

**IDSN NOTE - CASTE REFERENCES IN MRG REPORT**

[State of the Worlds Minorities and Indigenous People 2015](#)

[Events 2014](#)

Chapters	Relevant paragraphs
<p><b>Forword by UN SR on Minority Issues Rita Izsák (pp.6-10)</b></p>	<p>This impressive volume put together by Minority Rights Group International (MRG) highlights the continued failure of many municipal officials, city planners and other urban decision makers to recognize and support their minority and indigenous populations. Furthermore, it draws attention to the limited understanding among rights activists of the specific implications that urbanization has for minority and indigenous communities. In Canada, where the majority of the country’s First Nations population now live in urban areas, entrenched exclusion and discrimination have pushed young community members into criminal gangs. In Bangladesh, Dhaka’s Dalit population are mostly concentrated in isolated and unsanitary ‘colonies’ where basic services such as water access are largely absent. In Uganda, poverty and crop failure have driven many Karamajong to migrate to Kampala, where community members can end up engaged in begging, prostitution or being exploited in other ways. Though each example is unique, the common thread between them is the particular challenges that urban areas present for these groups <b>(p.7)</b></p>
<p><b>Thematic overview</b></p>	
<p><b>Minorities and indigenous peoples’ rights in urban areas</b></p> <p><b>Corinne Lennox</b></p> <p><b>(pp.10-22)</b></p>	<p><b>The right to non-discrimination</b></p> <p>Discrimination also leads to minorities and indigenous peoples often being concentrated in the most hazardous and polluting jobs. The majority of sweepers in Lahore, Pakistan are Christians, occupying the lowest ranks of employment in the sanitation services. In Pune, India’s ninth largest city, nearly 90 per cent of waste-pickers are women, most of whom are Dalits <b>(p. 15)</b>.</p> <p>Regularization of legal status can enable minorities and indigenous peoples to access livelihoods in the formal economy where protection against discrimination is stronger. Labour rights associations for the informal sector can be supported to better include minorities and indigenous peoples. In Pune, Dalit women are part of a workers’ cooperative, SWaCH (Solid Waste Collection and Handling), that negotiated an agreement with the municipal authority to have exclusive rights to manage the waste recycling, a move that has improved wages, safety and security for the workers. Targeted micro-credit programmes can help minorities and indigenous peoples to overcome discrimination in accessing financial services. For example, the government of India has launched in 2015 a Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Castes to support Dalits to finance innovative enterprise and green businesses <b>(p.15)</b>.</p>
<p><b>Minorities and Indigenous women and Urbanization</b></p>	<p><b>Employment</b></p> <p>Other than domestic work, it is common for minority and indigenous women to become locked into certain urban employment sectors. For example, Dalit women</p>

<p><b>Nicole Girard</b> <b>(pp.32-49)</b></p>	<p>in Bangladesh are largely a rural population, but for Dalits living in the capital city Dhaka the majority were born in the city and live in vast informal settlements. To be Dalit is to be untouchable, outcast from the social and religious hierarchy. Employment is hereditary, passing down jobs that are considered dirty and demeaning through the generations. According to Zakir Hossain, the Director of Najorik Uddyog, an NGO working with Dalit communities in Dhaka, a large proportion of Dalit women are public cleaners. ‘The main employment of Dalit women is cleaning and sweeping jobs in the municipality, the City Corporation and other government and non-government offices. Other than cleaning jobs, some Dalit women are involved in sewing clothes at home. But guardians and male members of the family do not like their sewing and other activities other than sweeping jobs.’</p> <p>Similarly, in India too, Dalits – many of them women – are employed by municipal governments to work in waste removal. In the city of Pune, however, waste-pickers, 90 per cent of whom are Dalit women, were able to organize themselves into a union in 1993. Thereafter, Solid Waste Collection and Handling (SWaCH) was created, a worker-owned cooperative of wastepickers who were given in 2008 exclusive rights by the city to work as garbage collectors. The city has provided uniforms, protective gear and some motorized carts; women report working fewer hours for the same amount of money and increased respect in the community <b>(pp. 36-37)</b>.</p> <p><b>Access to health services</b> A lack of regular access to clean water and sanitation facilities can pose direct threats to women’s health. Diseases that stem from a lack of sanitation, such as schistosomiasis, a parasitic disease that results in lesions to the urogenital tract, make women three times more vulnerable to HIV infection. Discrimination against Dalits in India manifests itself in unequal access to water and sanitation. On the national level, it is estimated that 60 per cent of non-Dalit women have access to adequate sanitation and water, whereas only 38 per cent of Dalit women have adequate access. The same discrimination is manifested in urban slum dwellings, where Dalits are over-represented. In one study from an urban slum in Chennai, 30.3 per cent of Dalits had no access to adequate water supply and sanitation, compared to 20.8 per cent of non-Dalits. A lack of hygienic options in informal settlements, particularly around menstruation, causes unnecessary shame and threats to self-respect for women. As many urban informal settlements do not have access to clean water, due to gendered responsibilities, women must travel and queue for long hours to collect water <b>(pp 39-40)</b>.</p>
<p><b>Advocacy participation and inclusion for minorities in urban areas</b></p> <p><b>Sajjad Hassan</b> <b>(pp.44-54)</b></p>	<p>Focusing on a range of case studies, including Roma in Europe, Dalits in Bangladesh, African American homeless persons in Chicago, and Dalit and Muslim homeless migrants in Delhi, the chapter will explore some of the key drivers of urban exclusion and identify potential ways forward to achieve safer, more equitable cities for these marginalized communities <b>(p.45)</b></p> <p><b>Overview of major challenges facing minorities in urban settings</b> An 11-country survey by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in 2012 noted that ‘about 45 per cent of the Roma surveyed live in</p>

