 25% of their plan outlay for excluded groups based on caste (15%) and tribes (7.5%). An analysis of the Central plan outlay for Higher Education shows that the allocation—though correspond roughly to the earmarked fund percentage— are mostly general. Within each schemes there is no specific component to ensure direct flow of funds to SC/ST for their higher education.

Major Interventions

1. Inception Workshop for the Research on Ensuring Economic Rights for the Dalit Women in South Asia, 6-7 June 2016, Kathmandu, Nepal

A Research on Strengthening economic rights of Dalit Women with particular focus on Land, Higher Education and Livelihoods (skill development) in South Asian countries of Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka as a part of UN Women project. The Inception workshop held in FEDO office marks the initiation of this project research in the region. The Inception workshop introduced the organizers and coordinators with the team of the research and explained the guidelines for implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the results. The members present in the meeting were Zakir Hossain, Afsana Amin (Bangladesh), Paul Divakar, Aloysius Irudayam, Beena Pallical, Deepak Nikarthil (India), Durga Sob, RenuSejapati (Nepal) and P. P. Sivapragasam (Sri Lanka) with Suhela Khan and Nishtha Satyam (UN Women) ([Read more: http://bit.ly/2azQamz](http://bit.ly/2azQamz))



(L-R)First Row: Ramesh Nathan (I), Aloysius Irudayam(I), Padam Sundas (N), Paul Divakar (I), Meen Biswakarma (N), Durga Sob (N), Rem Bahadur BK (N), Asha Kowtal (I); Second Row: Beena Pallical (I), Afsana Amin (B), Renu Sejapati (N), Zakir Hossain (B), Deepak Nikarthil (I) P. Sivapragasam (S)

2. ADRF Core Committee Meeting, 8th June 2016, Kathmandu, Nepal

The first ADRF Core Committee Meeting of in 2016 was held on 8th June in Kathmandu, Nepal. Presided by ADRF Chair, Paul Divakar and Co-chair Durga Sob, the executive members and core team members planned out

the next six months of the activities. Hon. Member of Parliament of Nepal Mr. Meen Biswakarma (Convenor, APDFC) the Chief Guest of the event unveiled the APDFC brochure. The Core Committee decided that ADRF to intervene in SAARC 2016 and PSAARC to be held in Islamabad, Pakistan. And to hold Asian Dalit Parliamentarian's Consultations during the event. It was also decided that ADRF to intervene during UN HLPF in New York. ADRF has got permission to hold Official Side Event during the UN HLPF.

3. Facilitation of Mr. Padam Sundas appointed as Ambassador to Bahrain, by Nepal Government.

Mr. Padam Sundas, President of Samata Foundation has been appointed as the Ambassador to Bahrain by the Nepal Government. Mr. Padam Sundas is a founding member as well as executive member of Asia Dalit Rights Forum has been an active and well respected Dalit leader-activist for many years in Nepal. His hard work and dedication towards Dalits upliftment has made him a much sought after man for the Dalit Rights in Nepal.



Paul Divakar (I) facilitating Mr. Padam Sundas as Durga Sob (N), Ramesh Nathan (I) and Renu Sejapati (N) join.

4. Movement Building event with Dalit Diaspora in North America on 9th July 2016, New York

An event on movement building for international and UN interventions from Dalit Diaspora was held on 9th July in New York, USA. This event looked towards strengthening and capacity building of the North America based Dalit activists and organisations for constructive engagement with UN and other international bodies on the issue of inclusion of the caste as a variable of exclusion and under development. Co organized with Ambedkar International Mission, this event focused on identifying and enabling a task force towards creating effective interventions on the inclusion of Dalits and other marginalized in the development agendas focusing on SDGs. ([Readmore: http://bit.ly/2b7wZkC](http://bit.ly/2b7wZkC))



Participants of the Workshop on capacity building and task force formation on addressing Dalit inclusion and participation in UN Programmes

5. Inclusion Check: Dalit and other marginalized women challenging inequalities in SDG on 12th July in Baha'i International Community Centre, New York

The side event on the inclusion of Dalit and Marginalized women in SDGs was held on 12 July 2016, Baha'i International Centre, New York. Co organized with CIVICUS, ADA, Stakeholder's Forum, GCAP, AIM, WNTA and MRG was presided by Ms. Rita Izsak-Ndiaye, Special Rapporteur of Minority Issues. Sustainable Development Goal has dedicated Goal 5 to address the gender equality and empowering girls and women for progressive and sustainable development. The goals and targets touch upon many of the concerns have focused on women's safety and inclusion in the participative development, the extent of the impact of the goals and targets are been questioned by many women and gender groups. There has been outcry of disappointment with the indicators has not able to justify the vast issues of concerns. Women generally face various hurdles in achieving of various goals and targets and accessing various services and welfare measures. They are systematically discriminated in the patriarchal institutional structure everywhere. However women from the DWD communities faces multi structured discrimination, based on their gender, caste, class and religion. These women have been dominated and forced to do various jobs like various traditional occupations like Devdasi system and other forms. ([ReadMorehttp://asiadalitrightsforum.org/interventions.php?id=#22](http://asiadalitrightsforum.org/interventions.php?id=#22))



Ms. Rita-Izsak, UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issue - Addressing the Gathering.





6. Leave No One Behind: Ensuring Inclusion of the most marginalized and socially excluded communities in SDGs on 12th July in UN HLPF (Official Side Event), New York

Sustainable Development Goals is appreciated as the ideal model for inclusive and participatory development with its rallying cry of Leave No One Behind. However there is a massive worry over the exclusive tendencies exhibited through structural exclusion of most marginalized and socially excluded communities like Dalits and others. An UN HLPF official side event co organized by CIVICUS, Stakeholders Forum, Asia Development Alliance (ADA), GCAP and Rural Development Centre (RDC) was held in 12th July 2016 in UN Headquarters, New York. ([ReadMorehttp://asiadalitrightsforum.org/interventions.php?id=#22](http://asiadalitrightsforum.org/interventions.php?id=#22))

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ⁱ The Capital letters in () in the captions of photograph's indicates the country name. I – India, B – Bangladesh, P – Pakistan, N – Nepal, S – Srilanka

