



**IDS**N

**International Dalit Solidarity Network**

**WORKING GLOBALLY AGAINST DISCRIMINATION BASED ON WORK AND DESCENT**

**2012**  
**annual report**



## 'Untouchables'

### Caste discrimination

Caste discrimination affects an estimated 260 million people worldwide, the vast majority living in South Asia. It involves massive violations of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Caste systems divide people into unequal and hierarchical social groups. Those at the bottom are considered 'lesser human beings', 'impure' and 'polluting' to other caste groups.

They are known to be 'untouchable' and subjected to so-called 'untouchability practices' in both public and private spheres. 'Untouchables' – known in South Asia as Dalits - are often forcibly assigned the most dirty, menial and hazardous jobs and many are subjected to forced and bonded labour. Due to exclusion practiced by both state and non-state actors, they have limited access to resources, services and development, keeping most Dalits in severe poverty.

They are often de facto excluded from decision making and meaningful participation in public and civil life. Lack of special legislation banning caste discrimination or lack of implementation of legislation, due to dysfunctional systems of justice and caste-bias, have largely left Dalits without protection. Whereas progress has been made over the last decade, with policy development and new legislation in some countries, fundamental challenges still remain in all caste-affected countries.

The division of a society into castes is a global phenomenon not exclusively practised within any particular religion or belief system. In South Asia, caste discrimination is traditionally rooted in the Hindu caste system, according to which Dalits are considered 'outcastes'. However, caste systems and the ensuing discrimination have spread into Christian, Buddhist, Muslim and Sikh communities. They are also found in Africa, other parts of Asia, the Middle East, the Pacific and in Diaspora communities.

**Photo:** On 30 November, hundreds of Dalit women gathered in Bhopal to set out on the Maila Mukti Yatra – a two month long march across India to end the inhuman practice of manual scavenging (see page 23).

PHOTOS: RASHTRIYA GARIMA ABHIYAN – JAN SAHAS

**Cover photo:** Participants in the Maila Mukti Yatra set fire to baskets used by mainly Dalit women to carry human excreta from dry latrines. The burning baskets are a symbol of the emancipation of manual scavengers.

PHOTO: RASHTRIYA GARIMA ABHIYAN – JAN SAHAS



# International Dalit Solidarity Network

4	<b>Executive Summary</b>
7	<b>United Nations</b>
7	Human Rights Council
8	Universal Periodic Review (UPR)
9	UN Special Procedures
11	UN treaty bodies
11	UN agencies and international organisations
12	<b>European Union</b>
12	EU support to DSN and IDSN work
12	The European Parliament (EP)
14	The Council Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM)
14	The European External Action Service (EEAS)
15	<b>Private Sector</b>
16	<b>Communication and networking</b>
19	<b>Developments in caste-affected countries</b>
19	India
24	Nepal
27	Bangladesh
29	Pakistan
32	<b>Developments in European countries</b>
32	Netherlands (DNN)
33	United Kingdom (DSN-UK)
34	Belgium (SDB)
35	Denmark (DSN-DK)
36	Finland (DSN-Fi)
37	Norway (DSN-Norway)
37	Sweden (DSN-S)
38	<b>Organisation, administration and finance</b>
40	<b>Financial Statements 2012</b>
41	<b>Expenditure 2012</b>
42	References
43	Abbreviations

2012  
annual report

## Executive summary

Towards the end of the year, the brutal rape of a woman in New Delhi sparked off public outrage in India and focused the world's attention on rape cases and violence against women in India. The case of this young woman who sadly died from her injuries, illustrated that violence against women is not only widespread and extreme, but in most cases surrounded by an almost complete lack of effectively functioning justice systems and rule of law. Less well known was the finding that Dalit women were worst affected by sexual violence in India, as highlighted in the 'Status Report 2012' of The Working Group on Human Rights in India and the UN (WGHR).<sup>1</sup>

In November, IDSN presented evidence of abhorrent atrocities against Dalits, covering multiple gang rapes in the state of Haryana and the demolition of as many as 400 Dalit houses in Tamil Nadu, to members of the European Parliament (EP). The cases formed the basis for the historically strong Urgency Resolution on caste discrimination in India adopted on 13 December.<sup>2</sup> Sixty MEPs from six political groups co-sponsored the resolution in which the European Parliament expressed its deep concern over the continued human rights violations against Dalits.

Condemning the high number of atrocities, the resolution particularly focused on the non-intervention by state actors

in acts of violence against Dalits and the dismal lack of effective justice mechanisms in such cases. The Parliament made timely calls to the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and the High Representative for Human Rights to develop an EU policy on caste discrimination and to EU member states to take action in the UN Human Rights Council for the endorsement of the draft UN Principles and Guidelines for the elimination of discrimination based on work and descent.

While the Dalit movement has legitimate expectations for UN forward-looking leadership on one of the most dehumanising human rights problems in the world, states still hesitate to take a specific initiative on caste discrimination in the Human Rights Council.

In 2012, IDSN continued systematic monitoring of governments' obligations to tackle caste discrimination, facilitated joint submissions to UN human rights bodies and issued a well-noticed appeal to UN institutions. Caste discrimination figured strongly in a number of thematic reports and country reviews by UN human rights bodies. The UPRs of India, the UK and Pakistan resulted in recommendations on caste discrimination and proved to be effective for enabling dialogue between Dalit civil society and governments in the pre-review process, in particular in India.

Disappointingly, however, the Government of India accepted only two out of ten caste-related recommendations and glossed over issues on deep-seated prejudices and discriminatory attitudes, gross human violations, and implementation of laws and exclusion of Dalits vis-à-vis state responsibility.

In the UPR of the UK, for the first time ever, a recommendation on outlawing caste discrimination in this country was raised, but unfortunately not accepted by the government. The persistence of similar forms of discrimination based on work and descent in Senegal and Yemen was noted by UN treaty bodies, which encouraged governments to adopt specific legislative measures and national action plans.

In 2012, Special Procedure mandate holders in particular addressed violations against Dalit human rights defenders; the stigma and exclusion of Dalits related to access to water and sanitation, including in emergency relief; and the links between forced marriage and caste discrimination. These issues were also debated at side events by Special Rapporteurs, representatives of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human rights (OHCHR) and Dalit human rights defenders. The efforts of the OHCHR, and some UN agencies, to identify and pursue country and regional approaches to address caste discrimination continued to be an encouragement.

### Caste and gender

#### Violence against Dalit women

**"Rape is often used as a tool for political and social subjugation of Dalit women, doomed to the lowest rungs of society due to caste-based prejudices... Sexual violence against Dalit women is a systemic way of enforcing status quo of the Dalits..."** the 2012 status report of the Working Group on Human Rights in India and the UN said.

**According to the Feminist Dalit Organization in Nepal, Dalit women are also the worst affected victims of gender-based violence in Nepal due to the intersection of gender and caste discrimination, and poverty.**

**The Devadasi system in India, prostitution forced upon young Dalit girls and women, continues unabated, while abduction and forced conversion of minority women in Pakistan took its hard toll on Dalit women in 2012.**

## 2012 Highlights

- UN Universal Periodic Reviews of India, UK and Pakistan: Recommendations on caste discrimination

---

- Campaign to mobilise MEPs to support the struggle to end caste discrimination

---

- European Parliament Resolution on Caste Discrimination in India

---

- New IDS N films 'We are not Untouchable' and 'Dalit women'

---

- New facebook campaign group and campaign website

---

- Campaign in India to strengthen legislation protecting Dalits

---

- Maila Mukti Yatra – a march to end manual scavenging in India

---

- South Asian regional consultation in Dhaka on Social, Economic and Legal protection for Dalits

---

- National institutions in Bangladesh commit to work for Dalit rights

---

- Launch of Dalit Solidarity Network in Norway

---

- New Dalit Solidarity Network websites

Drawing also on work with UN human rights bodies, IDS N increased its number of submissions in 2012 to EU institutions on thematic issues and country situations. IDS N and DS Ns intensified cooperation with Members and Committees of the European Parliament, noting an increased interest by political groups and a corresponding high number of resolution references, recommendations and MEP questions on caste discrimination.

A website designated for MEPs, [www.endcaste.com/MEP](http://www.endcaste.com/MEP), was launched in June featuring an online petition for MEPs, briefing papers and an IDS N appeal to EU institutions. Other campaigning initiatives launched in 2012 included a new website, [www.endcaste.com](http://www.endcaste.com), as well as a new facebook

page, End Caste Discrimination, providing new means for the public to state their support. Two new IDS N-produced video films on caste discrimination - 'We are not untouchable – end caste discrimination now!' and a short film on Dalit women formed an essential part of new IDS N campaigns. Another milestone was the introduction of new websites for a number of Dalit Solidarity Networks (DSNs) in Europe, featuring automatic updates of IDS N news. IDS N's focus on social media increased further, and a new comprehensive database on caste discrimination was created.

Dalit Solidarity Networks in several countries hosted national public events and quite successfully drew political attention to the need for strategies in development, human rights and CSR policies to address caste discrimination. In late December, the Dutch Minister for Foreign Affairs, Frans Timmermans, made his support clear with the following statement in a parliamentary debate: "The topic of discrimination based on work and descent has – as far as I am concerned – to be put higher on the agenda of the European Union. The European Parliament has recently adopted a very relevant resolution about the position of Dalits and I think that we can also better shape European policy on that basis."

As in previous years, submissions and debates in the UN, the EU and in European countries were shaped by the input and contributions of IDS N members and associates. In the course of the year, Dalit human rights defenders<sup>3</sup> from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Japan and UK participated in or led presentations in joint interventions at the EU and UN. Thanks to the numerous information sources, campaigning and lobbying activities in 2012, IDS N contributed greatly to an increased level of knowledge about the issue among the general public as well as politicians, officials and the media.

However, as the country sections of this report show, and despite civil society's gigantic efforts in affected countries, solid progress was not always evident; in Pakistan and India atrocities and violent acts against Dalits were even further aggravated. In Pakistan, 'scheduled castes' were the worst

## A global issue

**Asha Kowtal**, General Secretary of the Indian Dalit Women's Rights Platform, AIDMAM, took part in a number of IDS N lobby interventions during 2012. She made this comment on the significance of international work to the Dalit struggle:



**"Using the international mechanisms, both the United Nations and the European Union, is necessary. Firstly, to bring this out of India and make it a global human rights issue. Secondly, to ensure that member states are at least questioning India or raising some relevant questions, which could lead to better mechanisms for policy implementation. So it is important, I really think it is important."**

**PAKISTAN** • One of the countries examined by the UN's Universal Periodic Review mechanism in 2012 was Pakistan where the Dalit community is one of the poorest and most marginalised. These Dalits live in makeshift shacks along a railway track in Karachi. The 'rent' for the huts is paid as a bribe to railway company employees. This community has no access to electricity, water, education or health care. Photo: Jakob Carlsen.

affected victims of the worsening law and order situation and deteriorating state of human rights in the country.

In India, important political commitments were made in 2012 for amendments of special legislation for the protection of Dalits, i.e. the Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribes PoA Act and a prohibiting the employment of manual scavengers. If realised and effectively implemented, these laws have a great potential for improving the lives of millions of Dalits. While nationwide social programmes had a positive impact on the lives of the poorest, including the Dalits, discrimination in all social and economic spheres and diversion of funding budgeted for Dalit development purposes remained a reality.

In spite of the past success of the Dalit movement in Nepal to push for special legislation and policies, implementation was weak. Adequate resourcing and outreach in particular to remote areas remained huge challenges. Further initiatives for securing the rights of Dalits were hampered by the political stalemate in Nepal and the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in May. The need for improvement in the administration of justice and well-functioning state structures remained key concerns for all human rights defenders in the country.

Perhaps the most promising development took place in Bangladesh. The growing - and increasingly diverse - Dalit movement successfully placed policy demands and the need for anti-discrimination legislation to protect Dalits on the table. This resulted in commitments by key national

institutions, such as the Law Commission and the National Human Rights Commission to take work forward.

Dalit voices all over South Asia were thus heard loudly in public life in 2012. Dalit human rights defenders fought with a good measure of success for their rights to become part of political decision-making, drafting of legislation and the creation of policy measures for their inclusion in socio-economic development.

Politically, however, the issue is well known for its 'sensitivity' and notorious ability to disturb diplomatic relations. The potential for efficient change and for the introduction of a UN monitoring mechanism on caste discrimination - sooner rather than later - is undermined by the position held by the Government of India internationally.

It is also increasingly evident that new economic and political power equations have a direct impact on human rights leverage. States previously known for their commitment to raise gross human rights violations irrespective of power and spheres of influence now bend towards powerful states, such as India. This is happening in spite of strengthened human rights policies and the devotion to human rights-based approaches by states. This new scenario has implications for global campaigning to end caste discrimination, but it could also potentially undermine many other global human rights campaigns.

Rikke Nöhrhnd  
Coordinator

## Atrocities

### The Dharmapuri attacks

On 7 November, in Dharmapuri district, Tamil Nadu, a mob of approximately 1,000 Vanniyars, a social group considered 'superior' to Dalits in India's caste hierarchy, looted and torched as many as 400 houses in three Dalit communities. The police knew about the risk of an assault but took no action to prevent it. The attacks took place following the suicide of a Vanniyar man whose daughter had married a Dalit. The mob ransacked three villages over a period of two-three hours, while the inhabitants sought safety nearby. Only when the villages had suffered much destruction did the police react. There are strong indications that the suicide was used as a pretext for carrying out an attack aimed at destroying the economic infrastructure of the Dalit communities. Prior to and following the incident, political forces in Tamil Nadu that appeal to the Vanniyar vote made strong anti-Dalit statements.



PHOTO: HENRI TIPHAGNE/NCPCR SR ON RTE - TAMIL NADU



## United Nations

In 2012 the Dalit issue figured strongly in a number of thematic reports and country reviews by UN human rights bodies, especially the UN Special Procedures and Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism. Intensive lobby efforts and alliance building in connection with the UPRs of India, the UK and Pakistan resulted in concrete recommendations by other states on the issue of caste discrimination in all three reviews.

Special Procedure mandate holders gave attention to the situation of Dalits under thematic human rights concerns, such as violations against Dalit human rights defenders, the stigma and exclusion of Dalits related to access to water and sanitation, and the links between forced marriage and caste discrimination. Furthermore, UN treaty bodies made recommendations on the persistence of discrimination based on work and descent in countries outside of Asia – in Yemen and Senegal.

With a view to raising Dalit voices and promoting their concerns at the international level, IDS N carried on its systematic efforts to facilitate inputs to the UN, monitor outcomes, and share regular information with decision-

makers and affected groups. Aiming to promote stronger links between international and national advocacy efforts, IDS N focused on strengthening the capacity of Dalit activists to engage effectively with the UN system and make use of the mechanisms at national level.

## Human Rights Council

In the course of the year, IDS N facilitated representation of 15 Dalit activists at human rights sessions and supported the submission of a large number of inputs on relevant thematic concerns and country situations to the UN. With the objective to increase international awareness and recognition of caste discrimination as a global human rights problem, IDS N facilitated two written and three oral statements to the Human Rights Council (HRC) and co-organised four parallel events at regular HRC sessions and UPR sessions together with international associates and national members.<sup>4</sup>

As an outcome of these systematic lobby activities and inputs, the number of UN observations and recommendations on caste discrimination steadily increased in 2012. By the end of the year, the compilation of caste-specific references in UN documents exceeded 145 pages. Despite the constantly growing number of

recommendations, states continued to hesitate to take a specific initiative on caste discrimination in the HRC – and even to voice their concerns when relevant reports were presented. While a large number of state delegations expressed continued concern about the problem, the lack of leadership by caste-affected states stood in the way of further action.

In particular, India's strong refusal to acknowledge caste discrimination as an international human rights issue, which should be dealt with in the UN, is keeping other states from addressing it as a whole. IDSN regrets India's defensive position on the issue. In the UPR process of

India, a constructive dialogue was initiated between national civil society organisations, the government and the National Human Rights Commission. Hopefully, this will lead to real progress at the national level, and a less defensive government approach to a discussion of India's human rights problems in the international arena.

## Universal Periodic Review

### Selected recommendations

#### India (A/HRC/21/10)

- **Czech Republic : Enact a law on the protection of human rights defenders, with emphasis on those defenders facing greater risks, including those working on minority rights and the rights of scheduled castes and tribes. (Not accepted)**
- **Germany : Take adequate measures to guarantee and monitor the effective implementation of the Prevention of Atrocities Act, providing legal means for an increased protection of vulnerable groups like the Dalit, including the access to legal remedies for affected persons. (Not accepted)**
- **Holy See: Prevent and pursue through the judicial process, all violent acts against religious and tribal minorities, Dalits and other castes. (Accepted)**
- **Ghana: Put in place appropriate monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the intended objectives of the progressive policy initiatives and measures for the promotion and protection of the welfare and the rights of the vulnerable, including women, girls and children, as well as the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and minorities are well achieved. (Accepted)**

#### The United Kingdom (A/HRC/21/9)

- **Nicaragua: Put in practice a national strategy to eliminate discrimination against caste, through the immediate adoption of the Equality Law of 2010 that prohibits such discrimination, in conformity with its international human rights obligations, including CERD's General Recommendation 29 and recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism. (Not accepted)**

---

**We as a country took a moral stand on Nelson Mandela... for freedom from apartheid. This is why I now back the Dalit struggle for international support, though it irks me that our countrymen have to go to the West to seek justice. If we would get justice on our land, why would we wash our dirty linen in public?**

Mari Marcel Thekaekara, columnist, Hindustan Times

---

For the Dalit agenda to be successfully pushed ahead in the UN, IDSN intensified its call for joint action between concerned countries and caste-affected governments to show global leadership to address the problem. Insisting that caste discrimination needs to be considered as a distinct human rights concern in the HRC, IDSN issued an Appeal to UN Member States, Special Procedures and UN Agencies in 2012, calling for a joint initiative to address caste discrimination in the HRC.<sup>5</sup> The appeal specifically urges states to propose a HRC resolution on discrimination based on work and descent in the HRC, recommending the endorsement and use of the draft UN Principles and Guidelines for the effective elimination of discrimination based on work and descent (hereafter the "draft UN Principles and Guidelines"). The appeal is systematically used in meetings with missions, capitals and UN experts in lobby meetings, and in IDSN's communication work on UN activities.