households lacking an indoor kitchen, toilet, shower or bath, or electricity...One in three Roma is unemployed, 20 per cent are not covered by health insurance, and 90 per cent are living below the poverty line.' On the other side of the globe, in Bangladesh, Dalits face similar obstacles. Discriminated against due to their 'low caste' status, as in other parts of South Asia, Bangladeshi Dalits are confined to some of the lowest paid jobs, such as cleaning toilets and sweeping streets. A significant proportion are urban, situated in municipally designated slum 'colonies' with no land ownership rights, despite their extended occupation of these areas, with many living in tiny huts often housing three generations of the same family under a single roof. Besides the obvious problem of overcrowding, this also affects the autonomy of younger members of the family, and particularly of women, to pursue their choices. As with a large proportion of Roma settlements, there are few basic amenities such as piped water, adequate sanitation or electricity and there is limited access to schooling. As a result, most Dalits have no formal education and very few are able to enjoy the benefits of higher education. According to a 2006 study, 64 per cent of the country's Dalits have received no education at all (p.45).

In India, the drivers of homelessness are somewhat different and typically intertwined with the dynamics of migration from rural to urban areas, where extreme poverty combines with the pressure on migrant labour to support families back home. Again, minorities – principally Dalits and poor Muslims – are disproportionately represented among the homeless. While data on homelessness, collected as part of the decennial census, does not disaggregate by religion or ethnicity, there is enough evidence that points to this imbalance. In the context of urban poverty nationally, Dalits and Muslims face higher levels of overcrowding and are concentrated disproportionately in the most marginalized urban areas, with an estimated 23 per cent of Dalits and 19 per cent of Muslims based in slums, compared to 11 per cent of the majority community. There is also anecdotal evidence, as well as evidence in the form of qualitative accounts of civil society organizations working on homelessness issues, pointing to the fact that the homeless are largely made up of these two minorities. While the situation of the homeless in urban areas generally is acute, the challenges experienced by those belonging to minorities are especially difficult. This is the case in Delhi, for example, the fastest growing metropolis in India and a magnet for labour from rural areas. Migrant labour in Delhi includes a large proportion of Dalits and Muslims, mostly landless labourers from poor northern states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal. Concentrated around settlements with large Muslim populations or in the older parts of the city, again traditionally Muslim, they struggle to access housing and in many cases end up sleeping in the open streets. The absence of a permanent home means they are not even recorded for the purposes of social security schemes such as food rations or pensions. Violence on the streets, especially against homeless children and women, is known to be high (p. 46).

### **The development and creation of minority community organizations**

Struggles for the advancement of the rights of minorities require (besides an enabling legal environment and capacity in places to support the process), platforms and collectives for minority communities to organize themselves, articulate their concerns and engage with other stakeholders. But community mobilization is not an easy task, especially among very marginalized groups. The Dalit example from Bangladesh is instructive here. Efforts by Dalit rights organizations led to the establishment in 2008 of the Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM). This was meant to serve as a platform for the Dalit community, with the aim of educating members on their rights, building public awareness against discrimination, sensitizing policy makers to the poor condition of Dalits and strengthening the capacity of Dalit run organizations to do all this. Mobilizing Dalits to organize themselves on a platform for recognition and rights was at the core of this strategy.

The fact that the homeless are largely made up of these two minorities. While the situation of the homeless in urban areas generally is acute, the challenges experienced by those belonging to minorities are especially difficult. This is the case in Delhi, for example, the fastest growing metropolis in India and a magnet for labour from rural areas. Migrant labour in Delhi includes a large proportion of Dalits and Muslims, mostly landless labourers from poor northern states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal. Concentrated around settlements with large Muslim populations or in the older parts of the city, again traditionally Muslim, they struggle to access housing and in many cases end up sleeping in the open streets. The absence of a permanent home means they are not even recorded for the purposes of social security schemes such as food rations or pensions. Violence on the streets, especially against homeless children and women, is known to be high.

