



Dalit Solidarity Network UK

FOUL PLAY



End Manual Scavenging by the 2010 Delhi Commonwealth Games

NO CASTE DISCRIMINATION AT THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES

Caste Discrimination is one of the biggest human rights abuses existing today. It is India's 'Hidden Apartheid' that even the Indian PM Manmohan Singh has described as 'a blot on humanity'. But the practice of untouchability and caste discrimination persists. Millions of Dalits worldwide still face discrimination in both the social and public arenas. Caste discrimination is a major cause of poverty and affects deeply the human rights and life chances of the so-called lower castes.

More than 270 million people worldwide continue to experience discrimination based on their caste and practices linked to untouchability. Communities severely affected are the Dalits (*formerly 'untouchables'*) of South Asia, as well as an estimated 3 million Burakumin in Japan and 'caste people' in West Africa. The majority of Dalits in South Asia live in chronic poverty and are deprived or excluded from adequate housing, health care, education, employment, sanitation, transport and from entering public spaces or places of worship. Dalit communities experience daily insecurity, uncertainty and violence, usually with no recourse to justice.

Manual Scavenging

It is estimated that around 1.3 million Dalits in India, mostly women, make their living through manual scavenging - a term used to describe the job of removing human excrement from dry toilets and sewers using basic tools such as thin boards, buckets and baskets, lined with sacking, carried on the head. Manual scavengers earn as little as 7p per day. Though this vile and inhumane practice was abolished by law in India in 1993 the practice is deeply entrenched in South Asian societies.

Numerous pieces of legislation exist to protect and promote the rights of Dalits and workers. However these Acts are largely ignored, even by local authorities who employ thousands of Dalits as manual scavengers.

Manual scavenging is one of the most extreme forms of caste discrimination and its complicity in its continued practice is an international human rights scandal.

The British created official posts for manual scavengers. All institutions – army, railway, courts, industries and major towns were equipped with dry toilets instead of water borne sewerage...this is not to say the British invented manual scavenging, rather they intervened to institutionalise it.

-India Stinking, Gita Ramaswamy, Navayana 2005





Dalit Solidarity Network UK

The Campaign



Dalits face violence and intimidation when protesting or speaking out against the lack of policy implementation and the violation of their rights. Despite this threat an organisation has been set up by manual scavengers in India called Safai Karmachari Andolan 'The Liberation Movement of those employed as scavengers'. They have launched an international campaign to demand an end to this practice by the Commonwealth Games, in Delhi October 2010.

HUMANITY, EQUALITY, DESTINY

The three core values of the Commonwealth Games movement are **Humanity, Equality and Destiny** (www.thecgf.com). These values are denied to India's 1.3 million manual scavengers. DSN is demanding the following before these games take place:

Humanity

Decent Work is a Human Right: Manual Scavenging is one of the most extreme forms of caste discrimination and the states complicity in its continued practice is an unacceptable human rights scandal.

Keep the Promise: The Indian Government and state authorities must fulfil their own target to eliminate scavenging by 2009/10 and to fully rehabilitate manual scavengers.

Equality

Caste Discrimination must be eliminated: Millions of Dalits still suffer caste discrimination in every aspect of their daily lives. This continued discrimination is the greatest threat to achieving the UN's Millennium Development Goals in India.

This is not our 'Destiny'!

For millions of Dalits Destiny means a life of discrimination, exploitation and inescapable poverty in occupations such as manual scavenging.

Support Rehabilitation: The UK Government must step up efforts to eradicate the practice of scavenging and support rehabilitation policies and programmes for alternative livelihood and sustenance.

To find out more about Foul Play and how you can play a part in ending this human rights scandal see DSN's website for regular updates.

www.dsnu.org

Director: Meena Varma, Thomas Clarkson House, The Stableyard, Broomgrove Rd, London SW9 9TL
Tel: +44 (0)20 7501 8323, Fax: +44 (0) 7738 4110, email: meena.v@dsnu.org
Registered charity number 1107022



Dalit Solidarity Network UK

Recommendations



Eradicate Caste Discrimination: Until this is achieved Dalits will continue to experience discrimination and degradation in their employment and their wider lives.