The draft UN Principles and Guidelines, published by the HRC in 2009 (A/HRC/11/CRP.3), represents the most comprehensive framework to date on the responsibility of states and non-state actors in eliminating caste discrimination. IDSN therefore continued to promote this framework as an integral part of its lobby activities with the long-term goal of establishing a follow-up mechanism on the topic in the HRC. In its dialogue with states, UN Special Procedures, In its dialogue with UN Agencies, IDSN specifically recommended that the UN take note of the measures proposed therein when preparing the Guidance Note on how to tackle racial discrimination and minority issues.

### Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

IDSN engaged in systematic lobbying for the inclusion of caste discrimination in three major UPR reviews of India, the UK and Pakistan in 2012. As a result, strong recommendations



**Human Rights Council****Reflections on the UN – by a Dalit activist**

Sujata Paudel, Feminist Dalit Organization Nepal

**"In June 2012, I was invited by IDS**N to participate in the 20th session of the Human Rights Council together with Dalit women activists from India. The programme developed joint reflections and strategies on international advocacy, and how to make use of UN human rights mechanisms. The learning experience of sharing perspectives on issues affecting Dalit women and good practices to promote and protect their rights was fruitful. In our meetings with delegates and experts, we specifically focused on inter-caste marriage, domestic violence, socio-economic, political and cultural rights, and the role of human rights defenders working in the field of Dalit women rights. My participation in the UN session has been a milestone for my human rights activism, and it has really inspired me to work for my community. I will use this experience to uplift the oppressed voice of Dalit women and boost our movement, although there is still long way to go."

on the need to strengthen government efforts to eliminate caste-based discrimination were made in all three reviews. In close cooperation with national platforms and international associates, a series of lobby documents were prepared and disseminated to country delegations in affected countries and Geneva. Moreover, parallel events were organized and press releases issued in co-operation with international and national NGOs working on similar issues.

In the case of India, ten caste-specific recommendations were made by a cross-regional group of states, including Thailand, Japan, Ghana, USA, Czech Republic, Germany, and the Holy See.<sup>6</sup> In a follow-up to the review, the Government of India accepted only two recommendations on the enactment of appropriate monitoring mechanisms to protect the rights of vulnerable groups, including scheduled castes, and the rights of scheduled caste women with regards to choice of marriage. According to the review procedure, the Government is responsible for implementing these recommendations in the next 4.5 year period.

Regarding the UK, one strong recommendation was made by Nicaragua to outlaw caste discrimination affecting an estimated 250,000 Dalits in the Indian diaspora community.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, two states – Austria and the Holy See – made recommendations on the protection of scheduled castes in Pakistan during its second review in October. With regard to Pakistan, IDS

N cooperated with Minority Rights Group International to give attention to the discrimination experienced by religious minorities, including Dalits.

In the follow-up to the UPRs of India and the UK, most of the caste-specific recommendations were unfortunately not accepted by the respective governments and will thus not be implemented.

Nevertheless, they constitute a basis for monitoring and reporting in the second UPR cycle. This requires follow-up at national level with different stakeholders, including government institutions and delegations in the respective countries; a process which is continuously supported by IDS

N. As such, the UPR has proven a useful catalyst for creating stronger links between national and international advocacy and for building new alliances in civil society.

In October 2012, another UPR report was submitted for the review of Bangladesh at the 16th UPR session in April/May 2013. The report 'Discrimination against Dalits in Bangladesh' was prepared by three national NGOs in association with IDS

N, providing information on the gaps in implementation of the UPR recommendations from the first review (2009) and introducing new recommendations.<sup>8</sup>

**UN Special Procedures**

In 2012, a total of nine UN Special Procedure mandates – including the newly established Working Group on discrimination against women in law and practice – gave specific consideration to the issue of caste discrimination in thematic and country mission reports.<sup>9</sup> One of the most powerful reports was presented by the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders at the 19th HRC session following her visit to India in early 2011. According to the report, Ms. Sekagya was "deeply disturbed" by the situation of Dalits' rights activists, in particular the "plight of women Dalits' rights defenders who face gender-based violence, or restrictions, regarding their work on the basis of their caste and gender."<sup>10</sup>

In the Indian delegation's response to the report, the government said it was "conscious of the need to ensure accountability of the law enforcement officials", but also that the Rapporteur narrated "unsubstantiated, generalised accounts of a handful of NGOs, that do not represent the many eminent NGOs who have done commendable work in India."<sup>11</sup>

At an HRC side event on the topic of Dalit human rights defenders, Ms. Sekagya called for enhanced protection for Dalit human rights defenders in India in the form of protection programmes, and for the establishment of a regional mechanism to protect them.<sup>12</sup> Another UN expert who visited India in 2012, the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, arbitrary, and summary executions, also noted the high level of impunity and cases of communal violence, adversely affecting Dalits and Adivasis.<sup>13</sup>

In her annual report, the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, Ms Catarina de Albuquerque, studied the links between stigma and



discrimination in the realisation of the right to water and sanitation. She found that “caste systems are striking examples of systems that lead to the stigmatization of large parts of the population, potentially amounting to violations of human rights”, and that “in terms of water and sanitation provision, Dalit habitations are often systematically excluded”.<sup>14</sup>

---

**Caste discrimination is one of the most pernicious forms of discrimination, as it condemns individuals from birth to a life of marginalisation. The links between caste, social hierarchy and slavery are strong.**

Gulnara Shahinian, UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery.

---

On this occasion, IDSN co-organised a side event with the participation of the Special Rapporteur on water and sanitation and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery. The event, which was chaired by a senior representative of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, highlighted the stigma affecting Dalits in the areas of access to basic services, bonded labour and manual scavenging, and forced conversions of scheduled caste women in Pakistan.<sup>15</sup>

In a video interview following the HRC session, Ms de Albuquerque stated that Dalits are not prioritised and even excluded in cases of natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies. She furthermore stated that in these situations, the “exclusion of people is seen as natural, as acceptable, even as necessary, as legal, even very often by authorities and this makes the problem much deeper and much more entrenched in societies and more difficult to combat.”<sup>16</sup>

In her report to the UN General Assembly, the Independent Expert on minority issues underlined the need for institutional attention to minorities, including Dalits, in the implementation of the UN Declaration on minorities (end note: UN GA report A/67/293). As an example, Ms Rita Izsák highlighted the National Dalit Commission in Nepal, which promotes implementation of national and international law to eliminate caste-based discrimination, such as the Untouchability Act 2011.

In addition to facilitating inputs to these studies and country visits, IDSN submitted information for thematic studies to the Working Group on discrimination against women in law and practice, the Working Group on human rights and transnational corporations, and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women.

**INDIA** • In 2012, the UN Special Rapporteur on water and sanitation noted that Dalits are not prioritised and even excluded in cases of natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies. There have been many cases of exclusion from humanitarian assistance in recent years, such as the Bihar floods in 2007. Dalit flood victims lived along a damp road for months after disaster had struck without being aware of any right to aid. The result of this exclusion was deprivation and starvation. Photo: Jakob Carlsen

## UN Treaty Bodies

In March 2012, Yemen was reviewed by the Human Rights Committee at a critical time of the country's political transition. Ahead of the review, IDS-N helped prepare an alternative report on civil and political rights of the Al-Akhdam in association with All Youth Network for Social Development.<sup>17</sup> Based on the inputs, the Committee expressed concern about "reports of long-standing discrimination and marginalization of some minority groups such as the Al-Akhdam community", in particular "the acts of aggression and intimidation, which have allegedly not led to any investigation and prosecution so far" for the Al-Akhdam in the context of the 2011 unrest. The Committee recommended that the State party ensure that minorities are able to "equally access education, health and public services" and to provide "effective remedies, including compensation" to victims of discrimination.<sup>18</sup>

For the review of Senegal by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in August 2012, IDS-N prepared a parallel report on 'The Situation of Castes in Senegal' in association with RADDHO.<sup>19</sup> The report demonstrated that caste-based discrimination still exists in Senegalese society, most prominently among the Wolofs and the Peuls tribes, but that it is a taboo in the socio-political sphere which leads to stigma and marginalisation of affected persons. As an outcome, the Committee recommended the State party to "take specific measures to combat and eliminate all survival of this phenomenon, including by adopting specific legislation prohibiting discrimination based on descent" and to "take measures to raise awareness and educate the public about the harmful effects of the caste system and the situation of victims".<sup>20</sup>

By the end of 2012, a draft parallel report for the examination of Pakistan by the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was prepared in association with the Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network and Pakistan's Institute for Labour

Studies. This is the first time that the situation of Dalit women in Pakistan – an extremely marginalised minority population – is the distinct subject of a parallel report to the UN.

## UN agencies and international organisations

IDS-N maintained a constructive dialogue with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and was encouraged by the strengthened UN approach to addressing caste-based discrimination at the regional and country level in South Asia. In this dialogue, IDS-N and national platforms reiterated the role of national human rights institutions and specialised agencies in tackling caste discrimination, especially with regard to developing and implementing specific legislation against caste discrimination, investigating cases, and undertaking research to study the phenomenon.

IDS-N also lobbied UN agencies to develop and apply caste-sensitive programming and guidelines for the effective elimination of caste-based discrimination, including in the post-2015 development framework.<sup>22</sup> In March 2012, the UN Secretary-General established a UN Network on racial discrimination and protection of minorities, bringing together a large number of UN Agencies. One of the tasks of the network is to develop a UN Guidance Note, which is expected to be finalised in 2013. IDS-N lobbied for the inclusion of caste discrimination in the guidance note and presented its recommendations at a pre-session of the UN Forum on Minority Issues and shared them with the OHCHR, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the UN Secretary-General.<sup>23</sup>

A key message was to include caste discrimination on par with other prohibited forms of discrimination in all UN policies and studies; something which is increasingly – but not yet systematically – done by the OHCHR and its representatives. Caste discrimination does, however, appear more and more often in UN statements and activities as a general concern when addressing the rights of marginalised and excluded groups. In connection with Human Rights Day 2012, the OHCHR invited IDS-N to participate in an online panel discussion on the issue of minority protection alongside the Independent Expert on minority issues.<sup>24</sup> Tweets from the event, generated by the UN secretariat, reached at least 1.3 million unique users on Twitter and generated more than 4.6 million impressions on this social media outlet.

## Millennium Development Goals

### The Post-2015 agenda

**IDS-N recommends that caste-based discrimination be recognised as one of the major structural factors at the root cause of inequalities in the post-2015 development framework and be included in the measures and targets proposed to address global inequalities. Dalit representatives also provided crucial input to consultations on a new framework for the Millennium Development Goals, which were reflected in outcome documents.<sup>21</sup>**

## European Union

2012 was a very productive year for IDS<sup>N</sup>'s work with EU institutions. IDS<sup>N</sup> strengthened its cooperation with Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and parliamentary committees, noting a much increased interest by all political groups and a corresponding high number of resolution references and recommendations on caste discrimination. The year ended with a plenary debate on caste discrimination in India and the adoption of an urgency resolution. A dialogue with COHOM was resumed in November and in the course of the year several exchanges with EU officials took place at country and Brussels level. Overall IDS<sup>N</sup> increased submissions to the EU on thematic issues and country situations.

### EU support to DSN and IDS<sup>N</sup> work

The 2011-2013 EC project 'Ending 'untouchability': European action to eliminate caste discrimination' held by IDS<sup>N</sup> covered production of two new introductory films on caste discrimination. 'We are not untouchable' and 'Dalit women' were launched in 2012, as were the new websites of a number of Dalit Solidarity Networks using a common design template. In addition, DSNs hosted several national level seminars and other events under the project.<sup>25</sup>

A comprehensive advocacy package for mobilisation of MEPs was finalised in June. It included briefing papers, an appeal to EU institutions, a campaign website with the films and an online petition for MEPs, as well as a facebook page 'End Caste Discrimination'.<sup>26</sup> At least 250 MEPs were approached through direct mail. The campaign is long term, but judging from the results of working with MEPs and EP institutions, it has proved to be an effective awareness raising and outreach tool.

Work also continued under the project to develop a brief and recommendations for multiple stakeholders for elimination of caste discrimination in disaster relief and rehabilitation programmes, based on a best practice case study from India.<sup>27</sup>

### The European Parliament (EP)

The European Parliament sent a clear message of solidarity to millions of victims of caste discrimination in India with the unanimous adoption of an urgency resolution on Dalits in India on 13 December and urged the country's authorities to live up to their pledges to end this serious human rights problem and ensure protection of Dalits and other vulnerable groups.<sup>28</sup>

In November, recent cases of atrocities against Dalits, i.e. the Dharmapuri arson case, and the multiple examples of gang rapes against Dalit women, in Haryana, were brought

to the attention of MEPs by an IDS<sup>N</sup> team. This led to the urgency resolution on the two cases with a comprehensive text on the general human rights situation of Dalits in India.

In the resolution, the European Parliament expressed its deep concern over the continued human rights violations against Dalits; condemned the high number of atrocities committed against them; and deplored the non-intervention by state actors such as the police in acts of communal violence against Dalits. Expressing also its deep concern about the inhuman practice of manual scavenging, the EP urged the Government of India to amend and enforce the law banning this practice.

The EP also called upon EU institutions to develop a specific policy on the issue and endorse the draft UN Principles and Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination based on Work and Descent.

IDS<sup>N</sup> submitted input, including case material, to political groups. Sixty MEPs co-signed their parties' respective text motions, and 15 MEPs spoke in Plenary about the atrocities, the lack of basic human right rights protection for Dalits and the failure of law enforcement in India.

While the official EU Annual Reports on Human Rights in the World to date have ignored caste discrimination, the EP Resolution on the 2010 version of this report, adopted in April, included two strong paragraphs on caste. In the succeeding resolution on the Annual Report 2011, adopted on

### Caste references

## EP Resolution on the 2011 EU Human Rights Report

### The European Parliament:

**110. Condemns the continued human rights violations committed against people suffering from caste-based discrimination, including the denial of equality and access to justice, continued segregation and caste-induced barriers to the achievement of basic human rights; requests the Council, the EEAS and the Commission to take joint action on caste-based discrimination... and to promote the draft UN Principles and Guidelines for the elimination of discrimination based on Work and Descent as a guiding framework to eliminate caste discrimination, and work for their endorsement by the UN Human Rights Council;**

**111. Requests the VP/HR and the Special Representative for Human Rights to give full recognition to caste discrimination as a cross-cutting issue of human rights and poverty with severe implications, in particular for women.**



In 2012, IDS<sup>N</sup> petitioned Members of the European Parliament to declare their support for the struggle to end caste discrimination on the website [www.endcaste.com/mep](http://www.endcaste.com/mep). The 'end caste' logo depicted here was also used in various other IDS<sup>N</sup> material – including a facebook page and various briefing documents.

13 December, the EP further sharpened its critique on caste discrimination and its recommendations for EU action. IDS<sup>N</sup> had provided input for both resolutions.<sup>29</sup>

Text proposals on caste discrimination for the EIDHR and Development Cooperation Instruments that regulate funding for EU programmes were introduced as amendments by MEPs to the draft reports. The Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) report voted on in the Committee on Development in October thus has references to caste-based discrimination in annexes on Asia and thematic programmes.<sup>30</sup> The draft EIDHR legislation also contains several references to caste discrimination as a theme covered under the instrument. Both pieces of legislation will be finalised in 2013 subject to negotiations between various EU institutions.

In July, The Parliamentary Committee on Development (DEVE) requested a study on EU action to address caste discrimination. IDS<sup>N</sup> had prepared a background note, which served as input for the group coordinators'

### IDS<sup>N</sup> recommendations

#### EU policy on Dalits

IDS<sup>N</sup> has argued that in order for the EU be in compliance with its human rights policy commitments, including the fight against all forms of discrimination, it must include caste discrimination as an essential element. IDS<sup>N</sup> has therefore recommended that EU undertake a review of its human rights policies, country strategy papers, thematic and regional strategies, communications and guidelines, as well as relevant thematic instruments in respect of this topic. An assessment of how poverty reduction and social and economic development are addressed in respect of caste discrimination in EU's relations with affected countries could also be a useful tool for identifying future policy options.

meeting in July. The study initiated in October by external consultants will be subject for discussion in DEVE in 2013.

In the course of the year, IDS<sup>N</sup> submitted several briefing packages to the Sub-Committee on Human Rights, the Delegation for Relations with India, and the Delegation for Relations with South Asia. According to Chairs of the delegations, the issue of caste discrimination has been raised in meetings in connection with country visits.

Finally, several parliamentary questions were posed to the EU Commission and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Commission Vice-President, Catherine Ashton, on how caste discrimination is addressed in EU development and human rights policies.<sup>31</sup>

**India has legislated on certain levels, but with little success... We therefore strongly urge that the Indian government and authorities – from local to the highest state level – protect and defend the rights of Dalits, and where necessary, enact new legislation.**

Barbara Lochbihler, Chair of the EP Sub-Committee on Human Rights

**One of the biggest problems is that people who have destroyed the houses of Dalits, treated them as slaves and forced them into prostitution, are not brought to justice. Even worse, every year hundreds, possibly even thousands, of Dalits are tortured by the police. The Dalits in India are virtually outlawed."**

Peter van Dalen, Dutch MEP

**I am appalled that Dalits in India have not seen their situation improved. The violent actions recently have shown how little has been done. It is clear that dominant castes are organising violent acts against Dalits. Unfortunately, the Indian authorities do not take their human rights responsibilities seriously.**

Mitro Repo, Finnish MEP

(Statements during the debate on 13 December)



### **The Council Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM)**

In November, IDS<sub>N</sub> was invited for an informal exchange on caste discrimination with COHOM now chaired by the External Action Service (EEAS). Dalit representatives from Nepal and India and the IDS<sub>N</sub> coordinator had a constructive dialogue with member states and urged COHOM to develop an EU policy on caste discrimination.