These civil society partnerships have, over time, led to many positive achievements, pushing Dalit concerns onto the national political agenda and leading eventually to the government making specific commitments to assist its Dalit population in its budget. BDERM also helped bring the issue to the attention of international agencies and UN bodies, with the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for Bangladesh including a specific objective for 'housing for all' on the human rights situation of the Dalit community. But the challenges to mobilizing Dalits continue to be significant. For one, anti-Dalit attitudes in society are deep-seated: changing the mindsets of different stakeholders, such as decision makers, service providers, civil society partners and the public at large, is difficult. And then there is the issue of building Dalit platforms themselves. Afsana Amin of Nagorik Uddyog ('Citizens' Initiative'), a civil society group seeking to promote participation, access to justice and development, which also acts as the secretariat to BDERM, says:

*'Discriminated [against] for centuries, Dalits have internalized their second class status. Educating them to demand reversal of this status is an uphill task. This is compounded by the poor literacy amongst the community, and the acute poverty, along with the concentration in low paid 'dirty' jobs. [This] means that mobilizing*

*for rights and dignity is not a priority for them. And Dalits being sub-divided along sub-castes, makes it a difficult task to organize all on a common platform*

BDERM's efforts to counter this take the form of programmes for Dalit youth on skill building, as well as leadership training for national and district committee Dalit members. It also supports projects for the conservation of Dalit language, culture and traditions, while promoting awareness raising and public education initiatives on constitutional rights and entitlements, such as housing and land tenure (pp. 46-47).

Lack of awareness and sensitivity to the plight of the homeless, and negative stereotypes, if not outright prejudice among the general public and officials against Dalits and Muslims – as mentioned, the minorities who make up the bulk of the homeless – results in a situation where much of the homeless population of the city is not covered by any social security programme. However, it was activism on the part of a food rights collective – the Right to Food Movement – working with a sympathetic higher court,<sup>1</sup> that led to the crafting of a programme of support for Delhi's homeless, including night shelters, improved facilities in day shelters and soup kitchens, among others. Constituents of the Right to Food Movement and other urban rights collectives in Delhi have worked with national and state governments to implement some of the programmes that the Delhi government formulated in response to the court's verdict. Their focus has been localities where minorities, including Muslims and Dalits, are concentrated, as well as other marginalized minorities – including women, children and elderly persons, among others. This targeting of minority areas has helped the benefits reach the most deserving people. Whilst it is true that the homeless examples, both from Chicago and Delhi, do not necessarily reflect minority activism as such, they do provide examples where general initiatives still ended up achieving positive outcomes for minorities. In India it was the shared issue of homelessness on the streets of Delhi, rather than a minority specific concern, that created the necessary consensus for traction and led to various improvements for all homeless people, particularly benefitting minorities: this is an example where working with general rights organizations and finding shared issues yielded results (p.50)

**Increasing visibility for minorities issues**

Countering prejudice is a challenge that Dalits in Bangladesh and organizations speaking for them, such as BDERM and Nagorik Uddyog, also face. The struggle in the country to ensure Dalit rights are recognized as a category worthy of policy attention has been a long, drawnout one. BDERM and alliance partners are now demanding that the government include disaggregated data on caste in the next national census. This is on the back of demands and campaigns for better housing and upgraded facilities for Dalits in urban settlements, including land allocations and regularization of tenure. However, much of the success of the Dalit struggle in Bangladesh has itself been the impact of efforts, by Nagorik Uddyog and other groups in BDERM, to raise the profile of the issue and bring multiple stakeholders

within the fold of the alliance. These efforts bore fruit in 2008, with political parties adopting the term 'Dalit' and including Dalit issues in their manifestos, thus committing to include Dalits within the policy framework. In parallel, BDERM also reached out to international stakeholders, such as the International Dalit Solidarity Network and the UN. These have had salutary effects in bringing Dalit issues centrestage in pro-poor policy debates in Bangladesh and internationally, with a focus on housing and other urban rights (p. 51).

#### **Engaging local authorities: how to participate in local political process**

BDERM's work in Bangladesh, similarly, has focused on the political empowerment of Dalits, developing a grassroots Dalit leadership and organizing them on rights-based platforms to advocate for decent housing, training and livelihood support for Dalit youth. But minority rights platforms have their limitations, due to their small constituency as well as the limited voice they have within the rights movements. Partnerships and alliances with larger rights platforms can help amplify voices. Dworkin of CCH notes:

*'Much of what we do is in partnership with other groups. These are coalitions of outside groups we lead or join; efforts led by unions, such as the Fight for 15; grassroots pro-poor collaborations, such as Chicago based organizations representing poor people (Sweet Home Chicago); or community organizations and neighbourhood associations concerned about affordable housing.*

