



FEDO's E-Bulletin

Movement Against Caste and Gender-Based Discrimination

Feminist Dalit Organization(FEDO)

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FEDO publishes its third edition of E-bulletin, where different news from both district and central level are included.

Public Hearing on Inter-caste marriage

The Feminist Dalit Organization (FEDO) held a public hearing on "Dalit women inter-caste marriage" on the occasion of "16 Days of Activism against Gender based Violence" in December 2010. In the program Chairman of National Women Commission, National Dalit Commission, representatives from civil society, Dalit women activists and journalist were present.

Durga Sob, the President of FEDO explained the scenario of inter-caste marriage in Nepal. "90% of the inter-caste marriage has not been successful and the couple has been isolated by the family and society" she clarified.

As illustration of the problem, 5 Dalit women spoke out about their own cases of inter-caste marriage during this program. One of them, Radha Kasera of Surkhet married a non Dalit boy Bimal Rana Magar after three years of relationship. But their love marriage was not accepted by the family and society because Radha belongs to the so-called untouchable caste. Because their family didn't change their mind, they decided to move to India. There Radha's husband worked in electricity wire repair. But unfortunately he got an electric shock at work and his hands had to be amputated. Now, Bimal can't work and they have two children to look after. Bimal's parents are still not accepting their relationship as well as Bimal lost his parents' inheritance property. Their life is miserable and they are still struggling to get incentives from government reserved for inter-caste couples.

This woman is just a representative of thousand cases of social violence from the inter-caste marriage. The physical and mental torture, domestic violence and discrimination Dalit women have to tackle is really challenging.



Home Minister Bhim Rawal pointing out government to have effective law for inter-caste marriage

Home Minister Bhim Rawal concluded by saying "what we need is social consciousness and a movement to fight against such social inequality and violence". He had shown his commitment to bring an effective law to minimize the breakdown of inter-caste marriage. We can hope some changes for the coming years.

This Month's Contents

- Public Hearing on Inter-caste marriage
- Dalit Women in exploration visit in Kathmandu
- Dalit girls' dropouts from school
- Celebration of International Human Rights Day
- Pressure group mobilization training
- Conference on minorities in Switzerland

Dalit Women come to Kathmandu for first high level talks

Dalit women from the grassroots level of FEDO met the national policy makers, legislators and organizations in capital for the first time. Some 25 Dalit women from Dhanusha, Dadeldhura, Banke and Arghakhanchi districts participated in a week long "sharing and learning" visit.

The main purpose of this visit was for Dalit women to speak directly to key leaders about their issues and to exert pressure on leaders to incorporate them in the government plan. The women visited the National Dalit Commission (NDC), the Ministry of Local Development, the Nepal Women Development Commission, the Human Rights Commission (HRC) and the Dalit NGO Federation (DNF). Most of the organizations promised to focus more on Dalit women issues, including the NDC, the Nepal Women Development Commission and the HRC. The Ministry of Local Development committed to separate budget at the district level for Dalit women's development.

The higher authorities of Ministry of local Development thanked FEDO for bringing these women to share about their agendas and problems. The senior authorities of the ministry present their planning for the districts. This type of visit from community level encourages making policies and planning in favor of the Dalit community.



Dalit women from districts standing in front of the National Dalit Commission

Dalit girls' dropout from school



Narendra Singh, member of the research team, introducing the sharing program on Dalit girls' dropout

FEDO completed its research entitled “Lack of access to Education of Dalit Girls”. This study was supported by the Minority Rights Group (MRG) and tried to understand the huge dropout rate of Dalit girls. The research was carried out by Dr. Bidhyanath Koirala with his team in four districts namely Kailali, Surkhet, Dailekh and Janakpur.

The research revealed plenty of findings. The major factors behind Dalit girls dropout rates are a lack of awareness about the importance of education, poverty and discrimination against Dalit girls. These three factors are the most widespread ones in all the districts where the research was conducted. But other factors like the Chaupadi system, early marriage also explain the phenomenon of high dropout rates.

The findings of the study were presented to social activists of different NGOs, the Ministry of Education, stakeholders and FEDO’s staff at a meeting held on 31st December, 2010. As a consequence, the research team received some feedback and suggestions about the study. Staff from FEDO’s central office also visited four different districts, namely Arkhankachi, Dadeldhura, Nepalganj and Dhanusa to share the findings and to get the reactions of local people as well. These findings will be shared at future events and will be submitted to the Nepali Government.

Celebration of International Human Rights Day



A district Judge giving his view on International Human Rights Day in Achham district

On 10th December, 2010, Dang, Pyuthan, Achham and Mahottari districts organized rallies for International Human Rights Day. They demonstrated around the district headquarters with placards featuring slogans about protecting and promoting Dalit women's human rights and stopping violence. After the rally, the demonstrators gathered at the district headquarters where key leaders delivered speeches on human rights and the protection of Dalit women's human rights. Major political party leaders, civil society activists, government line agency officers and human rights activists all expressed their views on the day. All committed to protect human rights in their respective districts. The main objective of the program was to put pressure on agencies at a national as well as international level.

Pressure group mobilization training

The main objective of this training was to mobilize the pressure group members to claim their rights in political inclusion and other areas. During their training, they gained knowledge about a variety of subjects including how to tap local resources more effectively. This is a key issue for Dalit people who are missing out on large amounts of funding because of discrimination, lack of access and lack of awareness. As a result, other groups who are better informed and do not suffer from discrimination are exerting pressure on funders to approve their proposals instead.

Participants were encouraged to put pressure on political parties and other political bodies to allow Dalit women to take on key roles. All participants learned about the reality of Dalit representation on political parties and government bodies. They committed to mobilize to change this situation to improve Dalit rights.

This training was held in Pyuthan district on December 25-27, 2010 under the "Leadership Development of Dalit Women for Political Participation" (LDDP) Project.



Participants doing an exercise during the pressure group mobilization's training in Pyuthan district

Conference on minorities in Switzerland



Mrs Ramtel and Ms Pariyar participating in an international conference on minorities in Geneva.

Three members of FEDO attended a "Minorities and effective participation in economic life" conference in Geneva, Switzerland, organized by Minority Rights Groups.

Participants from around the world presented their recommendations for their own governments to reduce wrong governmental policies on minority issues. As representatives of Nepal, members of FEDO, emphasized the position of Dalit and their struggles.

The chairperson, Sita Gupta, from the United Nations, noted all the recommendations of the respective countries which the UN will use to improve the minorities' situation in the world as soon as possible.