Before the exchange, IDS<sub>N</sub> was requested by EEAS to provide input to the EU Annual Human Rights Action Plan 2013. Annual Action Plans were launched as a common tool for EU institutions and member states with adoption of the EU Strategic Framework on Human Rights in June 2012.

### **The European External Action Service (EEAS)**

In February, IDS<sub>N</sub> disseminated outcome documents from the December 2011 International Consultation on Good Practices and Strategies to Address Caste Discrimination to a wider group of EU stakeholders.<sup>32</sup> In the course of the year, IDS<sub>N</sub> provided country and issue-based briefings, recommendations and relevant information from the UN on caste-related issues to EAAS and Commission officials. A number of meetings were held with officials in Brussels with

different IDS<sub>N</sub> teams, which have included representatives from India and Nepal as well as DSNs from the Netherlands, Finland, Denmark, and Belgium.

IDS<sub>N</sub> lobbied the EEAS, and the EU delegation in India in particular, to include caste discrimination as a theme in EU human rights country strategies and the EU-India human rights dialogue (which was not held in 2012), and to have regular consultations with Dalit civil society representatives. The specific outcome related to human rights strategies is unknown as documents remain confidential. However, representatives of the EU working group on human rights at member state embassies and the EU delegation in India held several dialogue meetings with civil society on caste issues. In some other caste-affected countries there are regular points of contact between Dalit organisations and the EU delegation. Furthermore, it is encouraging that Dalit organisations have been allocated considerable grants from the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) for regional and country level projects.

In November, IDS<sub>N</sub> was invited by the Commission to give presentations at a staff lunch-time conference for around 50 participants. Asha Kowtal from India, Bhakta Bishwakarma from Nepal, and Rikke Nöhrind, IDS<sub>N</sub> Coordinator, spoke on the occasion.

**PAKISTAN** • Lakhio, his wife Gatha and their six children work as bonded labourers for a landlord in Sindh province. Each year, their debt grows. Dalits are exploited as forced or bonded labourers throughout South Asia, suffering abysmal working conditions and completely lacking any labour rights. Their situation can be described as a form of contemporary slavery. Photo: Jakob Carlsen.

## Private Sector

A result of the 2011 adoption of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights by the Human Rights Council was a new, authoritative global standard to prevent and address adverse impacts of business activities on human rights. The UN Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations was established to promote these principles.

IDSN made a submission to the Working Group with recommendations for addressing the issue of caste discrimination and inclusion of groups affected by this form of discrimination. This was done in response to an invitation to stakeholders to submit input in advance of a public consultation in May on themes and modalities for the first annual Forum on Business and Human Rights in December 2012. Further lobbying to promote the issue with the secretariat of the Working Group was done with an initial positive response.

The Guiding Principles emphasise non-discrimination with particular attention to the rights and needs of individuals from vulnerable and marginalised groups or populations. Important international standards and initiatives on business and human rights are increasingly converging around these principles.

The problem of bonded labour in South Asia was highlighted in several reports in 2012. In a follow-up to their

2011 report 'Captured by Cotton', The Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO) and the India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN) published 'Maid in India' with findings on the labour conditions for the young women/ girls, mainly Dalits, working in the South Indian garment and textile industry under the so-called Sumangali scheme. Many problems remain unsolved, but the report notes that efforts to abolish the Sumangali practice – a form of bonded labour – have had some effect.

The insufficient progress was further documented in Anti-Slavery International's report 'Slavery on the High Street'.<sup>33</sup> Findings of this research show that while some suppliers have left the practice of withholding salaries for three years, a range of other labour rights problems still exists, including restrictions on the right to freedom of movement, as the workers are not allowed to freely leave the factory hostels.

---

**Almost all bonded labourers in South Asia... belong to a minority ethnic group or caste... It is crucial to understand that there remains a stratum of human beings in South Asia who are deemed exploitable and expendable by society at large.** Siddharth Kara, Bonded Labor, Columbia University Press 2012, p.6

---

IDSN members DSN-UK and DNN have been actively involved in the multi-stakeholder process involving producers, buyers, trade unions and NGOs undertaken to improve conditions for the Sumangali workers as a result of the reports mentioned above.<sup>34</sup>

The link between caste and bonded labour was also highlighted by another IDSN associate, Franciscans International, in their publication 'Modern Slavery in India'<sup>35</sup>. This research documents that the majority of victims of trafficking and other forms of slavery and bonded labour are Dalits and Adivasis.

This fact is furthermore demonstrated by the respected researcher Siddharth Kara in his 2012 publication 'Bonded Labour – tackling the system of slavery in South Asia', which documents abysmal conditions for workers trapped in slavery in a wide range of sectors throughout the region. He draws attention to caste as a factor that compels the 'lowest castes' to remain in forced labour conditions, and allows the 'higher castes' to exploit their labour.

The IDSN secretariat provided input to a Copenhagen Business School research project on production of garment and textile products in India and Pakistan aiming at exploring the caste dimension in the production chain. The research is in its initial phase, and IDSN has offered to be an associate partner to the research project once it materialises.

### Bonded labour

Two of several reports that highlight the problem of bonded labour in South Asia: **Maid in India** focuses on labour conditions for young women and girls in the South Indian textile industry, and **Modern Slavery in India** documents that the majority of victims of trafficking and other forms of slavery and bonded labour are Dalits and Adivasis.



## Communication and networking

A number of major communication projects were completed in 2012 and new ones were launched. The year saw the release of two IDSN-produced video films on caste discrimination as well as the introduction of new websites for a number of Dalit Solidarity Networks (DSNs) in Europe. IDSN's focus on social media increased further, and the organisation created a comprehensive new database on caste discrimination.

IDSN's new introductory video 'We are not untouchable – end caste discrimination now!' was released in May. The 12 minute long film includes examples of caste discrimination and 'untouchability' practices from India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Yemen. The video has been compiled from material recorded by Dalit community video volunteers, documentary filmmakers, and NGOs. Its powerful cover depicts Kamlesh, a six-year old Dalit girl from India who was thrown into the fire for walking on a road reserved for 'upper castes'.

To some extent, the new film is meant as an update to IDSN's ten year old original introductory video on caste discrimination, 'I'm Dalit how are you?',<sup>36</sup> which, contrary to 'We are not untouchable', focuses exclusively on India. However, 'I'm Dalit how are you?' retains its powerful appeal and has now been seen by more than 160,000 viewers on YouTube. The new video is also available on YouTube, as is the second IDSN-produced video that was launched in 2012, a six minute long thematic film on Dalit women.

As well as being available on the internet, 'We are not untouchable' has been screened in a number of different settings. These include events in the EU, the UN and a number of European countries. Dalit Solidarity Networks in Belgium, Denmark and Finland have also launched versions of the original English language video in their own national language,<sup>37</sup> and other versions are expected to follow in 2013.

To accompany the two videos, IDSN launched a new website, [www.endcaste.com](http://www.endcaste.com), as well as a new facebook page, End Caste Discrimination. These were primarily meant as vehicles to disseminate knowledge about the new films as well as offering a fairly simple way of expressing support for the struggle to end caste discrimination. By the end of the year, the number of fans on [www.facebook.com/endcaste](http://www.facebook.com/endcaste) had exceeded 800 and was rising steadily.

The IDSN facebook channel more than doubled its number of fans in 2012 and was approaching the 1,000 mark. This page has become a very useful means of disseminating information on caste discrimination. Updates include relevant news from IDSN and its numerous partner organisations as well as newspaper articles and video clips.

A main source of information on caste discrimination continues to be the IDSN website at [www.idsn.org](http://www.idsn.org). The site became even more popular in 2012 with an impressive increase in the number of unique visitors by 54 per cent compared to 2011. The number of page views increased by 21 per cent.

As a very useful and welcome addition to the website, IDSN created a new comprehensive database on caste discrimination by storing almost 1,000 documents on the social bookmarking service, Delicious. From now on, all IDSN documents as well as relevant documents from other sources will be stored on [www.delicious.com/idsn](http://www.delicious.com/idsn). Within the next year or two, IDSN also hopes to invest in an improved structure for this important database.

The IDSN e-newsletter continued to be an important and popular source of information on the issue of caste discrimination. In 2012, the number of subscribers increased by nine per cent to approximately 890. There were also special editions of the newsletter focusing on the IDSN annual report as well as 'atrocities and impunity in India'. Due to work pressure at the IDSN secretariat, it was not always possible to issue the newsletter on a monthly basis, but the intention remains to do so in 2013 with the possible exception of the summer holiday period.

### Video campaign



In April, [Video Volunteers](#), a grassroots media organisation led by the Indian human rights campaigner and filmmaker Stalin K (pictured left), launched 'Article 17: A campaign to end untouchability'. The campaign features video clips documenting various 'untouchability' practices.<sup>38</sup>







### Introductory film

The cover of the IDSN-produced [introductory video](#) to the issue of caste discrimination 'We are not untouchable' depicts Kamlesh, a Dalit girl who was thrown into the fire for walking on a road reserved for 'upper castes'. The film was launched in 2012 and has been adapted into several other languages.

The new video films mentioned above form part of IDSN's EU-funded project 'Ending 'untouchability': European action to eliminate caste discrimination,' which runs until the end of 2013. This project has also provided funding for the development of new websites for the numerous Dalit Solidarity Networks across Europe. DSNs in the United Kingdom, Belgium, Norway, Finland, Sweden and Denmark introduced their new sites in 2012. These websites all use the same template, created by IDSN.

The numerous new initiatives within IDSN communication and networking in 2012 as well as the already existing ones such as the website have firmly established IDSN as a key global information resource on the issue of caste discrimination. Thanks to the numerous information sources and lobbying activities, IDSN has contributed greatly to an increased level of knowledge about the issue among the general public as well as politicians, officials and the media.

In addition to the initiatives mentioned above, the IDSN secretariat continued to pitch stories to the mainstream international media and issue press releases in connection with relevant events, such as the historic resolution on caste discrimination in India by the European Parliament and the UN's Universal Periodic Review of India's human rights

record. The latter press release was issued jointly with IDSN international associate Human Rights Watch.

Early in the year, the secretariat finalised and disseminated outcome documents from the International Consultation (IC) on Good Practices and Strategies to Eliminate Caste-Based Discrimination, including the IC Declaration and a comprehensive report which also contains a best practice case collation and thematic overviews. More than 200 direct postings were made to ministries, UN agencies, EU institutions, embassies, NHRIs, parliamentarians and civil society stakeholders. Positive responses were received from many, including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN Special Procedures Branch, UNICEF India, UNESCO and some embassies.

Articles, videos and books on the issue of caste discrimination continued to appear in caste-affected countries as well as Europe and North America. Of the many initiatives, a video campaign by the Indian organisation Video Volunteers is particularly worth mentioning. 'Article 17: A campaign to end untouchability' features 26 video clips documenting 'untouchability' practices across India. IDSN fully endorses this campaign and has worked actively to spread its message to contacts throughout the world.





**NEPAL** • A Dalit woman in Western Nepal carrying a heavy load on her shoulders. Dalit women in South Asia face multiple forms of discrimination – as Dalits, as women, and as members of an impoverished underclass. They are particularly vulnerable to verbal abuse, physical assault, rape, sexual exploitation, forced prostitution and bonded labour. The combination of caste and gender discrimination leaves them at the very bottom of society. Photo: Jakob Carlsen.

## Developments in caste-affected countries

“If you are a poor woman who is raped, you cannot even imagine a life where there will be justice. If you are a poor woman and a Dalit, then the chances of justice are even slimmer.” With this comment, Indian newspaper columnist Kalpana Sharma set the tone for 2012 – a year when violence against women in South Asia became the focus of international attention. In India, Dalit women are particularly vulnerable to such violence, and indeed, Ms Sharma’s analysis was written in the wake of a series of brutal gang-rapes against Dalit and other women in the state of Haryana. But her words apply almost equally well to the situation in Pakistan or Nepal.

Dalit women in South Asia continue to be subjected to caste discrimination. So do Dalit children and Dalit men. Their access to justice continues to be appallingly insufficient, and when they assert themselves – or dare fight back against discrimination and oppression – they are often met with further violence from so-called upper castes. Nevertheless, Dalit human rights defenders continue their struggle – in a country such as India which witnessed huge demonstrations for Dalit rights in the course of 2012, and on the international stage where Dalit representatives speak out with dignity and conviction.

### India

In 2012, Dalit human rights campaigners were on the march all over India. They marched to claim their community’s rightful share of the government budget. They marched to make politicians amend legislation that is supposed to protect Dalits from atrocities, but fails to do so. They marched to protest against a series of horrifying rapes against Dalit women and girls in Haryana. And they marched to eradicate the illegal and inhuman practice of manual scavenging that particularly affects Dalits.

An increasingly assertive Dalit movement combined such mass manifestations with high level political lobbying to achieve some impressive results. And yet, while the struggle against caste discrimination and caste-related atrocities progressed, events on the ground also served as a sad reminder, not only of the immense significance of this struggle, but of how far India has to go before human rights in general, and Dalit rights in particular, are respected.

The Asian Human Rights Commission phrased its concerns as follows in a report, ‘The State of Human Rights in India 2012’: “India is still ruled by the caste system; we all know this truth. It is plagued with discrimination, gender inequality, untouchability and feudalism, which is the reason why there is little hope for the society or for its

social institutions to make any real effort in creating a system that is based on equality and social justice.”<sup>39</sup>

Two caste-related atrocity cases – the rapes in Haryana and the attacks on Dalit villages in Dharmapuri<sup>40</sup> – attracted particular attention, but there were countless more. However, it took a horrifying incident without any direct connection to the caste issue to truly focus the world’s attention on the dark side of ‘shining India’. On 16 December, a young woman was savagely gang-raped in New Delhi, and later succumbed to her injuries. The incident triggered mass protests, and the ensuing intense media coverage spread far beyond India’s borders.

Violence against women permeates all layers of Indian society, but Dalit women are particularly vulnerable due to the combination of caste and gender discrimination. In the wake of the Delhi gang-rape, some observers began to ask questions about the lack of mass protests following similarly brutal attacks involving Dalit women or girls. Nevertheless, hopes were also expressed that the outrage surrounding this particular incident might lead to positive change for India’s women – including those from the Dalit community.

---

**Every time we go into the field, we have to deal with a case of a young 12-15 year-old girl who was raped by seven-eight men, and then you just start wondering: Are they human beings or are they animals? How could they do this to a girl - and a girl who is completely powerless because of her age, her size, her mind and her caste and everything?**

Asha Kowtal, General Secretary, AIDMAM

---

The vulnerability of Dalit women to sexual violence was highlighted a number of times in the course of 2012, particularly in the wake of a series of brutal gang-rapes in the state of Haryana. The National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR), particularly its platform for Dalit

### India

## Police shoot Dalit youths

**Police action during the incidents in Gujarat that lead to the killing of three Dalit youth on 21-23 September 2012 suggests clear discrimination against the Dalit community. Human rights campaigners claim that the police, armed with AK-47 assault rifles, fired indiscriminately against groups of Dalits. According to the Asian Human Rights Commission, the police in India lack the necessary training to undertake their job as required in a democratic society.**<sup>41</sup>

women's rights, AIDMAM, played a very active role in exposing and protesting against these rape cases.

Overall, it was a busy year for NCDHR campaigners who were the driving force behind important initiatives to strengthen legislation on Dalit rights as well as its implementation. The focus was also very much on budgetary rights as government funds that could lift millions of Dalits out of poverty are continuously diverted or misallocated to other sections of society.

This latter issue was the subject of huge demonstrations on 24 April and again on 9 May, when thousands of Dalits and Adivasis (also known as Scheduled Tribes) marched on the Indian Parliament in Delhi demanding their rightful share of the Union budget. Marches also took place in other parts of India – they were organised by the SC/ST Budget Adhikar Andolan, a national coalition of several organisations committed to advancing the budgetary claims of Dalits and Adivasis.

Their demands include legislation to ensure that billions of Euros allocated to their welfare are not diverted to other purposes, but are used on health, education, housing, land rights, employment, income generation, entrepreneurship and access to basic amenities.

Since 2009, a national coalition consisting of 150 NGOs, including NCDHR, has campaigned for amendments to the so-called SC/ST PoA Act. This piece of legislation was introduced in 1989 to protect Dalits against atrocities and caste discrimination, but implementation of the Act has been completely inadequate. The campaign intensified in 2012 and produced specific results as the Government of India promised to bring in amendments to existing legislation.<sup>42</sup>

The intention to do so was reaffirmed by the Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, Kumari Selja, at a mass rally of Dalit and Adivasi rights campaigners in Delhi on 23 November. She called the conviction rate in atrocity cases "shameful" and said that the PoA Act needed urgent amendments to plug loopholes in its implementation. These amendments may be introduced in 2013.

The rally, the National Dalit-Adivasi Sammelan – described as one of the most powerful expressions of Dalit assertion in recent years – marked the culmination of the coalition's activities in 2012. It issued the 'Dalit-Adivasi Delhi Declaration' as a wake-up call to the people of India and their elected representatives. The declaration called on the "entire nation" to free India from "the oppressive forces of caste and patriarchy".

## India

### Dalits and Adivasis protest against budget diversions

Delhi, April 2012. Activists shave their heads to protest against diversions of funds earmarked for Dalit and Adivasi social programmes in India. With the National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights as the driving force, massive demonstrations against budget diversions took place in April and May. According to NCDHR National Convenor Vijay Parmar, at least half of the Dalits currently living below the poverty line would be above it if funds for Dalit communities were properly allocated. "However, funds are diverted, misallocated or notionally allocated. Schemes rarely reach their intended beneficiaries," he said.