A problem, she adds, is that 'what is affordable for the poor, might still not be affordable for the homeless'. Where minority groups align with larger platforms, a balance must be struck between the group's core interests and those of the larger pro-poor platform. These latter groups might be concerned about the poor, but not the most poor specifically, including the homeless. Hence a common ground has to be reached. This is not to undermine the importance of partnering with pro-poor formations – as Dworkin makes clear, 'they have size and bring a lot of scale and reach, all of which is a help to our cause too. Organizations working with the homeless do not have that sort of heft.' In Delhi, the role of the Supreme Court in asking its commissioners to monitor the implementation of its Right to Food ruling in favour of the urban homeless meant that space was created for the civil society organizations to positively influence outcomes. This also opened up ground for strengthening the principal homeless rights collective in Delhi, the Shahri Adhikar Manch: Begharon ke Saath (SAMBSK). Numbering over 20 organizations and social movements, SAM-BSK works to promote and protect the rights of the homeless. In recent times, SAM members have pooled their resources to provide emergency night shelter and care for the homeless in the winter months. Other outcomes have been the enrolment of the homeless in electoral registers, giving them the ability to exercise their democratic rights, something that migrants lose when they travel from rural areas to cities. Crucially, the use of an encompassing category 'homeless', rather than the specific minority, Dalit or Muslim, has meant that service providers have tended, on the whole, to be supportive of these efforts. The work has not attracted the kind of resistance that, in the literature, seems to visit interventions targeted at minorities, particularly religious communities (pp. 51-52).

<p><b>Urbanization, minorities and indigenous peoples: how can the law provide protection?</b></p> <p><b>Lucy Claridge</b></p> <p><b>(pp. 62- 72)</b></p>	<p><b>Roma</b></p> <p><i>Footnote 28 (in relation to social exclusion and forced evictions): Roma are, of course, not the only minority group to suffer in this way: many other minorities and indigenous communities (for example, the Dalits) have also experienced similar treatment at the hands of their governments and their fellow citizens. However, unlike Dalits, Roma have been able to challenge this treatment before regional bodies – including the ECtHR – providing some interesting jurisprudence for consideration in this chapter. For that reason, and for that reason alone, jurisprudence involving Roma has been selected for inclusion. (p. 71)</i></p>
<p><b>Regional Overview Asia and Oceania</b></p> <p><b>(pp. 136- 220)</b></p>	
<p><b>South Asia</b></p> <p><b>Shikah Dilawri and Nicole Girard</b></p>	<p><b>Bangladesh</b></p> <p>Dalits, comprise many of Bangladesh’s urban slum dwellers. Many live in what are called ‘sweeper colonies’ as most Dalits here are traditionally employed as manual scavengers or waste collectors. Discriminated against throughout society, it is difficult to find more skilled employment for the educated few, as their housing address on their CVs quickly reveals who they are. Whole colonies have faced multiple evictions over the course of decades, moving between abandoned hospitals and factories after being displaced by ‘rehabilitation’ or urban beautification. An anti-discrimination law has long been advocated for in Bangladesh, but stalled again in parliament this year. Though there is a paucity of data available on their situation, in May 2014 a seminar organized by Dalit activists highlighted the water and sanitation crisis facing their communities – a huge health risk given the city’s vulnerability to flooding, exacerbated by climate change. Dhaka’s poorest communities are typically located in the most flood-prone areas of the capital, including Dalit settlements such as the Agargaon Sweeper Colony, where residents live in a series of cramped shelters built on stilts to protect them from the floodwater (p. 171).</p> <p><b>India</b></p> <p>Due to their distinct features and cultural practices, minority and indigenous migrants from the north-east often face verbal abuse and even violence. This was highlighted in January when Nido Tania, an indigenous university student from Arunachal Pradesh, died shortly after being beaten by a group of shopkeepers in Delhi who had reportedly shouted racist slurs and insulted Tania’s hairstyle. Four adults were charged with his death, while minors were also detained. The police investigation recommended that charges be filed under the Scheduled Castes and Tribes Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989 (SC/ST Act), a key piece of legislation intended to prevent violence against Dalits and indigenous peoples. In September this recommendation was declined by the trial court after it concluded that the racist element was not proven, though Nido’s father, a member of the legislative assembly, is seeking to overturn this ruling. In the wake of this killing, the Bezbaruah Committee was formed to investigate remedial measures, and made a</p>