- **The UK government** should express its concern on this issue and the lack of progress on legislation intended to eradicate this practice.
- **The UK Government's** Department for International Development should use its programmes and funding in India to actively support the implementation of eradication and rehabilitation programmes to end this human rights violation.
- **The Indian Government** should immediately release the Rs800 crores set aside for the liberation, rehabilitation and re-education of Manual Scavengers and continue funding until rehabilitation is complete.
- **The Indian Government** should undertake an extensive evaluation into how money already released for the rehabilitation of manual scavengers has been spent.
- **The Indian Government** should ensure all Districts construct safe forms of sanitation to replace dry latrines.
- **Free health and Sanitation Programmes** should be provided to protect and care for former Manual Scavengers whose health has been adversely affected by their occupation.
- **International institutions, governments, humanitarian organisations, labour organisations and companies** must acknowledge manual scavenging and the massive human rights abuse which it represents. Stepping up efforts to eradicate its practice should go hand in hand with a commitment to support rehabilitation and training programmes for alternative livelihood and sustenance providing **a living wage for decent work.**
- **In the lead up to the Commonwealth Games 2010** affirmative action programmes for Dalits should be introduced to ensure that employment created by the games is equally accessible to Dalits.
- **Before these games** take place under the banner of 'Equality, Humanity, Destiny' the Commonwealth Games Federation should recognise in its constitution caste as a cause of discrimination, and a barrier to the realisation of these principles for Dalits. The federation should take all possible steps to challenge caste discrimination within the games and beyond.
- **All of these measures should be time bound to ensure action and accountability.**

Decent Work is a Human Right: Put an end to Manual Scavenging by 2010.



Dalit Solidarity Network UK

About Us



About Dalit Solidarity Network UK

The UK Dalit Solidarity Network (DSN) is part of an international network campaigning for recognition of caste discrimination and action for its eradication. DSN lobbies, campaigns and educates about caste discrimination and how people can take action to end one of the greatest human rights abuses in the world today.

DSNUK aims to change values and practices through policy changes worldwide. We are working towards equality and social justice for Dalits both in the UK and other caste affected countries. We are a small pioneering headquarters organisation in the UK, working jointly with other like-minded groups, building strategic alliances to maximise advocacy opportunities and build a stronger network of organisations raising the issue of caste discrimination both in the UK and in caste affected countries.

DSN can offer a selection of educational and campaign materials on caste discrimination to individuals, groups, unions, INGOs with significant presences in caste affected countries, and the corporate sector. This includes a caste discrimination training programme in which DSN hopes to raise awareness and give practical advice on caste discrimination and how to combat it. Please contact the office for more information.

About SKA

Safai Karmachari Andolan (SKA) is a national movement committed to the eradication of manual scavenging and the liberation and rehabilitation of all such safai karmacharis (manual scavengers) into dignified occupations. SKA's major focus is to organise and mobilise the safai karmachari community around the issues of dignity and rights, accompanied by strategic advocacy and legal interventions.

Whilst focussing primarily on the rights of persons engaged in manual scavenging, SKA is also committed to working with all those engaged in 'unclean' occupations, such as pit or septic tank workers, sewage workers and sweepers, who fall within the ambit of 'safai karmacharis'.

SKA is one of the first organisations to organise women from the safai karmachari community to assert their right to a life with dignity. SKA works in close collaboration with other Dalit and human rights organisations committed to the rights of socially excluded communities.

For more information see the website: <http://safaikarmachariandolan.org/index.asp>

Join the Network

Fill in the membership form on line at www.dsnu.org and hit the 'join now' button!

Director: Meena Varma, Thomas Clarkson House, The Stableyard, Broomgrove Rd, London SW9 9TL
Tel: +44 (0)20 7501 8323, Fax: +44 (0) 7738 4110, email: meena.v@dsnu.org
Registered charity number 1107022

NO CASTE DISCRIMINATION AT THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES