

**Excerpts on caste discrimination from:
House of Commons – International Development Committee
The Future of DFID's Programme in India: Government Response to the
Committee's**

Eighth Report of Session 2010–12

Seventh Special Report of Session 2010–12

Maternal and Child Health

6. India is making slow progress in reducing maternal, child and neonatal deaths. Progress is most slow in the poorer states and amongst the poorest people. DFID's new programme should have a strong focus on this area. To ensure such investments are properly targeted to achieve results among the poorest, we recommend that DFID fund a group of epidemiologists, or other appropriate researchers, to collect data over a given period on **caste**, tribal and religious affiliation of those who access maternal services or have institutional deliveries. This should enable the Government of India to make more informed decisions about how to target its interventions in this important area. (Paragraph 62)

22. DFID has supported household surveys and commissioned analysis on the use of health services by wealth, religion and **caste**. State governments can then use the data to help them allocate resources.

23. For example, in Madhya Pradesh the analysis of survey data on deliveries at health facilities shows an increase from 26% in 2005-06 to 47% in 2007-08. The rate of progress among Scheduled Tribes (three and a half fold increase) and **Scheduled Castes** (two-fold increase) has been faster than for the general population and this has led to the reduction in the gap across social groups². Yet, despite these improvements, only 29% of Scheduled Tribe mothers and 49% of **Schedule Caste mothers** are giving birth at health facilities.

Social Exclusion

7. India has high levels of inequality—particular **castes**, tribes, and religious groups do less well than others because of entrenched discriminatory practices and despite laws against such behaviour. We met groups of **Dalits**, including children, who were beginning to challenge social norms about their role in society. We were impressed by their brave and determined outlook. However it will be virtually impossible for most of these children to change their social status while other parts of Indian society, and social institutions, tacitly accept this level of exclusion and discrimination. We recommend that DFID place greater explicit emphasis on tackling inequalities throughout DFID's programmes. (Paragraph 69)

26. The UK supports programmes with civil society organisations in India which directly target the poorest and most vulnerable people, particularly **Dalits**, Tribal people, Muslims, women and disabled people, to organise, understand their rights, and get access to services and opportunities that they have often been denied.

27. The Government of India has asked the UK to support their flagship secondary education initiative. We will use this opportunity to engage on critical areas for girls' education, ranging from ensuring adequate sanitary provision through to improved data management and learning assessment systems. We are also

looking at ways to help get more **Dalit girls** into secondary school and ensure they can afford to stay there. We welcome the IDC's strong support for this.

Working with civil society

40. DFID has earmarked more funds to expand the range of organisations that it works with in India, with a particular focus on trying to connect the best thinkers and innovators - such as Think Tanks and IT entrepreneurs - with organisations on the ground, led by and working with **Dalits**, Tribal communities, Muslims, and women. One particular area of focus is using cheap IT to help the poorest people access services, understand their rights, and hold government to account.