series of recommendations including criminalizing discrimination targeting north-easterners. By the start of 2015, the government had decided to add to its hate speech provision in Section 153 of the penal code to address their concerns. Violence against Dalits is also widespread and continued throughout 2014, driven by the persistent effects of India's caste system and the lack of justice for victims. One of the most shocking incidents occurred in October in Bihar, when a Dalit boy was beaten and burned to death for letting his goat graze on the grass of an upper-caste landholder. The landholder was subsequently taken into police custody. Though attacks on Dalits are common throughout the country, the situation is particularly difficult in Bihar, often cited as India's most lawless province, where the population is overwhelmingly rural and often located in remote areas. Some activists believe that the appointment of Jitan Ram Manjhi, a Dalit, as Bihar's chief minister in May sharpened tensions as Manjhi's calls for greater rights for the Dalit community were resented by upper-caste members. Manjhi resigned from his post in February 2015 just before he was to face a vote of confidence in the state assembly, claiming his decision was intended to avert violence after he and his supporters allegedly received death threats. Though the majority of Dalits still reside in rural areas, with just over 20 per cent based in urban areas, cities are often seen as a positive force in reducing caste divisions. While Dalits still face violence and discrimination in cities, strict social hierarchies are harder to enforce and violence generally is not as pervasive and brutal. Severe inequalities persist, however, with Dalits making up a large proportion of those engaged in the urban informal labour sector as domestic workers, rickshaw-pullers, street vendors and other poorly paid sectors. While many choose to migrate voluntarily for employment, many also end up in urban areas as a result of forcible displacement or evictions – issues which affect marginalized minorities disproportionately and continue to drive migration to urban areas.

Of the 60 million or more people displaced by development projects since independence in 1947, 40 per cent are Adivasis and another 40 per cent are Dalits or other rural poor. The challenges are especially acute for Dalit women, who are further exploited due to castegender prescriptions. Manual scavenging, for instance – the practice of removing human waste – is often 'reserved' for Dalit women, particularly in rural areas but frequently in urban centres as well, including by local government and municipal corporations who pay menial wages for this degrading and unsanitary task. This is despite the Supreme Court reaffirming in March 2014 that the practice was prohibited. In some cases, certain Dalit castes are expected to do the job and may be pressured or intimidated if they attempt to access alternative livelihoods. Nevertheless, urban areas can also offer women from excluded castes the opportunity to improve their lives. The garment manufacturing industry in Tamil Nadu, for example, has attracted Dalit women into cities like Tirupur and Coimbatore through the Sumangali Scheme. Set up in the early 2000s, the scheme targets young women and girls, 60 per cent of whom are Dalits. Girls migrate on the promise of decent wages and a bonus after their contracts are finished, hopeful to escape poverty and discrimination in the villages – though many unfortunately end up in situations of exploitation and bonded labour. While India is visibly struggling with general urban poverty and the growth of informal settlements, minorities experience these challenges more acutely. One in every five urban slum dwellers is Dalit, compared to only one in



ten for urban India generally, and urban Dalits continue to report discrimination in access to housing and employment. Rapid urban expansion and urban beautification programmes for international events or upmarket housing have led to the destruction of many urban slums, including marginalized minority settlements. Expanding urban areas can even swallow former rural settlements, with little regard for their existing residents. In Maharashtra in 2012, for instance, the Malegaon municipality attempted to requisition outlying Dalit and Adivasi villages for a slum relocation project, claiming that their existing land certificates were no longer valid under the city's jurisdiction. 25 houses were demolished without warning, though a sustained campaign managed to save 75 Dalit and Adivasi homes in the adjacent village. Though lower-caste groups are especially vulnerable to land grabbing, many communities have also successfully resisted attempts by local authorities and companies to forcibly displace them. During 2014 the Dalit Ekta Camp in New Delhi, a slum community of 4,000 Dalits and Muslims, faced the threat of demolition due to claims of encroachment on protected green space, despite residents having lived there for decades. Critics argued that the real motivation was local politics rather than environmental protection, as in May the local member of the legislative assembly had written to local authorities to request demolition of the slum: he stood to profit from evicting 900 voters who supported the opposition Aam Aadmi Party candidate in the upcoming assembly elections. At the end of November, once the upcoming elections were set to be announced, Dalit Ekta Camp was informed that their homes would be destroyed in less than 12 hours. They filed a case before the Delhi High Court and managed to get a stay of the demolition. On 4 December the court issued an order that the Delhi Development Authority must produce evidence that the eviction is in accordance with existing policy (pp. 174-178).

