

A series of events held highlighting the situation of Dalits in India

The National Confederation of Dalit Adivasi Organisations (NACDAOR) in collaboration with various partners has organized a series of marches in October and December to highlight atrocities against Dalits, violence against Dalit women, the rights of Dalit children and the impact of climate change respectively.

An all India convention of Dalit and Adivasi organizations as well as an event on Empowering Women and Girls, were held in New Delhi, Climate marches were held in Bihar, in Haryana Dalit children observed the Universal Childrens Day to highlight the rights of the child, in Bihar Dalit women marched to end caste and gender violence and in Haryana a Dalit dignity march to fight atrocities was launched.

More information on the marches is available in the below email communications from NACDOR.

12th ALL INDIA CONVENTION OF DALIT ADIVASI ORGANIZATIONS

Date: 4th-5th December 2015

Venue: Mavalankar Hall, Rafi Marg, New Delhi

“Strengthening the Stake of Socially Excluded: For Transforming India & Achieving Sustainable Development Goals”

National Confederation of Dalit Adivasi Organisations (NACDAOR), the national platform of over 2200 social organisations spread across India, organised the 12th All India Convention of Dalit Adivasi Organisations on **“Transforming India and Achieving SDGs: Strengthening the stake of Socially Excluded” on 4 – 5 December, 2015 at Mavalankar Hall, Rafi Marg, New Delhi**. More than 1000 participants comprising of leaders of Socially Excluded Communities, academicians, CSOs, NGOs from more than 25 states participated in this annual Convention. The convention deliberated upon different development issues and strategies concerning the socially excluded communities in India, especially in the context of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the called to the union government to “Transform India”.

The convention was divided into eight thematic sessions namely Poverty, Nutrition, Education, Land Rights, Gender, Corporate Commitments, Peace & Justice and Climate Change. NACDAOR engaged academia, government, corporate, civil society organizations and grass root Dalit and Adivasi leaders to strengthen the voices of excluded. The followings are the objectives of the convention.

- Articulation of the concerns of Dalits and Adivasis across India and their presentation to Government of India and development support agencies.
- Strengthening the networking and alliance building of organizations working for Dalits and Adivasis.
- Highlighting the role and contribution of Dalit and Adivasi Organizations in bridging the divide.

- Strategizing for monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals to track the progress of Dalits and Adivasis in India

The convention brought together numerous organizations and their unheard concerns, voices and requisites under one umbrella to strengthen the stake of socially excluded communities in Transforming India and Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Mr. **Ashok Bharti, Chairman of NACDAOR** welcomed the delegates and presented the inaugural address. Representatives of supporting organizations like Mr. Tarun Vij, Country Manager of GAIN, Mr. Rajiv Tondon, Deputy Country Director, ACF, Mr. Amitava Mukherjee, Senior Adviser, NRLM, Govt. of India, Mr. Anand Kumar, Director of PACS, Mr. Avinash Kumar, Director, Programmes and Policy, Water Aid, Mr. Ambrish Rai, National Convener, Right to Education Forum, Mr. Tanveer Kazi, Regional Manager, Action Aid, Mr. Gagan Sethi, Managing Trustee, ECONET and Mr. Soumya Mohanty, Head of Programs, Church of North India, SBSS shared their views and recommendation for addressing Dalits and Adivasi issues in India.

Media representatives like Dr. Meena Sharma (Associate Editor, Gender and Social Affairs, Focus News), Mr. Mukti Turkey, Editor of Dalit – Adivasi Duniya and Mr. Vinod Agnihotri, consulting editor of (Amar Ujala) presented media strategies for addressing social exclusion within the framework of SDGs. Political leaders like Shri K.C. Tyagi, MP, Rajya Sabha, and Mr. D. Raja, MP, Rajya Sabha and Mr. Ramdas Athawale, MP Rajya Sabha emphasized on motivating political wills for eradicating poverty and ensuring dignity to Dalits and Adivasis.

