



International Dalit Solidarity Network

WORKING GLOBALLY AGAINST DISCRIMINATION BASED ON WORK AND DESCENT

IDSN May Newsletter 2009

International News

Durban Review Conference

[Global Church Organizations regret exclusion of "hundreds of millions" affected by caste-based discrimination from the UN racism conference outcome document.](#) 27 April 2009

[Human rights violations against 170 million people is not an "internal issue" \(Press Release\):](#) In statements at the UN Racism Conference yesterday states and NGOs put caste discrimination on the agenda, while India objected. 24 April 2009

[UN Racism Conference fails to address caste-based discrimination affecting 260 million people \(Press Release\):](#) Those, for whom the Racism Conference should have been a platform for dialogue, are being relegated to the margins in the final outcome document. 22 April 2009

[Durban Review Conference: Break the UN silence on caste discrimination:](#) 260 million people worldwide suffer from caste discrimination and are being silenced by the Durban Review Conference. 16 April 2009

Other international news

[Human Rights Council adopts decision to publish completed Sub-Commission studies:](#) At its 10th session in March 2009, the Human Rights Council decided to publish the completed Sub-Commission reports, which means that the finalized reports on discrimination based on work and descent may finally be issued. 16 April 2009

[Conference on justice for dalits calls for international action:](#) Church leaders and human rights advocates seek to further internationalize the struggle to overcome caste-based discrimination, which affects hundreds of millions of people worldwide. 3 April 2009

[European Parliament: Ensure that Dalits benefit from EU-India Free Trade Agreement](#) (Press Release): In a report on the EU-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) the European Parliament (EP) calls on the European Council and Commission to work together with the Indian Government to move towards ending caste based discrimination. 27 March 2009

[India must show leadership in combating caste-based discrimination, says UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) (Press Release): During her first official visits to Nepal and India from 18-24 March, the High Commissioner for Human Rights delivered two historic speeches urging the Government of India to show global leadership in the fight against caste-based discrimination. 26 March 2009

Main National News

India:

Election monitoring: Indian Elections are underway and the National Dalit Election Watch, an NCDHR initiative, is monitoring and reporting on incidents of violence, intimidation and fraud involving Dalits, at the polling stations. Their website www.dalitvotes.in is constantly updated on the developments.

Prize awarded to founder of sanitation movement: This year's Stockholm Water Prize has been awarded to the Indian founder of a nation-wide sanitation movement which has benefited millions of people in India and other countries. Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak's work is being described as a shining example of how one can effectively fight appalling sanitation conditions faced by the poor. www.siwi.org/stockholmwaterprize

Pakistan

Official launch of the Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network (PDSN): IDSN is very pleased to see the official launch of PDSN and look forward to continuing our work with them. [Read a full news article about the launch here.](#)

Discrimination against scheduled castes reduced: In an [article in the news](#) it is highlighted that discrimination against scheduled castes has been reduced, particularly in the cities. Pakistan's first Dalit Senator, Dr Khatumal Jeewan, however comments that the problem is still large in rural areas. Read a full [profile of the senator here.](#)

Bangladesh

Stop Dalit evictions: There has been a call to stop the evictions of Dalits from housing in Bangladesh, organized by Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM), Bangladesh Dalit Human Rights (BDHR) and the Dalit Women's Forum. Supporters formed a human chain and protested the unlawful eviction of Dalits from their land and their homes. There was national press coverage of the event – see for example [this article](#). BDERM and BDHR furthermore demanded budgetary allocations for Dalits' housing at a seminar on the issue. See [this article](#) (scroll down on the page), for more information.

Call to formulate law to end caste discrimination in Bangladesh: There were discussions in Bangladesh on the International Day for the Elimination of Racism to formulate a law to end discrimination against Dalits. Read the article about the discussions [here.](#)

Nepal

It was recently officially announced that at least one Dalit minister will be appointed in Nepal.

Jagaran Media Centre in Nepal has launched an [online soap opera](#) revolving around the problems associated with caste-discrimination.