#### **Case Study by Rajiv Shah**

##### ***Discrimination against Dalit women in Ahmedabad***

In Ahmedabad, located in the heart of Gujarat state, Dalits have been an important but often invisible presence for generations, working as scavengers and waste-clearers within the strict confines of India's caste system. Concentrated on the periphery of the city, frequently segregated from other communities, many had also migrated to the city in search of work in emerging industries such as Ahmedabad's textile mills. Nevertheless, though strong caste and communal barriers remained in place, Dalit settlements existed alongside upper-caste and Muslim neighbourhoods in the city centre and the nearby industrial townships. However, over the last few decades a number of violent incidents, including anti-Dalit riots in 1981 and communal violence in 2002, have reinforced divisions. This case study, drawing on interviews conducted in December 2014 with a number of activists and community members based in the city, highlights some of the key challenges facing Dalit women today. According to Madhuben Koradiya, a Dalit women's rights activist with the Ahmedabad-based NGO Navsarjan Trust who was interviewed for this case study, the closure of many of the city's mills in the 1980s and early 1990s also precipitated a crisis for Dalit women. In previous years Dalit women had been making some small gains, with some even managing to secure low-level government employment, but this tentative progress halted with the collapse of the textile industry: '[It] led to large-scale joblessness among men,

following which Dalit women were forced to do any job they could lay their hands on, even as construction workers, in order to help the family. A huge oversupply of labour in the job market meant less wages.... Women have nowhere to go, except to work as daily wagers or home-based workers.'

As a result, their livelihood options deteriorated:

'Things have further worsened over the last 10 to 15 years. Dalit women are doing such jobs which I could not even imagine when I was young. They are ready to work as guinea pigs for pharmaceutical companies, which use them to experiment with the reaction to medicines of the human body. They are ready to become surrogate mothers for money.'

Following the outbreak of communal violence across Gujarat in 2002, the situation for Dalit women worsened. Though Muslims were exposed to the worst of the violence, the 'next biggest casualty' were Dalits:

'Out of more than 1,000 killed, more than 100 were Dalits. The young Dalits were misguided by the saffron brigade [right-wing Hindu extremists]. Now no one takes care of the families of many of the Dalits who were arrested for the riots or those who died. The condition of women is particularly in bad shape. Many women have been pushed into such illegal activities like brewing country liquor and prostitution, and there is little anyone is doing.'

The challenges Dalit women face, though overlapping with general issues of urban poverty and gender discrimination, are in many ways distinct from the issues that face the female population as a whole. Ahmedabad has a number of active women's organizations, but while these often have a large Dalit constituency among their members, their focus generally is not on specific incidents of discrimination. While a trade union may periodically train its members on issues of sexual violence and harassment, for example, it usually avoids taking up human rights issues related to atrocities against Dalit women. Solidarity was also undermined following the 2002 communal violence. Preeti Vaghela, another activist based with the Navsarjan Trust, described how prior to the riots Dalit and Muslim families lived side by side in some parts of the city. However, in the aftermath, the interaction between women from different communities came to an abrupt halt:

'[Until 2002] women interacted with each other. However, following the riots, Dalits have fled many of these areas, and got scattered to different places. The social fabric which women had built around themselves, even among Dalits, has broken apart.'

Ramilaben Babubhai Parmar, a researcher who was involved with Navsarjan Trust in a survey of the city's sanitary workers, reports that among Valmiki – probably the most marginalized of all the Dalit sub-castes – most women work as sanitary workers, whether it is for the municipality or housing societies.

'In housing societies, they are paid to work as sweepers. They sometimes are also allowed to work as sweepers inside individual houses and clean up individual toilets. However, they are generally not employed as housemaids to clean up utensils or cook food. The latter work is mostly done by women from other

backward classes, who do not have the stigma of being “impure”. There are Valmiki women who work in private offices. But they mostly work as sweepers.’ Their husbands, too, will also typically work in this dangerous occupation and as a result many end up having to head their households alone:

‘The situation is such that there is a higher incidence of widows among the gutter workers. Our survey said about 20 to 25 per cent of young Valmiki women were widows, and I don’t think that the situation has changed much even now. Malnutrition is widely prevalent. Most girls are married very young, even before attaining adulthood.’

In the segregated areas where Valmiki are located, however, sanitary facilities are almost non-existent:

‘A large number of Valmiki localities are devoid of any toilet facilities. There is a pay-and-use toilet in several localities, like Bootbhavani and Chandranagar areas, where they live, yet it is in poor shape, or often locked, and never cleaned up because of lack of water, and women are forced to go out in the open, often sitting next to the railway station nearby, to defecate.’

One consequence of the systematic humiliation experienced by the community is that Valmiki women also face regular abuse from men of their own caste:

‘Within Valmiki families, their condition has worsened. Our impression is that cases of their suicide have gone up drastically, and so have cases of violence by men. I come across such at least three to four cases of this kind every month. Working in insanitary conditions, dejected and depressed following day-long work, men drink a lot of illicit country-made liquor, which wasn’t generally the case earlier. This tells heavily on women.’