PHOTO: NCDHR

**India**

## The Haryana rapes

In the state of Haryana, numerous Dalit women and underage girls were raped in September and October, often with extreme brutality. While women from other social groups have also been the victims of rape, Dalit women are particularly vulnerable to such crimes.

According to some estimates, 90 percent of crimes against Dalit women are not reported due to fear of social ostracism and threats to personal safety and security. In one of the most publicised cases, a 16-year old Dalit girl was raped for three hours by at least seven men – mostly from a dominant caste - in the village of Dabra, Hisar district, on 9 September.

The perpetrators filmed the incident with their cell phones. Nine days later, as he discovered what had happened to his daughter, her father committed suicide. Only when faced with mass protests did the police decide to take action against the suspected perpetrators. Dalit activists reacted to the reports by sending a fact finding mission to Haryana and, subsequently, by organising a march to some of the places where Dalit women and girls had been raped.

This Dalit Mahila Garima Yatra expressed solidarity with the rape survivors and outrage against the institutionalised sexual violence against Dalit women. These photographs depict activists during various stages of the Yatra.



PHOTOS: ASHA KOWTAL/AIDNAM

Other activities of the National Coalition for Strengthening the PoA Act in 2012 included nationwide discussions on the issue, including a national strategy consultation in Delhi on 17-18 May with the participation of NGOs, scholars, officials and political figures.

All in all, the coalition enjoyed a successful year. However, at a press briefing prior to the mass rally in Delhi, one of its members, Henri Tiphagne of the human rights NGO People's Watch, also sounded a cautionary note regarding the possible impact of amendments to the existing law.

---

**When people say it has been 60 years of India's liberation, I find it difficult to believe, for we are still slaves, working for others, picking up human excreta with our bare hands.** Kala bai Lavre, manual scavenger, in The Hindu newspaper

---

“Unless legal changes are accompanied by a change in attitudes of all those who enforce the law – the judiciary, the bureaucracy and the police – who investigate the cases, nothing is going to change for a large section of the socially excluded communities of Dalits and Adivasis,” he said.

Legislative changes were also on the agenda in another area of particular relevance to Dalits. In August, the government proposed a new law to eradicate manual scavenging. This inhuman practice virtually forces a million or more Indians, mostly Dalit women, to remove human excreta from dry latrines with their bare hands.

A previous law from 1993 had in fact banned manual scavenging, but had generally been a failure. The new law would include a much more comprehensive definition of the practice than previously seen. This would mean that sewage workers, often Dalits, who face very dangerous conditions, would also be covered by the new legislation. The bill would also entail tough penalties for those who continue to employ people as manual scavengers.

**Restrictions on NGOs****Shrinking space for civil society**

**The administration of the Foreign Contribution Regulations Act (FCRA) was a cause of grave concern in India and internationally. NGOs that receive foreign funding were severely restricted in renewing their certificates. The government increased its scrutiny of a number of organisations and in some cases froze their bank accounts for no apparent reason. The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders, Margaret Sekaggya, noted that the FCRA “may lead to abuse by the authorities when reviewing applications of organisations which were critical of authorities.” The European Parliament called on the Indian authorities to repeal those provisions of the Act “which do not conform to international standards and potentially undermine the work of NGOs, including Dalit organisations and other organisations representing disadvantaged groups in Indian society, by impeding them from receiving funds from international donors.”**

The proposed bill was cautiously welcomed by campaigners who, however, noted that it needs to be improved. As always, given India’s dismal record on implementation, there are also serious concerns as to whether the new legislation will make any difference ‘on the ground’.

Much attention was paid from various quarters to manual scavenging during 2012. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) highlighted the issue by organising a national conference in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, on 24-25 February. The aim was to develop a roadmap for the total elimination of manual scavenging and the rehabilitation of manual scavengers.

The following month, the National Campaign for Dignity and Eradication of Manual Scavenging (Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan) hosted a national public hearing in Delhi on the rehabilitation of manual scavengers and their children. The same organisation successfully lobbied Indian parliamentarians to ask questions on the issue, and on 30 November, it launched a nationwide *Maila Mukti Yatra* - a march for the “total eradication of manual scavenging.”<sup>43</sup>

The issue also generated considerable media coverage, not least when the famous Bollywood star, Aamir Khan, spoke

---

**If I think that I am higher than you because of birth, then I am mentally ill.** Aamir Khan, Bollywood star and talk show host

---

out against the practice. A July episode of his popular talk show, *Satyamev Jayate* (‘Truth alone prevails’) focused on caste discrimination, and later the same month, Mr Khan discussed manual scavenging with the Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh.

A march that was not initiated by the Dalit movement itself, but may nevertheless have a considerable impact on the lives of many Dalits, focused on the rights of the country’s landless poor. The march involving tens of thousands of landless people started on 2 October and was to have culminated in Delhi a month later. However, as the Government of India made a promise to advance land reforms, the activists, led by NGO *Ekta Parishad*, decided to call off the march on 11 October and await legislative developments.<sup>44</sup>

“The development is a positive one, but much needs to be done to make the agenda a reality and for the benefits of land reform and redistribution to reach the millions of landless poor across India,” the Working Group on Human Rights in India and the UN said in a comment which yet again questioned the government’s commitment to follow up on its promises.

The issue of forced and bonded labour – in particular involving Dalit women - was described in a number of reports by IDS partners, including ‘*Maid in India*’ on the so-called *Sumangali* scheme and ‘*Modern Slavery in India*’ by *Franciscans International*. The latter report noted that Dalit and Adivasi women “are exploited in situations like brick kilns, embroidery factories, and the agricultural sector. Others are sexually exploited, forced into marriage, or fall prey to the organ transplanting racket.”<sup>45</sup>

---

**At first, the media described us as animals, but then they realised that we made a difference, and they started to report positively about us. But there are still many politicians who try to prevent the media from writing about Dalits, because they prefer to hide the problems and make India appear modern and democratic. So there is a long way to go.**

Manjula Pradeep, Director, *Navsarjan Trust*, in the Danish daily, *Kristeligt Dagblad*

---

In general, the issue of caste discrimination in the labour market figured quite prominently in 2012. A new bill on quotas that would ensure promotions for Dalits and Adivasis in government jobs was discussed in Parliament. But as the private sector in India grows and becomes ever more important, attention was also being paid to caste discrimination in this sector where, contrary to the public

**India****Maila Mukti Yatra**

On 30 November, the National Campaign for Dignity and Eradication of Manual Scavenging (Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan) launched a Maila Mukti Yatra, a march to end this inhuman practice. The Yatra involved thousands of present and former manual scavengers, mainly Dalit women, and covered 18 states. It was to end with a mass rally in New Delhi on 31 January 2013.



Read more about the Yatra on [www.mailamukti.org](http://www.mailamukti.org) and [www.facebook.com/MailaMuktiYatra](https://www.facebook.com/MailaMuktiYatra).

sector, there is no quota/reservation system. NCDHR has embarked on a project – in cooperation with IDS international associate IMADR – to look at inclusion in the private sector and advocate an affirmative action policy.

The Indian media reported extensively on caste discrimination and atrocities throughout 2012, although there continues to be a lack of Dalit representation in mainstream media. Stalin K, a human rights campaigner and media activist, noted in 2012 that “in the entire national news media in India, including TV and newspapers, there is not a single Dalit correspondent.” Stalin K’s grassroots media organisation, Video Volunteers, aims to give a voice to marginalised people, including Dalits.<sup>46</sup>

NCDHR and other Dalit organisations continued to work on the international stage to advance the struggle against caste discrimination. Human rights defenders from NCDHR, Navsarjan, Jan Sahas and others took part in a number of

IDS interventions at the UN, in the EU and in various European countries.

In 2012, an area of particular focus was the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of India, which took place in May. A coalition consisting of more than 100 Dalit movements, organisations and platforms, and led by NCDHR, cooperated on a joint stakeholders report on caste-based discrimination in India which was submitted to OHCHR. Ultimately, the report was endorsed by 563 organisations.

The Working Group on Human Rights in India and the UN (WGHR), which includes two IDS partners, NCDHR and People’s Watch, released a general report on human rights in India as preparatory material for the UPR. It included many references to caste discrimination. In December, WGHR released an updated and revised version of the report which included the recommendations – including those on the caste issue – made by states to the Government of India during the UPR.<sup>47</sup>

---

**If you have come across an Indian, not just in India but anywhere in the world, who have told you that the caste system and caste discrimination is a thing of the past, then that person was either fooling you or was downright ignorant. That person, I can guarantee you, must also belong to the privileged caste.** Stalin K, filmmaker and human rights campaigner

---

“Given the growing nature and extent of discrimination and violence, we urge the Government of India to address the Dalit, Adivasi and other marginalised communities’ issues more strongly and take appropriate policy and legislative changes,” Prasad Srivella of NCDHR said during a WGHR press conference.

NCDHR also prepared a submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on water and sanitation, outlining the obstacles to access to water and sanitation encountered by Dalits in India, and to the Special Rapporteur on violence against women. The latter issue attracted much attention towards the end of the year due to the numerous rape cases in Haryana and the gang-rape in New Delhi.

An example of Dalit involvement in cross-cutting advocacy work was NCDHR general secretary Paul Divakar’s convenorship of Wada Na Todo Abhiyan, a campaign comprising a wide range of organisations that holds the Government of India accountable to its promise to work towards achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals, and also contributes to the global development agenda. Issues such as poverty and social exclusion are, as ever, relevant to the struggle for Dalit human rights.

## Nepal

Compared to the momentous achievements of 2011 – including the historic ‘Untouchability Bill’ – 2012 may appear to be a somewhat anticlimactic year in the struggle for Dalit rights in Nepal. The political stalemate, particularly the failure to adopt a new constitution, meant that the issue of caste discrimination and the concerns of the Dalit movement received less political attention than in the previous year. Nevertheless, Dalit organisations continued to work tirelessly for the rights of their community, and did achieve some notable results.

In general, caste discrimination and ‘untouchability’ practices continue in Nepalese society. Dalits are routinely subjected to violence, threats, harassment, exploitation, social exclusion and communal boycotts. In recent years, however, there have been considerable achievements in the struggle against caste discrimination. Just a few years ago, Dalits were completely excluded from political life and

had no legal protection. Today, there are constitutional and legislative safeguards for the protection and promotion of Dalit rights, some policy provisions for educational and development schemes, as well as employment quotas for Dalits.

The adoption of the Untouchability Bill in May 2011 was a momentous victory for the Dalit movement. However, concern was expressed at the time that implementation of laws in Nepal remains very weak. Such concerns were, to some extent, justified during 2012. As the Asian Human Rights Commission phrased it when writing about the new law in its report on ‘The State of Human Rights in Nepal in 2012’, the government’s “commitment to its effective implementation and to the provision of redress to the victims of caste-based discrimination remains under question”.<sup>48</sup>

The Dalit movement of Nepal shares these concerns, even though the country’s Prime Minister, Dr Baburam Bhattarai, has reiterated his government’s commitment to implementing the new law. Speaking at a seminar in Kathmandu in early June, the Prime Minister said that the law would help reduce ‘untouchability’, but added that “the efforts of government alone to end social malpractices – like treating people as less than animals – are not sufficient. Political parties, organisations and civil society should be active to this end.” However, as Dalit rights activists point out adequate resources for effective implementation of the Untouchability Act, especially in rural and remote areas, are needed.

Dalit organisations were critical of the Constituent Assembly’s work to draft a new constitution. When a proposed draft was circulated in early May, they found that it did not sufficiently address their concerns. Hence, they organised a peaceful demonstration for the inclusion of Dalit provisions in the constitution. Several civil society leaders were taken into police custody – including Durga Sob (Feminist Dalit Organization – FEDO), Gajadhar Sunar (Dalit NGO Federation – DNF), and Bhakta Bishwakarma

## Nepal

### Dalit population

**Contrary to expectations, the 2011 census survey published in 2012 did not reveal any significant change in the Dalit population of the country, which is still officially estimated at 13-14 per cent. Some Dalit groups have estimated that the number may be as high as 20 per cent. A higher figure could have helped the Dalit movement push the government to enact policies aimed at assisting Dalits.**



**Nepal****Dalits rally for constitutional provisions**

PHOTO: NNDSWO

**Kathmandu, May 2012. Dalit civil society organisations demonstrate for the inclusion of Dalit provisions in Nepal's new constitution. Later that same month, the Constituent Assembly was dissolved, leaving the country in a constitutional deadlock.**

(Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organisation – NNDSWO) from IDS member and associate organisations. They were released on the same day.

The already faltering constitutional process came to a halt later that month when the Constituent Assembly yet again failed to agree on a draft constitution. The Assembly was dissolved on 28 May, and the government announced the holding of new elections later in the year. These were also postponed and may now be held in May 2013. This constitutional deadlock has had severe consequences for the development of an effective human rights framework in Nepal. This also affects the situation of Dalits whose rights are only partially protected by the existing framework.

As the government had refused to extend the mandate of the United Nations' Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the OHCHR country office formally closed operations on 31 March 2012. Among other things, the office had played a very important role in placing the Dalit issue on Nepal's human rights agenda. Human Rights Watch described this unexplained refusal as a "major step backwards" and called upon the government to reverse its decision.

Despite losing its country office, the OHCHR continued to take a strong interest in Nepal, including the issue of caste discrimination. During its time in Nepal, OHCHR focused much of its work on access to justice – or the lack thereof

– for victims of caste discrimination.<sup>49</sup> During a December mission to Nepal, Katia Chirizzi from OHCHR's main office in Geneva consulted with Dalit civil society, the National Dalit Commission (NDC) and political sister organisations about the progress of UPR recommendations and other issues related to the Dalit agenda and the ongoing peace process in Nepal. The OHCHR has reiterated its commitment to work for the elimination of caste discrimination in Nepal and other countries in the region and its availability to provide technical assistance in the implementation of key UPR recommendations, such as the adoption of an NDC Bill in line with international standards.

A couple of high profile cases of caste-based violence during 2012 demonstrated how the absence of the rule of law – including a corrupt and dysfunctional police force – particularly affects Dalits.

On 12 June, after a 10-month long struggle, the family of Sete Damai achieved some form of justice when a district court in Dailekh, mid-Western Nepal, gave his murderers long prison sentences. Sete Damai was a 50-year old Dalit who was stabbed to death on 30 August, 2011, by a group of 'upper caste' men. They were strongly opposed to his son's inter-caste marriage to a non-Dalit woman.

Following an intense civil society campaign involving, among others, IDSN partners DNF, FEDO and NNDSWO as well as OHCHR-Nepal, nine suspects were arrested. Three of them were eventually sentenced to 20 years imprisonment, two of them faced 10 years in prison, while the sentences for the remaining four ranged from two and a half to five years. In August, Sete Damai's family received 1,000,000 Rupees (appr. 8,500 Euros) in compensation from the government.

According to the Asian Human Rights Commission, this incident shows the extent to which non-Dalits will go in order to protect their so-called social prestige. It also demonstrates that "the coordinated effort of Dalit civil society is necessary to balance the relationship between the victims and the perpetrators and ensure that victims have access to legal redress." Often Dalit victims of caste-related crimes are unable to achieve justice due to indifference from the authorities and threats and pressure from 'upper caste' perpetrators.

In another murder case resulting from an inter-caste marriage, the victim's family has so far been unable to achieve any justice. A young Dalit man, Shiva Shankar Das, was reportedly poisoned to death by his 'upper caste' wife's family in late January. The conduct of the police in this case has been highly questionable. Despite a protest campaign by Dalit organisations and the conclusion by a parliamentary subcommittee that the young man was indeed murdered, the police investigation continues to be slow, and the victim's family is still struggling for justice.

## Nepal

### Discrimination in public places

**The World Bank supported FEDO report "Tracking of Public Services towards Dalits and Marginalized", details the lives of 467 Dalits from Dhanusa, Kavre, Bajura and Bajhang. Compared to non-Dalit respondents, discrimination is still markedly higher for them in public spaces, such as at water sources and local tea shops, and in the houses of 'upper caste' people.**

**It is found that 70 percent of Dalits in Dhanusa face problems at water sources, compared to 18.2 percent of the region's non-Dalit population. In one particular district, Kavre, 64.2 percent of Dalits face discrimination in the homes of upper caste Nepalese.**

**The study also finds that marginalised groups' access to and knowledge of government initiatives is limited. Only a quarter of those who responded are receiving help from public services, with just 60 percent even aware that such help exists. The author of the report Hira Vishwakarma has pointed out that investment support is having a "negligible" impact on those who need it most, with "money simply not reaching them".<sup>50</sup>**

These two cases have only received attention because of the efforts of civil society, particularly Dalit organisations. Without such support, Dalit victims of human rights violations would face even bigger difficulties in accessing any kind of justice and would very possibly face retaliation from 'upper caste' perpetrators of these violations.

Thus, Dalit civil society organisations play an important role in the struggle for the rights of individual victims of caste discrimination and caste-related atrocities. In a broader context, the Dalit movement continued to put pressure on the government and the political system in 2012 to address the concerns of the Dalit community as a whole. Dalit organisations have issued a number of key recommendations to the government:

- The government should invest in comprehensive Dalit development schemes and make necessary arrangements for the effective implementation of anti-discrimination measures in national legislation and international law. There is a need for effective mechanisms that ensure rapid justice to the victims of caste discrimination and 'untouchability' practices as well as violence against women so that such cases be reported, investigated and prosecuted, victims get timely justice and compensation, and perpetrators are penalised.

- The issues of proportional participation of Dalits in every state structure and the elimination of structural discrimination should be major agenda points of the future peace-keeping dialogue and democratisation process in Nepal. The work done by Constitutional Assembly members to ensure the rights of marginalised people, including Dalits, through various thematic papers needs to be enshrined in the new constitution.
- In the international arena, the government is urged to play a role in the UN Human Rights Council for action towards a resolution on the draft UN Principles and Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination based on Work and Descent. The government has already acknowledged this framework and has recognised caste discrimination as a violation of international human rights law.