Representatives of Youth Dignity forum, Ms. Tapa Das from North East and Council for Renovation of Western Odisha Schedule Caste Literature and Art presented cultural program to energize the participants. The charter of demand was released by the Shri Prakash Ambedkar, grand-son of Dr B.R Ambedkar. The demand captures all the issue discussed in the convention. Following are the outcomes of the convention:

- Issues and strategies for the rights and development of Dalits and Adivasis articulated in the current developmental processes.
- A stronger voice of Dalit Adivasi organizations, against the new series of violence against the excluded communities, emerged which would be effective in activating the government machinery.
- A collective channel of communication between the common platforms of Dalit Adivasi organisations and the Government and the Development Support Agencies on policy issues improved. Alliance building among Dalit Adivasi organizations strengthened.
- Dalit Adivasi organizations better equipped to address the new framework of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Gol's push on 'Transforming India'.

We are attaching some photos of the 12th All India Convention for your views.

Climate Marches in Bihar demanding to take concrete steps to reduce the menace of climate change on Dalits and to adopt Climate Sensitive Planning in Development

National Confederation of Dalit Adivasi Organisations (NACDAOR) in partnership with Akhil Bharatiya MGNREGA Majdur Union (ABMMU) is organising Climate March in Bihar State on 29th November on the eve of the Climate Summit taking place in Paris. Through Climate March/ Public Actions, thousand of Dalits and member of other marginalised communities would ask the policy makers for taking concrete steps for reducing the menace of climate change on human society. It would sensitise decision makers for eliminating development deficits across the communities and help to build a bigger and broader movement demanding decisive and ambitious action to tackle the root causes of climate change.

NACDAOR's State Representative Mr Ganesh Gautam would be coordinating the mobilisation in more than 10 districts of Bihar.

S.no	District	Coordinator of COP 21 Mobilization in Bihar
1	Om Prakash	Katihar
2	Akhilshwar Prasad	Patna
3	Devendra Das	Araria
4	Lalendra Kumar	Jehanabad
5	Balram Das	Nalanda
6	Jaimani Kumari	Gaya
7	Khushilal Ram	Kishanganj
8	Saraswati Devi	Bhojpur
9	Shashibhushan	Nawada
10	Rajendra Sada	Madhubani

Bihar is one of the worst flood affected states in India and every year hundreds of people lose their lives and become homeless due to massive flood. Bihar is sharply divided between rich and poor. Of course, it is the poor and Dalits who suffer the most when flood strikes the state.

In this backdrop, the Dalits and Maha Dalit communities demanded government initiating action to build the local resilience to reduce the loss of life and property against flood through Village Disaster Preparedness Committees in flood affected district in Bihar. They also demand Government of Bihar to adopt Climate Friendly and Climate Sensitive planning and avoid dominant development model which cause destruction and damage to climate.

Dalit Women March in Patna City of Bihar to End Caste and Gender Based Violence against Women

16 Days Activism against Gender- Based Violence Campaign

November 25 - December 10

Organized by

Rastriya Dalit Mahila Andolan (RDMA) and National Confederation of Dalit Adivasi Organizations (NACDAOR) in Partnership with Maitri Network

Rastriya Dalit Mahila Andolan (RDMA) women unit of NACDAOR launched the 16 Days Activism against Gender- Based Violence Campaign on 25th November in Bihar to spread massive awareness in society to end violence against Dalit and Adivasi women in Bihar. Hundred of women from Katihar, Kishanganj, Araria districts marched in Patna shouting slogan against the gender based violence in Bihar. The march was started from BMP road and went to Ashianamore by shouting slogans and holding placards & posters .Similar campaign are being organised in Jehanabad, Gaya and Bhojpur district from 25th November to 30th November 2015 to create massive awareness on women and girls rights and their dignity.

The year 2015 marks the 24th year of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign, initiated in 1991 and coordinated by the Center for Women's Global Leadership. RDMA as part of Maitri Network has been leading this campaign in North India to draw the attention of policymakers, governments, UN agencies and countless individuals across India and called for the implementation of human rights obligations, including the right to health and reproductive rights, and end to militarism and gender-based violence, among others. This year, the 16 Days Campaign is focusing specifically on patriarchal system of discrimination and inequality based on relationships to power.