In one slum area in western Ahmedabad, situated within an affluent locality, around 70 Valmiki families live in huts with no access to water, sanitation, electricity or any form of government support. None yet have the luxury of a concrete house, in part because their homes have been destroyed by local authorities as illegal several times already. All face the constant threat of eviction. The settlement is surrounded by expensive flats, whose owners employ some of the women as sweepers. Research interviews with a number of Valmiki women living in this area highlighted the continued discrimination they faced in their employment. While claiming they were not subjected to ‘untouchability’, as was the case in the past, all of them admitted that at best they were working as sweepers in individual households, with none employed as regular housemaids to clean up utensils or cook. As one of the women interviewed put it:

‘Frankly I don’t feel untouchability as our ancestors did, but I do not do any other work inside the houses except sweeping and cleaning the apartments. I am allowed into the kitchen also, but I do not cook food or clean utensils. In fact, nobody has asked me to do these jobs, which others do.’

Another Valmiki woman, when asked why she did not refuse to work as a manual scavenger as it was prohibited by law, smiled and said, ‘Do you want us to lose our job? If we do not do the work, we will be replaced by others.’ This seemed to be the case even when they had been lucky enough to access some secondary education. Based on the accounts of the women interviewed, it appeared that even those Valmiki women who had managed some study were still condemned to the same manual labour their ancestors had been forced to perform.

	<p>Though these issues are not usually as pronounced among non-Valmiki Dalit women, discrimination in Ahmedabad is still widespread even among the less stigmatized Dalit groups, as Koradiya describes:          ‘It is rarely visible, but one can feel it does prevail in the dominant caste behaviour. In an interaction, Dalit teachers complained to us that while they would sit together to take an afternoon meal, non Dalit women as a rule would not like to share food with them, nor would the non-Dalit women ever offer them water. The feeling of distance was always visible.’          Sexual harassment, too, remains a serious challenge for women in Indian cities in general, but is especially acute for Dalit women, who are vulnerable due to their secondary status. For example, Leena Patel, a Dalit journalist and social worker interviewed for this research, highlighted the experiences of Dalit women working in the city’s diamond polishing industry. The ‘hypocrisy’, as Patel describes it, is that ‘untouchability is their motto, but the dominant caste owner doesn’t have any problem touching Dalit women’. She heard similar stories from Dalit women recruited to work as cleaners at wedding parties, who felt helpless in the face of harassment. ‘In fact, a few of the women considered sexual overtures as a normal behaviour of the contractors who offered them work. They said, if they protested against men touching them, they would not be given the job the next time’ (pp. 175-177).</p> <p><b>Pakistan</b></p> <p>According to the NGO Life for All, this signalled the most violent month suffered by Pakistan’s Hindus in two decades. Forced conversion and marriages of minority women also continued in 2014, with Dalit Hindu girls especially targeted. These incidents have been perpetuated by the lack of substantial reform to personal laws, which prevent or obstruct certain minorities from registering marriages. Although attempts were made to address such gaps in the province of Punjab with the tabling of the Punjab Hindu Marriage Registration Bill in 2014, substantial reform remains to be seen (p.179).</p>
<p><b>East Asia</b>  <b>Michael Caster</b></p>	<p>While urbanization has contributed to rising incomes and development across the country, there is a danger that inequalities will only widen if measures are not taken to ensure that minorities are fully included in this process. Japan, in contrast, has already developed into a largely urban society. Among the most pressing issues there are the resolution of historic discrimination and underdevelopment in certain neighbourhoods, such as Buraku dowa, and the conflicts that arise in Tokyo and elsewhere from racist groups who resent the increased diversity of urban Japan. In Mongolia, where the majority of the population is still rural, urbanization is nevertheless transforming the lives of many herders and pastoralists who, in a context of crop failure and limited access to land, are now migrating in large numbers to the capital, Ulaanbaatar (p. 184).</p>