While campaigning on a national level, IDS-N partner organisations went about their daily work with energy and enthusiasm. Throughout the year, they continued to speak up for Dalit rights and also conducted useful research on the issue of caste discrimination.

Research by NNDSWO – a Dalit organisation that cooperates closely with IDS-N – showed an encouraging trend in media reporting on Dalit issues. In the year running from April 2010 till April 2011, three major national daily newspapers, Kantipur, Gorakhpatrika and Naya Patrika, published altogether 244 news articles and opinion pieces on Dalit issues and caste discrimination. The following year, the number had almost tripled. Such figures are a sign of increasing media sensitivity towards the Dalit issue, and indicate that advocacy efforts by the Dalit movement in Nepal have had positive results.

---

**The failure to adopt a new constitution has meant that addressing the issues of the Dalit community has been put on the backburner once more.**

Asian Human Rights Commission

---

It is also an encouraging development that a Dalit journalist and President of the Jagaran Media Service, Rem Bahadur Bishwakarma, was appointed to the 'High Level Inclusive Media Commission' formed under the Information and Communication Ministry in September.

In December, FEDO organised the participation of Dalit women in '16 Days of Activism to Stop Violence Against Women'. As in other caste-affected countries, Dalit women in Nepal continue to be the worst affected victims of gender-based violence. They are particularly vulnerable due to the intersection between gender, caste and conditions of poverty.

## Bangladesh

Politically, economically, socially and culturally, Dalits are one of the most excluded minority groups in Bangladesh. In 2012, the country's Dalit movement continued to campaign for the rights of Dalits and other socially excluded people. The Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM) and other organisations lobbied the Government for changes in legislation as well as increased budget allocations for the country's estimated 5.5 million Dalits.

A few political leaders from mainstream parties became sensitive towards the Dalit issue, but political leadership from Dalit communities in the national political arena is still lacking. This is a main challenge for the Dalit rights movement in Bangladesh. So is the lack of unity in the Dalit community which makes it more difficult for it to raise its voice to the government and demand basic rights for Dalits.

Although the political parties were informed about Dalit development issues, they took no special initiatives in this area. The work of the Dalit movement has, however, led to some positive results, such as the agreement between the Law Commission of Bangladesh and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to work for the enactment of a law for protecting Dalit rights in Bangladesh.

BDERM organised meetings with these two bodies as well as lawmakers and government officials to discuss a specific law against 'untouchability' and discrimination and secure an increased focus on Dalit rights issues. In early December, BDERM representatives met with the Foreign Ministry and discussed the Universal Periodic Review submission related to the Dalit rights situation. During this discussion, the relevant desk of the ministry agreed to include the Dalit issue in its UPR report.

This UPR submission was prepared jointly by BDERM, Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Women Federation (BDEWF), and Nagorik Uddyog (Citizen's Initiative) in association with IDS-N. The report contains findings on the human rights situation of Dalits in Bangladesh and also follows up on the lack of implementation of existing UPR recommendations from the first review in 2009, with a particular focus on Dalits and other excluded groups. The human rights record of Bangladesh will be reviewed in April-May 2013.<sup>51</sup>

For the past two years, the Government of Bangladesh has allocated funds for Dalits in the national budget. In the fiscal year 2012-13, the amount was BDT 146.1 million (appr. 1,378,000 Euros) to be spent on social safety net programmes for Dalit and other socially excluded communities. In the previous year, the government allocated BDT 100 million for housing development for Dalits. BDERM had previously submitted a memorandum to the Finance Ministry demanding a specific allocation in the national

## Bangladesh

## Dalits form 'human' chain to campaign for their rights



Dhaka, December 2012. Campaigning is an important part of the activities of the Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM). On this occasion, BDERM activists in Dhaka form a 'human chain' to mark 'World Dignity Day' and 'International Human Rights Day'.

budget to develop housing, sanitation and safe water facilities for Dalit communities.

These budget allocations are positive steps, but the amounts are very small for such a large community. Dalits are a very long way from fully enjoying the most fundamental human rights. Key challenges include lack of access to education; extreme poverty issues; health and housing problems; and unequal access to work. There is still a serious need for producing disaggregated data on caste, and further research.

Dalit women are the worst affected. They suffer from multiple forms of discrimination and are yet to be empowered to take an active part in the socio-cultural, economic and political arena in the community and the country. The newly formed BDEWF has formulated a list of demands, including the need for ensuring basic health services, scholarships for students, social safety-net programmes, and political inclusion of Dalit women at local and national level.

Jahangirnagar University in Dhaka provided a special admission facility for four Dalit students. This step came as a response to a BDERM memorandum to the university's Vice-Chancellor, demanding a special admission quota for Dalit students. Most Dalits have no formal education and only few make it to the higher education institutions.

As in previous years, campaigning formed an important part of BDERM's activities. Human chains and rallies were organised on numerous occasions, including International Women's Day (8 March), the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21 March) and Human Rights Day (10 December). Dalits also demonstrated for budget allocations and a specific law against 'untouchability'.

BDERM also organised a number of seminars together with the NGO Nagorik Uddyog – one on the role of the state in ensuring the right of socially excluded people, including Dalits, and another on budget and development issues. BDERM also teamed up with BDEWF for a seminar on social justice and the vulnerability of Dalits.

At a South Asian regional consultation in Dhaka on 1-2 December, campaigners for Dalit rights from the region and beyond as well as researchers discussed special legislation to ensure equal rights for Dalits and other excluded communities in Bangladesh. It was at this event that the Acting Chair of the Law Commission, Dr Shah Alam, announced the decision to work with NHRC on a set of recommendations to the government on a law against 'untouchability'. The consultation also made recommendations on the development of a national action plan, taking guidance from UN human rights frameworks and experience from other countries in the region.<sup>52</sup>

BDERM participated in numerous other networking activities, including a gathering of development workers and a workshop on the draft UPR report. BDERM leader Sonu Rani Das participated in the 21st Session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. This session gave her an opportunity to discuss the situation and challenges of the Dalit communities in Bangladesh.

On a local and district level, there was a flurry of activities. Advocacy meetings took place, involving local government officials. BDERM partner organisations organised 79 awareness meetings in a number of towns and cities and provided skill training. BDERM also organised training programmes for Dalit leaders, activists, women and students.

---

**The Government of Bangladesh should be encouraged to enact a law against discriminatory practices and recognise them as a criminal offence. It would also be important to establish quota systems for Dalits in all public educational institutes, and promote adequate employment opportunities for Dalits in all sectors of the economy.**

UNDP Country Director Mr Stefan Priesner on International Human Rights Day, 10 December

---

BDERM continued to reach out the country's media outlets. On 7 July, staff from daily newspapers and electronic media took part in a dialogue meeting on 'Dalit Rights Movement: Success, Way Forward and the Role of Journalists'. At this event, BDERM leaders discussed the overall situation of Dalits in Bangladesh and the struggle for their rights. The journalists also made suggestions on how to move forward to the Dalit rights movement.

The movement continued publishing its newsletter which was distributed to Dalit communities, development organisations, human rights activists, educators and policy makers. The organisation also published campaign posters and a calendar and posted regular updates on its website.

## Pakistan

Incidents of human rights violations in Pakistan reached an alarming level in 2012. The law and order situation remained volatile, terrorist attacks against innocent citizens continued in many parts of the country, and the space for moderate, liberal and progressive voices kept shrinking. An example of this trend was the terrorist attack on Mala la Yousuf Zai, a young school girl advocating for girl's education, by Taliban forces.

Marginalised minorities in general and Dalits in particular are very seriously affected by the worsening law and order situation and the deteriorating state of human rights in Pakistan. Religious minorities live in fear and have fallen prey to numerous violent attacks. The kidnappings and killings of Hindu traders – and the forced conversions of Hindu girls – made hundreds of Hindu families migrate to India in 2012.

The Dalit community is one of the poorest and most marginalised in Pakistan. Although the Constitution prohibits discrimination on the ground of caste, the Government of Pakistan has done very little to eliminate caste discrimination. It has not initiated any affirmative action programmes for the promotion and protection of the Dalit community. Years of denial has aggravated the situation, as successive governments have not bothered to put in place any measures to prevent this form of discrimination.

A major problem for Dalits is overwhelming illiteracy and poverty, which hinders them from entering the education system. Dalit students are discriminated against and discouraged by teachers and fellow non-Dalit students. Health indicators reveal Dalits to be in the poorest condition of all. Access to basic health services is sometimes blocked by health workers who deny them proper treatment or refuse to touch their bodies.

Under these difficult circumstances, the Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network (PDSN) continued its struggle for Dalit rights in Pakistan. 2012 saw a wave of mobilisation among Pakistani Dalits. Different groups emerged with their own demands and organised several demonstrations and public meetings, calling for equal treatment for Dalits in Pakistan and an end to caste discrimination. PDSN members either participated in such events or co-organised them.

Pakistan's human rights record was reviewed by the UN's UPR mechanism on 30 October. The PDSN contribution to the shadow report was an important initiative to raise the issue of caste discrimination in Pakistan at an international level. PDSN delegations visited Geneva twice in 2012 and, together with IDS N, lobbied many countries to raise the issue with the Government of Pakistan during the UPR.

Many states expressed concern about the human rights situation of religious minorities, including scheduled

castes. Two states – Austria and the Holy See – made recommendations on the situation of scheduled castes, which is considered a religious minority in Pakistan.<sup>53</sup>

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, paid a visit to Pakistan in June. During a press conference, she raised the issue of equality before the law and mentioned that she had heard from various groups, including Dalits, about their “sense of injustice and despair when acts of violence (...) against their communities go unpunished”.

## Pakistan

### Violence against Dalits

**Pakistan's Dalits are frequently subjected to violent attacks – often carried out with impunity.**

- **A 14-year old Dalit girl, Rekha, was abducted in Karachi, forcibly married and converted to Islam. According to the Asian Human Rights Commission, the authorities have sided with the perpetrators who have since moved the girl to a tribal area near the Afghanistan border.**
- **On 26 May, a young Dalit veterinary doctor, Mr Garohoo, was murdered by 'upper caste' people in Ahoo village, Tharparkar district. Following this murder, Dalits demonstrated and went on strike all over the district. Local business leaders, all 'upper caste' Hindus, reacted to this by filing complaints about 110 Dalits to the police.**
- **A 26-year-old Dalit Christian worker, Asif Masih from Mirpurkhas, was murdered in July, allegedly by henchmen of an influential landlord. PDSN demanded the arrest of his killers and accused the police of protecting the landlord.**
- **In October, Chetan Kolhi, a Dalit police sub-inspector, was killed at the door of his house in Mirpurkhas. It is alleged that his son had an affair with a Muslim girl.**
- **In November, Moomal Meghwar, a 13 year-old Dalit brick kiln worker, was kidnapped in Umerkot district and forcibly converted to Islam.**
- **On 4 December, a six-year old Dalit girl, Vijanti Meghwar, was brutally raped in Umerkot district. No action has been taken against the alleged rapist who belongs to a political party closely affiliated with the military. Journalists trying to investigate the case have been threatened.**
- **On 21 December, a 14-year-old Dalit girl was raped in Chachro, Tharparkar district – allegedly by a local leader of a political party. Again, no action has been taken by the authorities.**

Following cases of kidnappings and forced conversion of Hindu girls in Sindh province, the President formed a three member parliamentary committee to look into the grievances of minorities. The committee's visits to affected communities resulted in a lot of media coverage, and committee members remain vocal in support of victims. This has resulted in a halt in kidnappings. PDSN had raised the issue of forced conversions with the media.

At the end of the year, Parliament was considering a bill to increase the number of seats for minorities. There has been no increase in seats for minorities for 23 years, although seats for Muslims have doubled during the same period. If a bill is passed in 2013, there may be increased Dalit representation in Parliament. Currently, there are only two Dalit members in the Senate and National Assembly.

In a rare case, the government appointed Dr Jaimal Dhanani, a Dalit from Tharparkar, as Vice Chancellor of the newly established Benazir Bhutto International University of Veterinary & Animal Sciences in Sindh province. This is the highest position a Dalit has ever held in Pakistan.

The PDSN secretariat continued functioning on a volunteer basis as the network has not yet applied for any funding. Network members and key individuals devoted their time free of charge and kept the network alive and active.

PDSN issued a number of media statements on key issues concerning Dalits. PDSN members contributed articles in newspapers and appeared in talk shows highlighting the plight of scheduled castes. On the basis of PDSN statements, many TV-channels broadcast talk shows and news items on Dalit issues. The network also contributed material for international interventions, including four case studies on Dalit women for the alternative CEDAW report for 2013.

In 2012, the census process in Pakistan was once again suspended for political reasons. Due to the faulty process, Dalits have been short-counted in previous censuses. According to figures from the last census carried out in 1998, there are only 330,000 Dalits in Pakistan. However, Dalit representatives claim that the number may be as high as five million or more. PDSN has called for research to be carried out because of the lack of disaggregated data on the socio-economic situation of Dalits.

PDSN members visited many victims of violence and expressed solidarity and took up issues with authorities. In one such case, PDSN intervention averted the demolition and encroachment of a Dalit graveyard in district Badin in Sindh province. PDSN members also visited and raised their voices against the eviction of scheduled castes in Karachi by authorities.

**Pakistan****Case studies of Dalit women**

PDSN conducted a case study of four educated Dalit women who gave accounts of their lives and their struggle to overcome caste discrimination. These cases were to be included in the alternative CEDAW report in 2013.



**“The fate of my community would be changed through education and learning of new skills, if the government gives attention to their development.”** Moolan Bai, 65, retired teacher, Mithi.



**“In school, we girls from the Kolhi community were not allowed to drink water from a glass. When we were thirsty, we had to cup our hands and have water poured in our hands from high up.”** Kirshana Lal, 33, legal counsellor, Hyderabad.



**“Women and girls from the lower caste or religious minority are easy targets for harassment, because the majority knows that they are weak and cannot take any action.”** Radha Bhil, 34, NGO social mobiliser, Sattar Nagar.



**“This form of discrimination is deeply rooted within us. To shape a positive society, awareness should be given to the children from a very early age about equality, equal rights and justice for all.”** Bhagwani Rathore, 34, senior manager, Godhiyo.<sup>54</sup>

PHOTOS: PDSN

Through its member organisations, PDSN continued its efforts to end bonded labour. Several hundred bonded labourers were released from agriculture and brick kilns. The majority of bonded labourers are Dalits. The Green Rural Development Organisation (GRDO), one of the key members of PDSN, managed to release 3,000 people from bonded labour in 2012. Of these, 90 per cent were Dalits.

A network was formed exclusively to demand government land for Haris (mainly Dalits). On 27 November 2012, the

Scheduled Caste Rights Movement (SCRM) organised a rally in Islamabad for Dalit land rights in Pakistan.

Pakistan suffered heavy losses in 2010 and 2011 due to heavy floods. In 2011 alone around 10-12 million people were affected, mostly in the lower districts of Sindh province. A large number of them were Dalits. PDSN members, notably PILER, continued advocacy efforts for the proper rehabilitation of Dalits affected by flood. Other PDSN members continued to deliver aid to Dalits in Thatta district.

## Developments in European countries

Dalit Solidarity Networks (DSNs) across Europe have received a welcome boost in the past couple of years. Thanks to funds from IDS<sup>N</sup>'s EU project, they have been able to create new websites and organise events that have often involved Dalit human rights campaigners from South Asia. Some of them have also made voice-overs in their own national languages of the IDS<sup>N</sup>-produced short films on caste discrimination, 'We are not untouchable' and 'Dalit women'. All DSNs have used these films for promotion and advocacy purposes.

These initiatives have enabled DSNs to raise more awareness about caste discrimination among the general public in their respective countries. They have also continued to lobby politicians, institutions and the corporate sector. Some DSNs played significant roles in lobbying their national MEPs in the run-up to the European Parliament's historic resolution on caste discrimination in India in December 2012.

### Netherlands (DNN)

The Dalit Network Netherlands continued its political lobbying efforts in 2012 – with some very positive results. DNN contributed to a range of questions by MEPs, the European Parliament's resolution on caste discrimination in India, and questions in the Dutch Parliament on the issue.<sup>55</sup> The commitment by the new Dutch Foreign Minister to take up the Dalit issue in the EU can be considered a particular achievement.

The network also highlighted the lives of thousands of Dalit girls in the Tamil Nadu textile industry who are working under bonded labour conditions under the so-called Sumangali or Camp Coolie system. This issue has been a cornerstone of DNN advocacy efforts.<sup>56</sup>

DNN raised awareness of Dalit issues through regular updates in Dutch and English on its website, the distribution of news articles to around 6.500 recipients, providing input for a 45-minute television programme on Dalits (featuring IDS<sup>N</sup>/DNN partner Navsarjan) during prime time and exposure among the members of the Dutch Council of Churches. The Dutch language version of the film 'We are not untouchable' and the booklet 'Untouchable' were used in much of this work.

The new Dutch government that was formed in November appears to pay more attention to caste discrimination than the previous one that had actually downgraded the Dalit issue. Although the new human rights policy is not expected until the spring of 2013, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Frans Timmermans, made clear – during the

annual budget session – that he considers the issue very important.

"The topic of discrimination based on work and descent has – as far as I am concerned – to be put higher on the agenda of the European Union. The European Parliament has recently adopted a very relevant resolution about the position of Dalits and I think that we can also better shape European policy on that basis," he said.

This was a positive signal compared to the policy of the previous government. Despite a motion on the Dalit issue being adopted by Parliament and the promise of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to implement it, very little was done between 2010 and 2012. The positive policy shift can obviously be attributed to the change of government, but would probably not have occurred without DNN intervention.

Corporate social responsibility has over the years become an important topic in Dutch public and political debate. The India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN) has played a significant role in raising this issue with both Dutch and international companies and with the Dutch government. ICN has increasingly integrated the caste/Dalit perspective in its own research on economic sectors like the garment, natural stone, leather and seeds industries.