Events/ Deadlines coming up

Reminder: International Seminar on “Comparative Contexts of Discrimination, Social Exclusion and Equal Opportunity Policies in Asia” will be held on the 6th – 8th of May at Gulmohar Hall, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, where academics, civil society groups and policy actors from selected countries in Asia will participate. The seminar will cover nine research studies which have been recently undertaken by the Indian Institute of Dalit Studies (IIDS) on the changing nature and forms of discrimination in the Asian region. The studies covered nine countries in Asia including Caste-based discrimination in South Asia. Papers are invited from other countries in Asia as well as in Europe, USA and Latin America. [Read more about the studies in the concept note.](#) Check the [IIDS webpage](#) for more information. [Download the recently released programme here.](#)

Asian College of Journalism (ACJ) scholarships for Dalit/Adivasi students - In 2006, Navayana had lobbied with Asian College of Journalism, Chennai, for the intake of Dalit students. Since then ACJ has institutionalised four scholarships for Dalit/Adivasi students. ACJ offers full scholarships for up to 4 Dalit students in the Class of 2010. The scholarships cover tuition fees, accommodation expenses and a living allowance per month. The **course design** and **application form** are available online at www.asianmedia.org.in (OR) www.asianmedia.org or at the Office of the Registrar, Asian College of Journalism, 124 Wallajah Road, Chennai-600 002, India. **Telephone:** +91-44-28418254/55, 28526227, 28526249

Studies and reports

****We are working on updating and expanding our publications section on the website to include the many valuable reports on caste discrimination and Dalits that we receive links to and PDFs of. As soon as this is up and running we will let everyone know. In the meantime there is a summary below of some of the new reports and initiatives we have received news of within this past month.****

New journal being launch: The International Journal of Dalit Studies. Two new publications with a focus on the study of Dalits will appear in the next month. Please note that scholars with relevant interests are invited submit articles, as well as to send introductions regarding their research and teaching interests to the journal (and postal addresses). Note also that there are explicit interests in issues of caste, caste-like social formations, Dalits and tribals throughout the world. Please write to mprana1@rediffmail.com for more information.

[New report on Caste Discrimination and UK law](#) by Annapurna Waughray is available as a PDF

[Recent case study on the cobbler community in Dhaka City](#) – Bangladesh, is available as a PDF

International Media & Press Clippings:

Caste discrimination and the Durban Review Conference: The issue of caste discrimination in relation to the Durban Review Conference was widely covered by the International and French media. [Get a full overview of the main media coverage here.](#)

Outlook India 's business magazine did a cover story on caste discrimination and diversity in business highlighting the issue in a 16 page feature. [Download a PDF](#) here or [read the magazine online here.](#) Among

other things the article points out that, “The goal of a casteless society can perhaps be achieved only by highlighting caste and other differences during the journey.”

The Guardian also recently brought a full article on Dalit girls waitressing in Mysore: Read the [article here](#)

Al- Jazeera highlighted caste discrimination in relation to the Indian elections in [this article](#).

Manjula Pradeep (Executive Director of [Navsarjan](#)), was recently interviewed by the New York based Asia Pacific Forum Radio on the Patan gang rape case, where a young dalit woman attending Patan PTC College in Gujarat was raped 14 times by six male professors. Manjula gave a thorough and in depth account of the case and explained the problem of caste based discrimination on a wider scale in India, and the lack of action taken by the Indian Government. [The full interview can be downloaded as an MP3 here](#).

US News brought an article about how Google maps have stumbled upon the caste issue in Japan by publishing old Japanese maps online. [Read the full article here](#)

Hindustan Times and OneWorld.net both ran articles on a new report by Jansahas and Unicef on how caste discrimination is rampant in Madhya Pradesh schools. See the [Hindustan Times article here](#) and the [oneworld.net article here](#). Hindustan Times also ran another article based on the same report on how [pregnant Dalit women are being refused treatment by government health workers](#).