

An appeal of
12 DAYS NATIONAL CAMPAIGN
against
CASTE BASED DISCRIMINATION AND UNTOUCHABILITY

From 24 May to 04 June 2013, Nepal

Let's fight caste based discrimination and untouchability TOGETHER

The Government of Nepal has acknowledged through the national and international human rights forums that the Dalit community of Nepal has lagged behind in all social, economic, and political spheres as a result of century-long caste based discrimination and untouchability. In order to the cause, the state has made some laws and declarations.

The declaration of Nepal as an Untouchability Free Nation in 2006 [4 June] by the reinstated parliament after people's movement II paved the path towards restoring the dignity and human rights of Dalits. The article 14 of the Interim Constitution 2007 has guaranteed the Rights against Untouchability as the fundamental rights. The Caste Based Discrimination and Untouchability (Offence and Punishment) Act 2011 endorsed by the legislative-parliament made any practices of discrimination and untouchability at both in private and public places a crime, and punishable according to the law. The government has also established a “mechanism to end the caste based discrimination and untouchability and promote Dalit rights in 2011” for the practical and effective implementation of all the laws and state commitments. The political parties have also made their commitments in protecting the rights of Dalit community and end the caste based discrimination and untouchability practices from the society.

Despite these declarations and legal and constitutional provisions, the Dalts are still facing worst form of discrimination on the ground of caste in every sphere of life. Rights have not be realized: the practices in the society have not changed significantly, Dalits are facing abuses and brutal attack while attempting to enjoy their rights and freedom enshrined by the constitution. To take some examples, a couple of inter-caste marriage of Bidur of Nuwakot district faced brutalism by the local people and they were expelled from their village on 28 April 2013. Chij Maya Pariyar of Chitwan district was severely beaten in an accusation of witchcraft. The attack and killing of Sete Damai of Dailekh district and Manbire Sunar of Kalikot district are the extreme in its form.

The continued abuses and brutal attack over equal rights seekers [Dalit] are due to ineffective implementation of constitutional and legal provisions and prejudice prosecutors and reluctance of the state machinery for protecting the rights Dalits. The unwillingness of political parties to regulate the conduct of their members and mechanism has left the cause behind. Furthermore, party cadres in many instances have provided political protection to the offenders and further victimized to the innocent people. Similarly, the media is not paying attention enough to raise the issue based on the research digging out the roots of structural discrimination rather make a news as a social phenomenon. The issue of caste based discrimination and untouchability is not deliberately considered as the violation of human rights. Rather it is taken as a social and cultural issue, and provide support to the perpetrators discouraging the Dalits not to seek their rights on an equal footing – the real situation in the society.

Objective of the Campaign

This “A 12 Days National Campaign against Caste Based Discrimination” from **24 May to 04 June 2013 [10-21 Jestha]** aims:

- To create pressure, provide policy feedbacks to accountable agencies for fair and effective implementation of anti-discrimination laws and provisions;
- To sensitize wider society and stakeholders about the state commitments and laws for combating caste based discrimination;
- To promote collective action among key actors to end caste based discrimination and untouchability.

Why 12 Days for the Campaign?

The Day 10th Jestha and 21st Jestha are historic days towards restoring the dignity of Dalit community in Nepal. This campaign is launched on 10th Jestha, on the day the legislature-parliament unanimously passed the Caste Based Discrimination and Untouchability (Offence and Punishment) Act 2011 [24 May]. It ends on 21st Jestha, the day when the state declared Nepal as an Untouchability Free Nation in 2006 [4 June]. Therefore, this campaign has three aspects. One is celebrating the state's commitment towards ensuring EQUAL RIGHTS TO DALIT, drawing the attention of the state machinery and all stakeholders TO DO MORE to restore the dignity of Dalits and ensure equal rights and raise awareness for effective implementation of anti-discrimination law.

Our Message

The Constitutional provisions, laws and state commitments are important steps. Now it requires effective implementation of them. This can only pave the way towards realizing the true spirit of Untouchability Free Nation and ensuring the human dignity and freedom of Dalits. There must be complete end to the caste based discrimination and untouchability only then Dalits can enjoy their rights as citizens of a sovereign democratic republican country. Peace and prosperity cannot be achieved by denying the rights of Dalit! The country cannot go ahead leaving Dalits behind in injustice!

Therefore, we appeal to all of you – the rights activists, peace loving people, human rights activists, media, occupational association, faith based organizations, political parties, wider society and every individual for your participation in the campaign and solidarity for 'restoring dignity' and human rights of Dalit.

We urge to the Government of Nepal and the state machinery to initiate result oriented actions with commitment and support this campaign.

We urge to the political parties of Nepal to mobilize all party cadets for combating caste based discrimination and untouchability and support this campaign

We also urge to international human rights community for their support and solidarity to this campaign.

Organizers:

Dalit Civil Society Organizations in Nepal