	<p><b>Japan</b></p> <p>Japan has yet to implement CERD’s 2010 recommendation to create a specific government agency to deal with Burakumin issues. Burakumin are not a distinct ethnic group in Japan, but the descendants of outcast communities from the feudal era who continue to face discrimination in mainstream Japanese society. Although they are not subject to official discrimination, Burakumin still face deep seated prejudice, especially in marriage and employment, with some companies referring to lists of family names and neighbourhoods to discriminate against Burakumin. Historically, Burakumin neighbourhoods, also known as dowa, were isolated and excluded settlements with little in the way of public services or other amenities. Increasing numbers migrated to urban areas in the post-war period, resulting in the expansion of segregated slums. Following strong advocacy efforts from Buraku organizations, however, the Japanese government committed substantial government funds between 1969 and 1997 to improving Buraku urban neighbourhoods, funding upgraded housing, infrastructure development and other improvements. As a result, in large part because of the active efforts of Buraku residents, living conditions in the areas have generally improved. By 2002, the government had completed urban development projects related to the Dowa Special Measures. Among other positive developments, the physical environment in traditionally Buraku districts has improved and other indicators, such as educational attainment and employment, have also risen. However, some of the community cohesion is being weakened as some more affluent Buraku move out and poorer nonBuraku groups move in from elsewhere, meaning that sub-standard housing and other issues are reappearing (p. 192).</p>
<p><b>Regional Overview Middle East and North Africa</b></p> <p>(pp. 226 -250)</p>	
<p><b>Yemen</b></p> <p><b>Sarah El-Ashmawy, Tom Palmer, Miriam Puttick and Dereck Verbakel</b></p>	<p>The year 2014 began with the completion of Yemen’s ten-month-long National Dialogue Conference (NDC) in January. With 565 representatives invited to attend and the final outcomes of the process agreed for inclusion in the country’s new Constitution, scheduled for a referendum by 25 January 2015, the NDC’s conclusion was welcomed by many observers as an important milestone in the country’s transition to democracy. However, the process was undermined by the failure to fully represent the country’s various minorities, including Yemen’s tiny Jewish minority, which was left out despite previous promises that they would be included. Also sidelined were Yemen’s Muhamasheen, literally ‘marginalized ones’, a visible and much discriminated minority known commonly as Akhdam or ‘servants’. Despite accounting for around 10 per cent of the population, they were represented by just a single delegate in the NDC proceedings. Nonetheless, one of the NDC outcomes stipulated the establishment of ‘fair national policies and procedures to ensure marginalized persons’ access to decent housing, basic public</p>

services, free health care, and job opportunities', including placement in 10 per cent of public jobs. The NDC Final Communiqué also affirmed the need to preserve elements of national heritage and cultural rights, such as the Mahari and Socotri languages **(p. 246)**

A Yemeni Bahá'í named Hamed Kamal bin Haydara remained in prison throughout 2014, where he faced various forms of torture and abuse. In not the first case of its kind, he was accused of committing the crimes of proselytizing the Bahá'í faith and collaborating with Israel. It was not until January 2015 that he was finally indicted. Muhamasheen continued to struggle during the year for greater political inclusion, access to justice and an end to discrimination. In April 2014, dozens of Muhamasheen staged a demonstration near Jabal Habshi, Ta'izz, to protest government inaction regarding the demolition and torching of 16 Muhamasheen homes eight months prior. According to the National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms (HOOD), the attacks were a response to the intended marriage of a young Muhamasheen man with a young woman from a nearby tribe, and were believed to be carried out as a gesture of disapproval by members of the girl's tribe. Following the demonstration, some Muhamasheen families fled the area due to fears of further attacks. One factor in their ongoing exclusion is the lack of national identification cards and birth certificates issued to Muhamasheen who, when located at both the social and geographical margins of Yemen's urban centres, have faced difficulties accessing state institutions. While urban centres can offer opportunities for upward mobility and improved access to services such as education and health care, for Muhamasheen and other minorities they have often deepened existing forms of discrimination while also creating new patterns of exclusion. Urbanization in Yemen has been fuelled by the country's population growth, one of the highest rates worldwide, as well as rising investment, construction and labour migration in recent years. This has led to acute pressure on basic services and housing in major urban centres such as Sana'a, one of the world's fastest growing cities, with some projections suggesting it could be the first national capital to run out of a viable water supply.

In this context, minorities, migrants and other marginalized groups have been disproportionately affected. Yemen's Muhamasheen have been forced to make their homes overwhelmingly in slums, within or on the outskirts of the country's expanding urban centres, often in settlements housing many inhabitants in a single room and lacking basic amenities such as plumbing and electricity. Squalid living conditions, including unsafe drinking water, with only nine per cent of Muhamasheen homes having a piped supply, have contributed to widespread health problems. While there have been instances of integration into the Yemeni working and middle classes, Muhamasheen have largely faced protracted urban poverty and limited livelihood opportunities, with many engaged in menial labour such as street sweeping and trash collection. Yet as rural poor, other migrants and those uprooted by conflict have in recent years rushed to Yemen's urban centres in greater numbers, competition for even these low-level jobs is growing. Yemen's Jewish community has also been forced to migrate to urban areas due to insecurity, with the majority having moved from the north to Sana'a in 2007 after being driven from their homes in the wake of the Houthi takeover of Sa'dah. Those in Sana'a are now living in a guarded compound, and at the end of 2014 the

	only other Jewish community in Yemen, numbering no more than a dozen or so families, remained in the town of Raida in 'Amran governorate (p. 248).			
<b>People Under Threat 2015</b>				
<b>Peoples most under threat – highest rated countries 2015</b>  (p. 254)  <b>Mark Lattimer and Derek Verbakel</b>	Rank	Country	Group	Total
	2	Somalia	Minorities incl. Bantu, Benadiri and 'caste' groups (Gaboye etc.); clan members at risk in fighting incl. Hawiye, Darod, etc.	23.58
	11	Yemen	Zaydi Shi'a, Sunni tribes, al-Muhamasheen, Southerner	17.49