In Patna the campaign was led by Ms Shweta Guria, Convenor of Adivasi Adhikar Andolan. In this occasion, she informed that said that women should come out of their home and should not feel shackled. She highlighted that Violence against women and girls is a grave violation of human rights. Its impact ranges from immediate to long-term multiple physical, sexual and mental consequences for women and girls, including death. It negatively affects women's general well-being and prevents

women from fully participating in society. She also demanded government for providing security and protection to women.

Many important dignitaries, social activists, women right activists, leaders from Bihar participated in this Foot March. NACDAOR/ RDMA's posters and pamphlets women rights were also distributed to participants for awareness and education. Finally, a memorandum of demand was also submitted to government officials.

This programme was coordinated by Mr. Ganesh Gautam (Programme Manager Bihar), Rajesh Kumar, Program Coordinator, Bihar

NACDAOR-Haryana Unit Meets in Delhi for Taking Stock of Dalit Atrocities in Haryana

Launching Dalit Dignity March in Haryana in December

National Confederation of Dalit Adivasi Organisations (NACDAOR) has organised a day-long meeting in its secretariat Delhi on 7th November 2015 to take stock of increasing atrocities and violence against Dalits and women in Haryana. This stocktaking was done by NACDOR's Chairman; Shri Ashok Bharti who personally interacted with each leader and sought their views on how a protected environment can be developed in Haryana by challenging the existing the repressive and caste dominated socio-economic structure. More than 20 leaders (both male and female) from 21 districts of Haryana participated in this stocktaking exercise and shared on how the Dalits are subjected to multiple forms of violence in their daily lives while attempting to live with dignity. The leaders in stocktaking meeting expressed their deep concern over the deep silence of the Dalit Parliamentarians on raising atrocities and violence. In this context, the NACDAOR-Haryana Unit decided to launch a state wide Dalit Dignity March from the second week of December 2015 and cover 21 districts in Haryana. The Leaders of the Dignity march committed to reach all the Dalits and Muslims households in all most all districts in Haryana in an intense way to educate them on their rights and constitutional values.

The *March* aims at to highlight the ongoing violence and atrocities against Dalits particularly Dalit women and demand speedy action on the violence cases. It also intends to create awareness on the existing legal mechanism that address the violence and sensitise both the duty holder and bearers on their role and responsibilities so that they become accountable. The *March* would also travel through 21 districts of Haryana and meet the victims of violence and atrocities and create a state wide environment for the rights of the socially excluded community. It will mobilize victims of violence and

state sponsored atrocities and inform them about the current laws, rules and provision for ensuring justice in the state.

It was opined by the most of leaders from Haryana that in recent months since the new government came into power, the atrocities against Dalits have increased in the state. The polity and lifestyle of Dalits have been affected by anti-Dalit policies adopted by the state government. The Government is determined to inject *Manuism* in its governance system and policies by perpetuating a system that forbids the Dalits and minorities from enjoying their fundamental rights. Therefore, it is inevitable reach out Dalits and stand with them in this juncture and educate them on Dr. B.R Ambedkar ideology and philosophy. The Dignity March will be followed up by intense local activities like meetings, discussions and building public opinion against the violence and discrimination. The March Dalit would instill confidence among the Dalits, who otherwise remain mute even when they face atrocities

Haryana is the 17th most populated state in India with a population of 25.6million forming 2% of total population in a spread of 44,000 sq kms making it the 20th largest state in the country.^[1] According to census of India 2011, the total population of Haryana is 25,351,462 (2.1 %). The total Dalit population in the state is 51, 13,615 (20.17 %) out of which 37, 20,109 are in rural areas and 13, 93, 506 are in urban areas. The Dalit population of Haryana is 2.5 % of that of the total Dalit/Adivasi population of India. The state comprises of 19 percent of the socially excluded scheduled caste communities, out of which 73 percent are in rural areas and 27 percent in urban areas. The state does not inhabit any Adivasi population. Furthermore, the state comprises of 22.5 percent Dalit children in the age group of 0-6 year's vis-à-vis 13 percent of the total state population of under 6 years children. Sources reveal that the health and nutritional status of these socially excluded children in the state is in a very poor condition. In spite of various state and national flagship programmes related to the eradication of malnutrition in the state, there is not much improvement of health situation of marginalized communities.