One of the issues that were intensively raised through campaigning and advocacy – and attracted a lot of attention in 2012 – is the bonded (child) labour and exploitation of young Dalit and other low-caste girls and women in the South Indian textile and garment industry. The fact that most of the exploited girls/women are Dalits was explicitly analysed and raised in DNN publications – especially the report 'Maid in India' – and in advocacy efforts aimed at industry (almost 40 garment brands), the European Union, the Dutch government, a number of UN Special Rapporteurs and the media.

Letters were sent to companies to which about half replied, questions were asked in the Dutch and European Parliament, the issue was raised in parliamentary debates and the media (including Indian media). Exploitation of Dalit girls in the textile industry has thus become a major CSR issue and has helped to raise the understanding of the public, the business world and policy makers on the intersection between labour rights exploitation and the vulnerable position of Dalits/Dalit girls in the labour market.

These efforts have also had an impact on the position of the Dalit girls themselves. The DNN report 'Maid in India' says that "the Sumangali scheme is abandoned at Eastman [one of the major Indian suppliers], that freedom of movement for hostel workers has improved and that wages are relatively high at Eastman." There have also been some





Six Dalit Solidarity Networks in Europe introduced new websites in 2012. They all use the same template, created by IDS<sup>N</sup>. The sites form part of IDS<sup>N</sup>'s EU-funded project "Ending 'untouchability': European action to eliminate caste discrimination". This is the website of DSN-Norway, the most recent Dalit Solidarity Network to be established. You can find the websites via these links:

[www.dsnu.org](http://www.dsnu.org)  
[www.dalit.be](http://www.dalit.be)  
[www.dalit.dk](http://www.dalit.dk)  
[www.dalit.fi](http://www.dalit.fi)  
[www.dalit.no](http://www.dalit.no)  
[www.dalitsolidarity.se](http://www.dalitsolidarity.se)

Two other European networks, DNN og DSI<sup>D</sup>, already have well-established websites ([www.dalits.nl](http://www.dalits.nl) and [www.dalit.de](http://www.dalit.de)) and were not part of the project

improvements in other companies, although the structural problems remain.

It is also relevant to mention here that the (independent) jury of the National Dutch Human Rights Award in 2012 selected a Dalit activist from Tamil Nadu, Mr Marimuthu Bharathan. This is an indication of the fact that the Dalit issue is now more recognised and accepted in The Netherlands as a major human rights issue.

Another expression of this fact is the 45-minute programme on Dalits on prime-time television as part of a number of media reports on India.

The activities of DNN depend very much on individual members, especially the India Committee of The Netherlands as co-ordinator of the Network. However, a number of partners continued to support Dalit organisations and/or Dalit related activities in caste-affected countries and the work of ICN on behalf of the Network.

ICN continued to represent DNN in the IDS<sup>N</sup> Council and Executive Group in 2012. The DNN coordinator actively contributed to IDS<sup>N</sup>'s work by participating in advocacy efforts at EU level, including meetings with MEPs, European Commission officials and others.

DNN issued several publications, including the 'Maid in India' report, and also prepared a Dutch version of the photo exhibition 'We are not untouchable'. The DNN coordinator gave a number of media interviews, particularly to Dutch media, but also to the Hindustan Times in India.

## United Kingdom (DSN-UK)

During 2012, the Dalit Solidarity Network – UK continued to direct its lobbying efforts at the UK Parliament as well as the corporate sector. The network also continued to raise awareness of the issue in the UK media and engaged in international work through IDS<sup>N</sup>.

The All Party Parliamentary Group for Dalits (APPG) was formed in November 2010 as a direct result of its members wishing to see a change in UK legislation – specifically to include caste as a discriminatory factor in the Equality Act. The Group has also led on several parliamentary questions and debates on international development aid and human rights on the Indian sub-continent within both the House of Lords and Commons.

All the group's questions have received an agreed 'holding response'; and that the Government would make a decision on the legislation and respond 'in due course' to the report on caste discrimination in the UK by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR).

A meeting with the Equality and Human Rights Commission in August 2012 resulted in their publishing a public statement on their website in support of the 'activation' of Clause 9 (5)(a) of the Equality Act, which would mean that caste discrimination would become illegal.

During this time many members of the APPG have been working tirelessly to move this position forward, and more recently Lord Harries and Lord Avebury requested meetings

The Dalit Solidarity Network in Belgium (SDB) has prepared a bilingual French-Dutch version of the IDSN photo exhibition "260 million reasons to act". The exhibition has already been introduced to a Belgian audience on several occasions.

with the Minister, Lynne Featherstone and the Secretary of State, Theresa May. The Home Office has yet to reply to these requests.

The APPG will continue to lobby the Government and urge it to:

- Invoke Clause 9(5) (a) of the Equality Act to legislate against caste discrimination
- Address caste based exclusion in international aid efforts in all South Asian caste affected countries

DSN-UK continues to play a significant role in the education of the UK corporate sector with regard to labour rights issues involving Dalits in sourcing countries. This has been achieved faster by DSN occupying a position on the Ethical trading Initiative (ETI) board since 2010 where it has directly raised and can maintain the issue at board level as one of great importance. There is now some understanding that in order to address labour rights issues in the stone supply chain in India then the caste issue must be addressed.

Many companies with Indian operations although sympathetic when they hear of certain labour rights abuses have felt the issue to be too complex and complicated to tackle. Caste discrimination is not a known entity for many of them. However, certain sectors are now willing to spend more time to understand and then begin to tackle this problem within their Indian supply chains.

ETI has been engaged in mapping out the regional and socio/cultural context around their programmes; this has given DSN-UK the opportunity to work on more issues with ETI and carry more influence with regard to the issue of caste discrimination and labour rights in the South Asia context.

ETI alongside the Fair Labour Association hosted the meeting with companies, NGOs and trade unions – local and international – in Tirupur, Tamil Nadu, the home of garment production in Southern India in March 2012. There were also representatives from government, trade associations, mills and factories. Most importantly, young women workers were also represented.

A programme of work to address the issue of forced labour of these young women is now being designed on the basis of that multi stakeholder input.

DSN-UK is the lead NGO in the ETI Stone Group, which has now agreed a programme of work to address labour rights issues in the stone quarries in Rajasthan. The ETI stone company members, their most important suppliers, ETI secretariat staff, the trade union coordinator and DSN-UK gathered for a ground-breaking event in Kota, Rajasthan, at the end of April 2012, to develop work in the stone supply chain. Also present were Indian national and Rajasthan-

based NGOs. This work will have participation from small grassroots NGOs from Kota as well as the Centre for Education and Communication in Delhi and the Centre for Dalit Rights in Jaipur.

DSN-UK is cautiously optimistic about the outcomes, certainly as a reflection of the change from absolute denial to a tentative agreement to address the key problems in the supply chains in India, including caste discrimination.

DSN-UK director Meena Varma was interviewed on Radio Oxford live for a 20 minutes Q&A session and gave a 10 minute interview with Sunrise Radio. Sunrise Radio is an Asian network radio station.

More recently The Independent as well as Mike Thompson from BBC Radio 4; Dil Neiyyar, BBC News and Priyanka Deladia from BBC Asian Network have made enquiries to DSN-UK. BBC 3 has not yet made a final decision on broadcasting a documentary to raise awareness in the UK of caste discrimination. The screening of this documentary has been postponed until the case of Vijay Begraj and his wife is ruled upon – it was postponed for the third time until February 2013. The couple claim to have lost their jobs at a law firm because of their inter-caste marriage.

At the beginning of March DSN-UK director Meena Varma spoke at an IDSN side event at the UN Human Rights Council. Dalit human rights defenders from affected countries (India, Sri Lanka, Japan and UK) presented their experiences and views on what can be done to prevent and tackle the common and unique challenges facing these persons working at the national, regional, and international level to combat a culture of impunity. The DSN-UK director spoke at this event to continue to highlight the need for UK legislation.

DSN-UK and IDSN submission to the UK UPR review resulted in a public recommendation from Nicaragua regarding legislation in the UK and Clause 9(5)(a) on 24 May 2012. The UK response published in September unsurprisingly did not support the recommendation. DSN-UK will continue to work at the highest levels of the Human Rights Council and UN to maintain momentum and interest in the UK Dalit population and call for their protection under both national and international standards.

### **Belgium (SDB)**

In 2012, the Dalit Solidarity Network in Belgium (SDB) focused its interventions on two main sectors: awareness raising and political lobbying. Internally, the SDB was strengthened to continue its work in both areas.

Thanks to the support from IDSN in the framework of the EU project, SDB developed a number of awareness raising materials and introduced them to a Belgian audience:



PHOTO: KARL WINTGENS/SDB

- A French language website ([www.dalit.be](http://www.dalit.be)) was developed, with initial content being prepared by the members of SDB and with regular updates through new articles on the situation of dalits in South Asia as well as on new developments within SDB itself.
- The IDSN video 'We are not untouchable' was translated and edited in French.<sup>57</sup>
- A bilingual French – Dutch adaptation of the IDSN exhibition '260 million reasons to act' was prepared. It enables an easy and flexible use of the posters in the awareness raising activities of SDB and other groups in Belgium. A catalogue presents the exhibition and a guide introduces ways of using the exhibition in school groups. The posters of the exhibition have been introduced to a Belgian audience on several occasions. Several exhibitions are already planned for 2013.
- Flyers presenting SDB and its support to the cause of the dalits were prepared and widely disseminated.

SDB also marked the 4th anniversary of the Kandhamal incidents by inviting Fr. Ajaya Kumar Singh (Orissa, India) to address a public meeting held in Brussels and in an interview on Radio RCF in October.

Several educational events took place in secondary schools to raise awareness of young Belgian students about the discrimination faced by Dalits in South Asia.

On the lobby side, SDF continued its political contacts with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brussels, and with members of the Belgian Senate. It has also introduced Indian partners from Dalit organisations to the Belgian authorities as well as to MEPs. SDB also circulated a French translation of IDSN's EU appeal to Belgian MEPs.

### Denmark (DSN-DK)

On 29 October, the Dalit Solidarity Network in Denmark (DSN-DK) – in association with IDSN – organised a public hearing in Copenhagen on caste discrimination. The hearing was opened by the Minister for Development Cooperation, Mr Christian Friis Bach, who described caste as "one of the worst forms of discrimination you can find". Among the speakers at the hearing were two Indian campaigners for Dalit rights, Asha Kowtal and Stalin K, as well as Katia Chirizzi from the OHCHR and representatives from a number of Danish NGOs that are members of DSN-DK.

The hearing attracted an audience of approximately 80 people and constituted the highlight of DSN-DK's work in 2012.<sup>58</sup> During the same week, the filmmaker and human rights campaigner, Stalin K, took part in a number of different events. He spoke to a group of international students at the Danish School of Media and Journalism in Aarhus, and conducted a well-attended seminar at the documentary film festival CPH:DOX. The work of Stalin K's

grassroots organisation, Video Volunteers, was the focal point of these talks – particularly its efforts to document and campaign against caste discrimination. At these various events, Stalin K also showed 'We are not untouchable', which features footage from Video Volunteers.

In 2012, DSN-DK introduced its new website, using the same template as a number of other European DSNs. It also made a Danish language version of IDS*N*'s introductory video 'We are not untouchable', with a voice-over by Danish actor Lars Mikkelsen. During the week of the public hearing, DSN-DK member organisations actively promoted the film on their facebook pages and generally contributed to an increased awareness of the issue of caste discrimination.

DSN-DK continued to pursue a regular dialogue with Danish government officials and politicians – the participation of the Minister in the October hearing was a direct result of these efforts. Denmark raised the issue in a UN as well as an EU context, including the UPR on India in May and an IDS*N* presentation on the situation of Dalits to the EU Council working group on human rights (COHOM) in November. Several meetings involving Dalit representatives from India and Nepal were held with officials the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In August, DSN-DK representatives also met with the Minister for Development and the Human Rights Ambassador.

A DSN-DK delegation presented its recommendations for Danish action against caste discrimination at a meeting of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Danish Parliament, and the Committee subsequently posed a number of questions to the Minister for Development concerning the government's policies on the issue.

DSN-DK responded to a number of requests for contacts, resources and information from students, researchers and the media. Two media outlets were particularly responsive to covering the Dalit issue – the website [U-landsnyt.dk](http://U-landsnyt.dk) with regular updates on caste discrimination and the newspaper, *Kristeligt Dagblad*. This daily published interviews with Dalit rights campaigners Manjula Pradeep and Stalin K during their visits to Denmark.

The television channel DK-4 also took an interest in the issue of caste discrimination and produced two programmes on the work of DSN-DK and IDS*N*, which included interviews with campaigners from South Asia as well as representatives from IDS*N* and DSN-DK member organisations Care Denmark and The Swallows (Svalerne). And finally, on the day of the public hearing IDS*N* coordinator Rikke Nöhrind was interviewed by Danish Radio.

DSN-DK maintained its involvement in the Danish Ethical Trading Initiative (DIEH) and provided input to a coming DIEH briefing paper on caste discrimination.

## Finland (DSN-Fi)

Having been officially registered in 2011, the Dalit Solidarity Network in Finland continued consolidating itself in 2012. Highlights of the year included the seminar 'End caste discrimination now' in October with the participation of a government minister, and the production of the Finnish language version of the film 'We are not untouchable' as well as the new DSN-Fi website.

The Finnish network played an active role in the IDS*N* lobbying campaign in the European Parliament. As a consequence many Finnish MEPs signed up to the EP petition to end caste discrimination, and some of the MEPs took the initial important steps for the motion that led to the European Parliament's resolution on caste discrimination in India.

Early in the year, the government of Finland was preparing its development policy programme for the next four years. DSN-Fi lobbied for inclusion of activities to prevent caste discrimination. In the penultimate draft, Dalits were mentioned among the most vulnerable groups that must be given special consideration. In the final version, however, they had unfortunately been omitted from the wording of the programme which was somewhat shorter than the earlier version.

In spite of this setback, Finland does emphasise democracy, human rights and sustainable development in its development policy. The rights-based thinking has been strengthened since the former policy paper. The Finnish priorities of education, decent work, reducing youth unemployment and improving the status of women and children are all highly relevant categories in a Dalit development context.

In the national media there was very little discussion of the issue. The recent atrocities in Haryana and in Dharmapuri were not reported, nor did the resolution of the European Parliament draw any media attention. DSN-Fi's seminar was covered by one mainstream newspaper: the tabloid *Ilta-Sanomat* published an interview with Vijay Parmar. Church-affiliated media have been an exception. They have actively covered the issues of caste discrimination and Dalit human rights.

DSN-Fi advocacy work included meetings between the network's chair, Mikko Malkavaara, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss the situation of Dalits and Finland's role in preventing caste discrimination. Minna Havunen and Timo Lappalainen paid a visit to Nokia's headquarters discussing the IT giant's human resources policy in respect of caste issues at their factories in Tamil Nadu.

The DSN-Fi seminar 'End Caste Discrimination Now!' took place on October 10 in the centre of Helsinki with two keynote speakers, Minister for International Development Heidi Hautala and Convenor of the National Campaign of Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) Vijay Parmar from India. More than 40 participants were present. They represented the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Human rights and development NGOs, the Lutheran church and the private sector. The Finnish version of 'We are not Untouchable' had its premiere at the seminar.

Vijay Parmar's programme included visits to NGOs (Finnchurchaid, Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission and Kepa, the umbrella organisation for Finnish NGOs interested in development issues and international affairs), visit to the Human Rights unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Finnish Parliament, where the Global group of the parliament and its chair, Ms. Annika Saarikko, was hosting a short session. The message of the Indian Dalit movement was delivered clearly.

The main productions of the year were the Finnish version (Emme ole koskettamattomia)<sup>59</sup> of 'We are not untouchable' and setting up the DSN-Fi website – both initiatives were funded by IDS-N's EU project. The Finnish language version of Jakob Carlsen's IDS-N photo exhibition in the form of roll-ups was finalised by the end of the year. In addition the members of the network have published many articles and given several presentations on caste discrimination and Dalits.

### **Norway (DSN-Norway)**

The Dalit Solidarity Network in Norway was established at an open NGO meeting in January 2012. The following organisations are members of DSN-Norway: FIAN Norway, the Norwegian Human Rights Fund, Plan Norway, Rafto, Stefanus-alliance, the Strømme Foundation and the Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations.

The mandate of DSN-Norway is to contribute to the abolishment of caste discrimination. The main targets for advocacy work are Norwegian authorities, policy makers, Norwegian organisations and companies working in caste-affected countries as well as the public at large.

As in 2011, the Norwegian Forum for Human Rights submitted a joint statement to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs addressing five country situations as well as five thematic human rights issues of importance at the UN; caste discrimination was one of these issues. This forum is a joint coalition working on human rights issues where several DSN-Norway members are active participants.

DSN-Norway's main activity in 2012 was, however, the hearing 'Joining forces for a caste-free world'. On 28 March, Norwegian authorities, politicians, organisations working with caste-affected countries and the general public were invited to a hearing on caste discrimination. The hearing took place at Litteraturhuset in Oslo, where the film 'We are not untouchable' served as a powerful introduction to the keynote speeches by Mr Paul Divakar and Ms Asha Kowtal from NCDHR, India.

The day concluded with a panel discussion featuring representatives from OHCHR and IDS-N as well as Plan Norway and the Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations. The hearing discussed how we can work together towards a world where no one is discriminated against on the basis of work, caste or descent. The hearing was attended by approximately 50 people and representatives from 30 organisations. The event served as a first step to the targeted advocacy work that was undertaken throughout the year.

With the support of IDS-N, the Norwegian network established its own website. The target group is the Norwegian public at large. DSN-Norway has received positive feedback from teachers and students who have been using the webpage when preparing for Operation Days work, the autumn school campaign that in 2012 addressed caste discrimination.

On this page, Norwegian speaking readers can find information about the network's activities, including a meeting with the Norwegian minister of Development, Mr. Heikki Holmås, in August. The Minister has showed his engagement throughout the year and also followed up on the meeting with a letter underlining his commitment to using the UN to address caste discrimination as well as his support for the draft UN Principles and Guidelines. He also promised that the Network's input on establishing a firmer strategy on the issue will be followed up by Norwegian embassies.

During the UPR of India in May 2012, DSN-Norway lobbied the Norwegian government to include a caste-related question in Norway's intervention.

### **Sweden (DSN-S)**

In 2012, the Dalit Solidarity Network in Sweden (DSN-S) worked closely with two other organisations; Friends of Village Community Development Society (VCDS) based in Stockholm and the Swallows India-Bangladesh in Lund. In the course of planning the program connected to the 2012 Human Rights Forum, other institutions and organisations approached DSN-S for collaboration around certain events. These included the Church of Sweden, Gothenburg and Uppsala Universities and TED-X/TEDTalks.

Activities centered around the Human Rights Forum in Gothenburg on 12-13 November constituted the highlights of DSN-S's work in 2012. They involved six seminars or events of which four were under the headline 'India's hidden apartheid: Equal by law – Unequal by caste'.

The annual Human Rights Forum is a unique gathering of more than 2000 people where human rights professionals, civil servants, politicians, researchers and activists focus on human rights for two days. Invited speakers from India were Ruth Manorama, President of the National Federation of Dalit Women, and Sukumar Narayana, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Delhi. Members of DSN-S, VCDS, and the Swallows also contributed.

These speakers held three seminars, one 90-minute seminar with 140 Participants<sup>60</sup> and two 30-minute seminars with 50 people participating on each occasion. Furthermore, Ruth Manorama was one of six activists from different countries in a seminar discussing the role of civil society in societal changes and in the struggle for human rights.

Ruth Manorama was a keynote speaker at a public seminar organised by the Church of Sweden at Gothenburg Cathedral. It was performed in way of a dialogue between her and K. G. Hammar, Archbishop emeritus. She also participated in a meeting organised and webcast by the non-profit organization TED-X.<sup>61</sup> About 30 people from different organisations and walks of life spoke 5-10 minutes each on the topic of 'human rights and identity'.

As part of the Global Week organised by the University of Gothenburg, about 50 students and teachers participated in a one hour seminar on the theme 'India's hidden apartheid: Equal by law – Unequal by Caste'. 'We are not Untouchable' was shown, and Ruth Manorama and Sukumar Narayana shared the podium.

Together with Edward A. Rodrigues, a Mumbai academic, and DSN-S representatives, Ms Manorama and Mr Narayana met with four parliamentarians involved in the Swedish-Indian Society at the Swedish Parliament. The introduction film and a new DSN-S leaflet were handed over to the parliamentarians who displayed a marked interest in the caste issue and how it permeates Indian society even today. Also individual cases and statistics were presented along with IDSN's EU and UN appeals.

Towards the end of the year, the new DSN-S website was close to completion. The film 'We are not untouchable' was provided with Swedish subtitles and launched at the Human Rights Forum in Gothenburg on November 12. DSN-S also produced and printed a leaflet with information on the caste system, caste discrimination and the advocacy work of the international Dalit network.

DSN-S aims to set up a formally registered organisation in 2013.

## Organisation, administration and finance

### Council

IDSN held its 9th Council meeting on 1-2 December 2011 in Kathmandu in connection with the International Consultation on Good Practises and Strategies to Eliminate Caste-based discrimination. The 10th IDSN Council meeting is planned to take place in Geneva in late February 2013.

Dalit Solidarity Networks (DSNs), international associates of IDSN and international organisations belonging to DSNs, continued to play important roles in supporting the Dalit movement including through collaboration in IDSN.

### Executive group (EG)

The composition of the Executive Group was decided upon at the Council meeting in 2011 with the following members:

- Manjula Pradeep, Navsarjan Trust, India – Co-convenor
- Meena Varma, Dalit Solidarity Network, UK – Co-convenor
- Paul Divakar, National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights, India
- Durga Sob, Feminist Dalit Organisation, Nepal
- Gerard Oonk, Dalit Network Netherlands
- Bijo Francis, Asian Human Rights Commission, Hong Kong
- Rikke Nöhrlind, IDSN, Ex-officio member

The EG held a regular meeting in March in Geneva and a strategic meeting – aimed at taking stock of IDSN achievements and strengths – in Copenhagen in September. Achievements include a high level of influence and concrete results as well as a general recognition of the organisation and a strong brand as a network. IDSN has moved towards more centrally planned operations, but members, associates and other stakeholders continue to provide substantial input. IDSN has also successfully enhanced its focus on Dalit women.

The current core programmes of IDSN continue to be considered essential, also in the medium to long term perspective. Future challenges include further strengthening of the links between international and national level work, i.e. making use of the international gains at the UN and EU level in caste-affected countries; and the need for regional approaches by the Dalit movement in South Asia and a regional linkage to IDSN's work. The challenge of turning political opposition against dealing

with caste discrimination as an international human rights issue into constructive engagement remains on the agenda. This challenge must also be considered in the context of the changing power dynamics in the international human rights arena.<sup>62</sup>

Securing immediate and long term financial sustainability for IDS-N remains a strategic priority; adequate resources must be secured to enable future work with high quality input, continuous development and solid outcomes.

## ECOSOC

ECOSOC consultative status provides NGOs with access to various UN bodies, including human rights mechanisms. Since IDS-N first submitted its application for this status to the Committee on NGOs in 2007, IDS-N has received 59 written questions from one member of the Committee, namely India, resulting in continuous deferral of the application by the Committee on NGOs.

In 2012, IDS-N therefore decided to submit a complaint on the case to the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful association and of assembly, and an appeal to the reprisal mechanism of the UN Secretary-General. In these complaints, IDS-N argues that the current working methods of the NGO Committee and in this case, the continued questioning by India, exclude IDS-N from freely associating with UN organisations in contrast to the principles of non-discrimination, equality, participation, transparency and accountability, laid out in resolution 1996/31 and works against the criteria for NGO participation stipulated therein.

IDS-N considers the efforts to hinder direct representation of Dalit voices at the UN – such as the continued opposition by India to granting ECOSOC accreditation to IDS-N – a reprisal against civil society and an infringement on the right to free association with the UN system. IDS-N's case was presented in a meeting in September in Geneva organised by the International Service on Human Rights on the functioning of the Committee on NGOs. The meeting was attended by states, the OHCHR and NGOs.

## Secretariat

The staff compliment of the IDS-N secretariat remained the same as in previous years with four full time staff: Coordinator Rikke Nöhrind, administrator and programme officer Maia Ingvarson, UN programme officer Gitte Dyrhagen Husager, and communications officer Maria Brink Schleimann, supplemented by Ole Westergård, part time bookkeeper. In June, journalist Kim Wiesener joined the office to cover for the communications officer, who went on maternity leave. The office was also supported by part

time student volunteers who contributed their work on ad hoc assignments related mainly to websites and research. Most staff travelled extensively, including to Geneva and Brussels, as part of lobby interventions and networking, which in most cases involved IDS-N members, associates or other alliance partners from South Asia.

## Finances

With stringent budget monitoring and management, IDS-N got through 2012 with a good level of activities and tangible outcomes despite a reduced budget. A small balance was carried forward at the end of the year.

Although extensive fundraising activities took place throughout the year, the budget was not covered fully. Contracts were renewed with existing funders and some additional pledges received, most of which are annual grants.

We are highly appreciative of the contributions to IDS-N including the crucial financial support by the core group of donors. In 2012, IDS-N was supported financially by DANIDA, Bread for the World, ICCO, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Open Society Foundation, CCFD, FinChurchAid, as well as by the European Commission with a grant co-financed by DanChurchAid.

IDS-N's three year programme proposal (2013-2015) was revised in October and presented to a number of bilateral donors, INGOs and funding associations. However, in a difficult financial environment the prospective for a budget deficit also for 2013 unfortunately prevails. Securing long term, multi-annual funding for IDS-N's core programmes remains a huge challenge, despite the unique role that IDS-N plays in the global struggle to end caste discrimination and the concrete outcomes which were evident also in 2012.

## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2012

### Profit and loss

(Details in note 1)	2012 DKK	2012 EURO	2011 DKK
Opening balance	927,161.66	124,618.50	2,087,866.45
<b>Income</b>			
Admin for EU/DCA project	77,865.82	10,465.84	94,568.21
DanChurchAid	219,460.37	29,497.36	275,414.00
Bread for the World	742,152.00		
Membership fees recd. for DSN-DK	52,950.00	7,116.94	52,700.00
Danida	1,000,000.00	134,408.60	1,000,000.00
Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs			259,850.50
CCFD	163,270.80	21,945.00	163,820.80
ICCO	222,609.00	29,920.56	
FinnChurchAid	148,700.00	19,986.56	148,838.00
Open Society Institute	559,385.00	75,186.16	624,896.00
European Commission	548,053.37	73,663.09	273,328.82
Other Income			21,127.44
Interest	1,423.79	191.37	2,186.70
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,735,870.15</b>	<b>502,133.08</b>	<b>2,916,730.47</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>4,046,613.19</b>	<b>543,899.62</b>	<b>4,077,435.26</b>
<b>Balance</b>	<b>616,418.62</b>	<b>82,851.97</b>	<b>927,161.66</b>

### Balance statement

(Details in note 1)	2012 DKK	2012 EURO	2011 DKK
<b>Assets</b>			
Cash at bank at 31.12 *	913,581.59	122,793.22	1,169,059.56
Rent deposit	25,029.00	3,364.11	24,000.00
Petty cash	13,235.75	1,779.00	5,991.95
Outstanding accounts	23,550.06	3,165.33	2,135.06
	975,396.40	131,101.67	1,201,186.57
<b>Liabilities</b>			
Balance Master Card account	-17,933.45	-2,410.41	-19,167.05
Compulsory holiday payment fund	-275,206.50	-36,990.12	-225,375.42
Outstanding accounts	-65,837.83	-8,849.17	-29,482.44
	-358,977.78	-48,249.70	-274,024.91
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<b>616,418.62</b>	<b>82,851.97</b>	<b>927,161.66</b>

The balance carried forward includes an amount of 281.090 DKK received late in December from Open Society Foundation for use in 2013.

The financial statements are presented in Danish kroner.

For reasons of comparison, amounts in Euro are presented, using a fixed exchange rate based a monthly average from [www.inforeuro.eu](http://www.inforeuro.eu): 7.44

Hence, some discrepancies may appear compared to actual amounts received in Euro

### Note 1

<b>Profit and loss</b>	2012 DKK	Core programme DKK	EU project DKK	DSN-DK DKK	Reserve DKK
Opening balance	927,161.66	407,973.72	244,138.13	7,004.60	268,045.21
<b>Income</b>					
Admin for EU/DCA project	77,865.82				77,865.82
DanChurchAid	219,460.37		219,460.37		
Bread for the World	742,152.00	742,152.00			
Membership fees rcd. for DSN-DK	52,950.00			52,950.00	
Danida	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00			
Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs					
CCFD	163,270.80	163,270.80			
ICCO	222,609.00	222,609.00			
FinnChurchAid	148,700.00	148,700.00			
Open Society Institute	559,385.00	559,385.00			
European Commission	548,053.37		548,053.37		
Other Income	0.00				
Interest	1,423.79	1,423.79			
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,735,870.15</b>	<b>2,837,540.59</b>	<b>767,513.74</b>	<b>52,950.00</b>	<b>77,865.82</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>4,046,613.19</b>	<b>2,795,720.08</b>	<b>1,190,996.81</b>	<b>59,896.30</b>	
<b>Balance</b>	<b>616,418.62</b>	<b>449,794.23</b>	<b>-179,344.94</b>	<b>58.30</b>	<b>345,911.03</b>

### Balance statement

	2012 DKK	Core programme DKK	EU project DKK	DSN-DK DKK	Reserve DKK
<b>Assets</b>					
Cash at bank at 31.12	913,581.59	718,035.06	386.87	58.62	195,101.05
Rent deposit	25,029.00	25,029.00			
Petty cash	13,235.75	13,235.75			
Outstanding accounts	23,550.06	23,550.05			
	61,814.81	61,814.80			
<b>Liabilities</b>					
Balance Master Card account	-17,933.45	-17,933.45			
Compulsory holiday payment fund	-275,206.50	-275,206.50			
Outstanding accounts	-65,837.83	-36,915.68	-23,672.15	-5,250.00	
	-358,977.78	-330,055.63	-23,672.15	-5,250.00	0.00
Fund balance brought forward		0.00	-156,059.66	5,249.68	150,809.98
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<b>616,418.62</b>	<b>449,794.23</b>	<b>-179,344.94</b>	<b>58.30</b>	<b>345,911.03</b>

The balance carried forward includes an amount of 281.090 DKK received late in December from Open Society Foundation for use in 2013.

Fund balance brought forward: Transfer between programmes due to balance at 31 December.

The reserve includes funds to cover legally binding employer obligations



**EXPENDITURE 2012**Budget Expenditure  
DKK DKK  
Budget Expenditure  
EUR EURBudget Expenditure  
DKK DKK  
Budget Expenditure  
EUR EUR**Networking, coordination and communication**

## General staff expenses

Staff training	35,000	6,019	4,704	809
Insurance	10,000	12,296	1,344	1,653
Other staff expenses	12,000	19,543	1,613	2,627
Holiday allowance	40,000	49,832	5,376	6,698
Finance officer	50,000	26,902	6,720	3,616
Maternity leave payment	38,350	83,405	5,155	11,210
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>185,350</b>	<b>197,997</b>	<b>24,913</b>	<b>26,613</b>

## Office costs

Rent	100,116	100,116	13,456	13,456
Office supplies	25,000	24,252	3,360	3,260
Postage and freight	15,000	15,853	2,016	2,131
Hospitality expenses	5,000	1,461	672	196
Telecommunication	22,000	16,427	2,957	2,208
Materials/memberships	2,000	2,156	269	290
Equipment	7,000	16,687	941	2,243
Bank	12,700	15,393	1,707	2,069
Office cleaning	19,000	18,063	2,554	2,428
Salaries administration	5,400	8,391	726	1,128
Audit	27,000	30,703	3,629	4,127
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>240,216</b>	<b>249,501</b>	<b>32,287</b>	<b>33,535</b>

## IT

IT service	14,000	17,646	1,882	2,372
MS IT service	26,676	26,676	3,585	3,585
Software license	28,500	36,508	3,831	4,907
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>69,176</b>	<b>80,830</b>	<b>9,298</b>	<b>10,864</b>

## Communication

Website	4,200	4,993	565	671
Tech. Assistance website	20,000	19,191	2,688	2,579
Publicity & Publications	120,000	71,655	16,129	9,631
Campaign and activity support	50,000	0	6,720	0
Travel	30,000	25,661	4,032	3,449
Communications officer	237,594	258,761	31,935	34,780
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>461,794</b>	<b>380,262</b>	<b>62,069</b>	<b>51,110</b>

## Governing bodies

Travel, executive group meetings	76,000	31,366	10,215	4,216
Venue/lodging, executive group meetings	25,000	38,455	3,360	5,169
Travel, council meetings	130,000	11,417	17,473	1,535
Venue/lodging, council meetings	170,000	0	22,849	0
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>401,000</b>	<b>81,237</b>	<b>53,898</b>	<b>10,919</b>
<b>Programme management and implementation</b>	<b>429,954</b>	<b>437,606</b>	<b>57,790</b>	<b>58,818</b>
<b>Total Communication, Networking and Co-ordination</b>	<b>1,787,490</b>	<b>1,427,434</b>	<b>240,254</b>	<b>191,859</b>

**UN Programme**

## UN Human Rights Council

## Interventions for universal periodic reviews

Travel, affected country reps	84,000	41,554	11,290	5,585
Travel, secretariat	15,000	13,586	2,016	1,826
Food	38,675	14,736	5,198	1,981
Accommodation	61,200	42,646	8,226	5,732
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>198,875</b>	<b>112,522</b>	<b>26,731</b>	<b>15,124</b>

## Interventions at council sessions

Travel, affected country reps	70,000	41,195	9,409	5,537
Travel, secretariat	24,000	32,105	3,226	4,315
Food	32,760	44,027	4,403	5,918
Accommodation	64,800	81,083	8,710	10,898
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>191,560</b>	<b>198,410</b>	<b>25,747</b>	<b>26,668</b>

## Special Procedures: Informal consultation w/spec. Rapporteurs

International travel	39,000	3,229	5,242	434
Accommodation	25,200	0	3,387	0
Food/consumption	12,740	1,933	1,712	260
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>76,940</b>	<b>5,162</b>	<b>10,341</b>	<b>694</b>

UN follow up/capacity building in Asia	25,000	21,070	3,360	2,832
UN Research & support	25,000	2,647	3,360	356
Programme management and implementation	482,475	489,307	64,849	65,767
<b>Total UN Programme</b>	<b>999,850</b>	<b>829,118</b>	<b>134,388</b>	<b>111,441</b>

**EU Programme**

## Lobby interventions

Travel, Nat. Advocacy platforms	7,000	296	941	40
Travel, secretariat	16,000	5,913	2,151	795
Food	12,000	1,007	1,613	135
Accommodation	16,000	840	2,151	113
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>51,000</b>	<b>8,056</b>	<b>6,855</b>	<b>1,083</b>
<b>Programme management and implementation</b>	<b>431,644</b>	<b>439,296</b>	<b>58,017</b>	<b>59,045</b>
<b>Total EU Programme</b>	<b>482,644</b>	<b>447,352</b>	<b>64,872</b>	<b>60,128</b>

**Private Sector**

Promotion activities	25,000	0	3,360	0
Travel	12,000	2,455	1,613	330
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>37,000</b>	<b>2,455</b>	<b>4,973</b>	<b>330</b>
<b>Programme management and implementation</b>	<b>87,681</b>	<b>89,361</b>	<b>11,785</b>	<b>12,011</b>
<b>Total Private Sector</b>	<b>124,681</b>	<b>91,816</b>	<b>16,758</b>	<b>12,341</b>

**Summary core programme**

Networking, Coordination and Communication	1,787,490	1,427,434	240,254	191,859
UN Programme	999,850	829,118	134,388	111,441
EU programme	482,644	447,352	64,872	60,128
Private sector	124,681	91,816	16,758	12,341
<b>Total programmes</b>	<b>3,394,665</b>	<b>2,795,720</b>	<b>456,272</b>	<b>375,769</b>

**Salaries funded under separate EU project:**

Communications officer	275,944	342,167	37,089	45,990
Finance officer	30,000	26,902	4,032	3,616
Coordinator	114,933	144,626	15,448	19,439
Programme officer	101,257	103,030	13,610	13,848
<b>Total EU funded salaries</b>	<b>522,133</b>	<b>616,726</b>	<b>70,179</b>	<b>82,893</b>

**Project activities funded by the EU**

Other human resources (per diems and other travel costs)	54,163	41,535	7,280	5,583
International Travel	56,246	53,444	7,560	7,183
Administration	103,498	77,866	13,911	10,466

## Costs and services

Production of video on cbd in South Africa	48,360	29,872	6,500	4,015
Development of humanitarian guidelines	149,544	0	20,100	0
Adjustment 2011	0	-4,126	0	-555
Consultation in Nepal – follow up	32,781	40,575	4,406	5,454
EU campaigns with DSNs	520,800	335,105	70,000	45,041
<b>Total costs and services</b>	<b>751,485</b>	<b>401,427</b>	<b>101,006</b>	<b>53,955</b>
<b>Total project activities</b>	<b>965,392</b>	<b>574,271</b>	<b>129,757</b>	<b>77,187</b>

**DSN-DK (Funded separately)**

Programme management and implementation	50,831	51,515	6,832	6,924
DSN-DK activities	0	8,381	0	1,127
<b>Total DSN-DK</b>	<b>50,831</b>	<b>59,896</b>	<b>6,832</b>	<b>8,051</b>

**Summary total expenditure**

Summary core programme	3,394,665	2,795,720	456,272	375,769
Salaries funded under separate EU project	522,133	616,726	70,179	82,893
Project activities under separate EU project	965,392	574,271	129,757	77,187
DSN-DK	50,831	59,896	6,832	8,051
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>4,933,021</b>	<b>4,046,613</b>	<b>663,040</b>	<b>543,900</b>

## Endnotes

- 1 WGHR Status Report 2012, revised: <http://bit.ly/Y6waVV>
- 2 Link to resolution: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2012-512>
- 3 The term "Dalit" used here (Dalit human rights defenders) also covers other persons affected by similar forms of discrimination based on work and descent.
- 4 For a list of UN-related side events focusing on caste discrimination, see: <http://idsn.org/international-advocacy/un/un-parallelevents/>
- 5 To be downloaded at [www.idsn.org/UNappeal](http://www.idsn.org/UNappeal)
- 6 See IDSN's analysis and reflections on outcomes of the UPR of India: <http://idsn.org/international-advocacy/un/universalperiodic-review/upr-india/>
- 7 For more on outcomes of the UPR of the UK, see: <http://idsn.org/international-advocacy/un/universal-periodic-review/upr-uk/>
- 8 Download UPR Bangladesh parallel report: [http://idsn.org/fileadmin/user\\_folder/pdf/New\\_files/UN/UPR/UPR16\\_submission\\_Dalitrighs\\_Bangladesh\\_2012-2013.pdf](http://idsn.org/fileadmin/user_folder/pdf/New_files/UN/UPR/UPR16_submission_Dalitrighs_Bangladesh_2012-2013.pdf)
- 9 List of UN Special Procedure mandates which addressed caste discrimination in 2012: Contemporary forms of racism; Contemporary forms of slavery; Minority issues; Human rights defenders; Violence against women; Water and sanitation; Extreme poverty; Extrajudicial, arbitrary and summary executions; and UN working Group on discrimination against women in law and practice. Find all references here: [www.idsn.org/UNcompilation](http://www.idsn.org/UNcompilation)
- 10 A/HRC/19/55/Add.1 paras. 110-116
- 11 Statement by India's delegation in the interactive dialogue with the SR on human rights defenders, 19th HRC session, 5 March 2012
- 12 See IDSN news piece from HRC19 side event on Dalit human rights defenders, held on 9th March 2012: <http://idsn.org/newsresources/idsn-news/read/article/dalit-human-rights-defenders-need-urgent-protection-says-un-expert-at-un-side-event/128/>
- 13 Press statement "India: Concern expressed about extrajudicial killings" following country visit to India, 19-30 March 2012
- 14 A/HRC/21/42, para. 20 and 32.
- 15 See press release "UN experts call for end to caste-based stigma and slavery" issued after the side event (13 September 2012): <http://idsn.org/news-resources/idsn-news/read/article/un-experts-call-for-end-to-caste-based-stigma-and-slavery/128/>
- 16 Link to interview: <http://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/unifeed/2012/09/geneva-right-to-water/>
- 17 Download CCPR Yemen alternative report: [http://idsn.org/fileadmin/user\\_folder/pdf/New\\_files/UN/TB/HRC-104\\_Yemen\\_AlternativeReport\\_01.pdf](http://idsn.org/fileadmin/user_folder/pdf/New_files/UN/TB/HRC-104_Yemen_AlternativeReport_01.pdf)
- 18 CCPR Concluding Observations, Yemen 2012 (CCPR/C/YEM/CO/5), para. 12
- 19 Download CERD Senegal alternative report: <http://bit.ly/Y9sJjc>
- 20 CERD Senegal 2012 - Concluding Observations (CERD/C/SEN/CO/16-18. Para 13)
- 21 This includes the outcome document from the Dhaka MDG consultation <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/file/298794/download/324150> and the draft Report on the Global Thematic Consultation on Inequalities: <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/node/299198>
- 22 See the Appeal at [www.idsn.org/UNappeal](http://www.idsn.org/UNappeal)
- 23 See IDSN recommendations to the UN Network, presented at a session of the UN Minority Forum on 26 November 2012: <http://bit.ly/YcJgaN>
- 24 See IDSN news piece "IDSN urges UN to be caste-inclusive" of 10 December 2012 with link to video discussion: <http://idsn.org/news-resources/idsn-news/read/article/idsn-urges-un-to-be-caste-inclusive/128/>
- 25 See also the DSN section of this report
- 26 References: [www.idsn.org/EUAppeal2012](http://www.idsn.org/EUAppeal2012); <http://endcaste.com/MEP>; and a face-book page to like 'End Caste Discrimination'
- 27 Addressing caste discrimination in Humanitarian Response – Case study on India by NDW: <http://bit.ly/w230kB>
- 28 Link to resolution: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2012-512>
- 29 See this link: <http://idsn.org/international-advocacy/eu/the-european-parliament/caste-references-in-ep-resolutions/>
- 30 Link to DCI report: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/deve/publications.html#menuzone>
- 31 Link to IDSN webpage with MEP questions and replies: <http://idsn.org/international-advocacy/eu/the-european-parliament/ep-caste-qas/>
- 32 Links to IC Declaration and Report: [www.idsn.org/globalcall](http://www.idsn.org/globalcall) and [www.idsn.org/ICReport](http://www.idsn.org/ICReport)
- 33 Slavery on the High Street: <http://bit.ly/14CfHQJ>
- 34 More information on their work on business and human rights can be found on pages 32-34 of this report.
- 35 The report can be accessed here: <http://bit.ly/119iig2>
- 36 Watch this film on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBxy1R0jitM>
- 37 Watch these films – and the original one on [www.youtube.com/idsnvideo](http://www.youtube.com/idsnvideo)
- 38 Video Volunteers campaign against 'untouchability': <http://indiaunheard.videovolunteers.org/anti-untouchability/>
- 39 AHRC - The State of Human Rights in India 2012: <http://www.humanrights.asia/resources/hrreport/2012/ahrc-spr-005-2012.pdf/view>
- 40 Read more here: <http://idsn.org/caste-discrimination/key-issues/dalit-women/india/the-haryana-rape-2012/> and <http://idsn.org/news-resources/idsn-news/read/article/mob-burns-hundreds-of-dalit-homes/128/>
- 41 Read more here: <http://www.humanrights.asia/news/ahrc-news/AHRC-STM-248-2012>
- 42 Read more on [www.annihilatecaste.org](http://www.annihilatecaste.org)
- 43 Read more on [www.mailamukti.org](http://www.mailamukti.org)
- 44 For a good background article, go to this link: <http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl2922/stories/20121116292203400.htm>
- 45 The report can be accessed here: <http://bit.ly/119iig2>
- 46 Read more on [www.videovolunteers.org](http://www.videovolunteers.org)
- 47 For more information, see [www.wgwr.org](http://www.wgwr.org)
- 48 Read more here: <http://www.humanrights.asia/news/ahrc-news/AHRC-STM-248-2012>
- 49 OPENING THE DOOR TO EQUALITY: Access to Justice for Dalits in Nepal (OHCHR, 2011): <http://bit.ly/YnG5Jp>
- 50 Link to article [http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news\\_details&news\\_id=41309](http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=41309)
- 51 Download UPR Bangladesh parallel report: [http://idsn.org/fileadmin/user\\_folder/pdf/New\\_files/UN/UPR/UPR16\\_submission\\_Dalitrighs\\_Bangladesh\\_2012-2013.pdf](http://idsn.org/fileadmin/user_folder/pdf/New_files/UN/UPR/UPR16_submission_Dalitrighs_Bangladesh_2012-2013.pdf)
- 52 Read this IDSN news piece: <http://idsn.org/news-resources/idsn-news/read/article/consultation-discusses-law-against-castediscrimination/128/>
- 53 Read more here: <http://idsn.org/news-resources/idsn-news/read/archive/2012/october/article/un-review-of-pakistan-urgentprotection-needed-for-minorities/128/>
- 54 The case studies can be found here: [http://idsn.org/fileadmin/user\\_folder/pdf/New\\_files/Pakistan/Dalit\\_women\\_in\\_Pakistan\\_-\\_case\\_studies\\_2012\\_01.pdf](http://idsn.org/fileadmin/user_folder/pdf/New_files/Pakistan/Dalit_women_in_Pakistan_-_case_studies_2012_01.pdf)
- 55 Read more on: <http://www.dalits.nl/q&motions.html>
- 56 Read more on this issue: [http://www.indianet.nl/sumangali\\_e.html](http://www.indianet.nl/sumangali_e.html)
- 57 Nous ne sommes pas intouchables: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEvzXtvFK1I>
- 58 Report from the hearing: <http://dalit.dk/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/IDSN-Hearing-Report-FINAL.pdf>
- 59 See the film on youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wB34fh1OYng>
- 60 Click on this link to watch the full seminar: <http://embed.bambuser.com/broadcast/3138702?autoplay=1>
- 61 Ruth Manorama's speech: <http://tedxsodravagen.se/ruth-manorama-if-i-were-fm/>
- 62 See also the Executive Summary

## Abbreviations

<b>AHRC</b>	Asian Human Rights Commission	<b>FCRA</b>	Foreign Contribution Regulations Act (India)
<b>AIDMAM</b>	All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch (Dalit women's platform)	<b>FEDO</b>	Feminist Dalit Organization (Nepal)
<b>APPG</b>	All Party Parliamentary Group for Dalits (UK)	<b>FIAN</b>	FoodFirst Information and Action Network
<b>BDERM</b>	Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement	<b>HRC</b>	(UN) Human Rights Council
<b>BDEWF</b>	Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Women's Federation	<b>HRW</b>	Human Rights Watch
<b>CA</b>	Constituent Assembly (Nepal)	<b>ICCO</b>	Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation
<b>CCFD</b>	Development NGO of the French Catholic Church	<b>IDSN</b>	International Dalit Solidarity Network
<b>CEDAW</b>	(UN) Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women	<b>IMADR</b>	International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism
<b>CERD</b>	(UN) Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	<b>MEP</b>	(EU) Member of European Parliament
<b>COHOM</b>	(EU) Working Party on Human Rights	<b>NCDHR</b>	National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (India)
<b>CPH:DOX</b>	Copenhagen International Documentary Festival	<b>NDC</b>	National Dalit Commission (Nepal)
<b>CSR</b>	Corporate Social Responsibility	<b>NFDW</b>	National Federation of Dalit Women
<b>DANIDA</b>	Danish International Development Agency	<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>DCI</b>	(EU) Development Cooperation Instrument	<b>NHRC</b>	National Human Rights Commission
<b>DEVE</b>	(EP) Committee on Development	<b>NHRI</b>	National Human Rights Institution
<b>DIEH</b>	Danish Ethical Trading Initiative	<b>NNDSWO</b>	Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization
<b>DNF</b>	Dalit NGO Federation (Nepal)	<b>OHCHR</b>	(UN) Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>DNN</b>	Dalit Network Netherlands	<b>PDSN</b>	Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network
<b>DSN</b>	Dalit Solidarity Network	<b>PILER</b>	Pakistan Institute of Labour Research
<b>DSN-DK</b>	Dalit Solidarity Network Denmark	<b>PoA</b>	Act Prevention of Atrocities Act
<b>DSN-FI</b>	Dalit Solidarity Network Finland	<b>RADDHO</b>	African Assembly for the Defence of Human Rights
<b>DSN-Norway</b>	Dalit Solidarity Network Norway	<b>SCRM</b>	Scheduled Caste Rights Movement (Pakistan)
<b>DSN-S</b>	Dalit Solidarity Network Sweden	<b>SC/ST</b>	Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes
<b>DSN-UK</b>	Dalit Solidarity Network UK	<b>SDB</b>	Solidarité Dalits Belgique
<b>EC</b>	European Commission	<b>TED-X</b>	Events designed to stimulate dialogue
<b>ECOSOC</b>	(UN) Economic and Social Council	<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>EEAS</b>	(EU) European External Action Service	<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>EG</b>	Executive Group	<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>EIDHR</b>	European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights	<b>UPR</b>	(UN) Universal Periodic Review
<b>EP</b>	(EU) European Parliament	<b>VCDS</b>	Friends of Village Community Development Society
<b>ETI</b>	Ethical Trading Initiative	<b>VP/HR</b>	Vice President/High Representative
<b>EU</b>	European Union	<b>WGHR</b>	Working Group on Human Rights in India and the UN



### International Dalit Solidarity Network

Fælledvej 12, 3rd floor  
DK – 2200 Copenhagen N  
Denmark  
Phone +45 60 43 34 32  
[info@idsn.org](mailto:info@idsn.org)  
[www.idsn.org](http://www.idsn.org)

### IDSN members

#### National platforms:

- The National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights – India
- The Dalit NGO Federation – Nepal
- Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement
- Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network

#### Dalit Solidarity Networks:

- The Dalit Solidarity Network – UK
- The Dalit Solidarity Platform – Germany
- The Dalit Network – Netherlands
- The Dalit Solidarity Network – Denmark
- The Dalit Solidarity Network – Sweden
- The Dalit Solidarity Network – Belgium
- The Dalit Solidarity Network – Finland
- The Dalit Solidarity Network - Norway

#### IDSN associates

##### Associated organisations:

- Feminist Dalit Organisation – Nepal
- National Federation of Dalit Women – India
- National Conference of Dalit Organisations – India
- Navsarjan Trust – India
- People’s Watch – India

#### International associates:

- Human Rights Watch
- The International Movement Against all Forms of Discrimination and Racism
- Anti-Slavery International
- The Minority Rights Group International
- The Asian Human Rights Commission
- The Robert F. Kennedy Foundation
- ICMICA/Pax Romana
- FORUM-ASIA
- The Lutheran World Federation
- The World Council of Churches
- The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative
- Asian Centre for Human Rights
- Franciscans International

#### Research associates:

- Center for Human Rights and Global Justice – USA
- International Centre for Ethnic Studies – Sri Lanka

Keep track of IDSN on facebook: [International Dalit Solidarity Network \(IDSN\)](https://www.facebook.com/idsn)

Support the Dalit struggle on facebook:: [End Caste Discrimination](#)

You can register to receive the monthly IDSN newsletter on [www.idsn.org](http://www.idsn.org)

Stay updated with IDSN's twitter feed on [twitter.com/idsnupdates](https://twitter.com/idsnupdates)

View a selection of videos on caste discrimination on [youtube.com/idsnvideo](https://youtube.com/idsnvideo)



[www.idsn.org](http://www.idsn.org) is a unique source of information for global news, resources and background on caste discrimination.

**IDSN** was founded in March 2000 to advocate for Dalit human rights and to raise awareness of Dalit issues nationally and internationally. IDSN is a network of international human rights groups, development agencies, national Dalit solidarity networks from Europe, and national platforms in caste-affected countries.

The network has had a significant impact on the internationalisation of caste discrimination as a critical human rights issue. Through engagement with UN, EU and other multilateral institutions, IDSN has successfully lobbied for action-oriented approaches to address 'untouchability' and other human rights abuses against Dalits and similar communities that suffer discrimination on the basis of work and descent.

IDSN bases its work on contributions from members and associates. Joint interventions in the United Nations and the

EU constitute a major part of IDSN's activities. The network produces crucial input in the form of documentation, strategic interventions and lobby action and also supports national level lobbying. Interaction between members adds to the dynamics of the network.

The Copenhagen-based secretariat coordinates lobby and advocacy activities in close cooperation with members, associates and alliance partners. IDSN was formally registered as an organisation in October 2003. In 2012, the Secretariat was staffed by five staff members: Coordinator Rikke Nöhrlind, Programme Officer Maia Ingvardson, UN Programme Officer Gitte Dyrhagen, Communications Officer Maria Brink Schleimann and part-time bookkeeper Ole Westergaard. Kim Wiesener has covered for Ms Schleimann since July 2012 due to her maternity leave.