Haryana has been notorious for the increasing crimes against women and caste based violence in an extremely parochial society with extreme forms of inequity and oppression. The violence against Dalit women in Haryana is much more than general women and is increasing day by day in recent years. Sex ratio is an important social indicator to measure the extent of prevailing inequality between males and females of this society. And some of the important reasons for Haryana being one of those states where the sex ratio is lowest are neglect of girl child resulting in higher mortality at younger age, high maternal mortality, sex selective female abortions and female infanticide.

The economic development is not only unequal for different social sections but also the feudal social systems, culture and values are perpetuated for the benefit of the economically strong. It has resulted in the continuation of caste divisions, caste based oppression, violence against the Dalit communities, brutal murders of youth involved in inter-caste marriages and violation of women's rights, serious crisis in sex-ratio and trafficking of women. Though, some of Dalit families who have ownership on land other small sources of income able to gain knowledge have been able to resist such unequal treatment, but the landless and unemployed Dalit families have been often on the receiving end in the rural areas.

In this context, the Dalit Dignity March would travel all Districts of Haryana and demand immediate stop of Atrocities on Dalits in Haryana. During the Dignity March, NACDAOR would hold public meetings, discussions with Dalits led organisations, leaders, media persons and the local officials, encouraging them to get organized and urging the officials to be sensitive and accountable.

We are sending herewith a brief report of the culmination meeting of Dalit Women Dignity March which was held on 1st October 2015 in Haryana **Rastriya Dalit Mahila Andolan (RDMA)** which is a platform of Dalit women facilitated by NACDOR organised the historic *Yatra* (March) in Haryana.

It was launched on 20th September 2015 from Nehri village of Rai block and culminated on 1st October 2015 at Asawarpur village with presence of thousands of women from 40 villages of Rai block in Sonapat district. Through this March, village level issues of 40 villages were identified and presented to the government officials for actions. It reached out more than 1.50 lakhs people directly and indirectly within a period of 10 days through audio-visual and awareness activities. A brief report is attached for your reference.

Dalit Women Dignity March: Culmination Meeting Resolved to End Violence against Women in Haryana

In Haryana, heinous violence and discrimination against women are due to male privilege, conflicts over power and control within intimate relationships, poor interpersonal communication, and male dominance in a relationship or family setting, economic stress and unemployment and through this Mass awareness, we would change this situation by engaging with men and boys and work for changing their attitude and behaviour toward women.

In community life, Dalit women are the victim of eve-teasing, gender and caste based violence. They are paid less in comparison to their males' counterpart even when amount of work is higher, denial of participation neither in the decision making neither process nor at village or community level etc. Wherever Dalit women dare to behave assertively and claim their rights they are suppressed through atrocities and violence. Moreover, all the crimes committed against the Dalits are not registered by the law enforcement, mainly Police, due to fears of adverse reactions by offenders, as well as non-cooperation from the stakeholders of law enforcement and justice.

In this backdrop, **Rastriya Dalit Mahila Andolan (RDMA)** which is a platform of Dalit women facilitated by NACDOR organised undertook *Yatra* (March) in Haryana which was launched on 20th September 2015 from Nehri village of Rai block and culminated on 1st October 2015 at Asawarpur village with presence of thousands of women from 40 villages of Rai block in Sonapat district. Women Dignity March traveled through 40 villages in Rai block and organised awareness meetings, workshops and had interaction with communities and service providers.

The Women Dignity March was conducted by a team of 11 women volunteers led by Ms. Rajni Tilak, Convener of RDMA. The objective of the Yatra was to create awareness on Dalit women rights among people, political representatives, government officials and media. The March also **created awareness on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** which recently adopted in United Nation General Assembly by the world leaders from 193 member nations. It highlighted the burning development issues of Dalit women in Haryana to catch the attention of policy makers and leaders. Through this March, village level issues of 40 villages were identified and presented to the government officials for actions. It reached out more than 1.50 lakhs people directly and indirectly within a period of 10 days through audio-visual and awareness activities. Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials like posters, leaflets would be distributed during Yatra.

Mr Rajni Tilak, National Convenor of RDMA inaugurated the meeting by lightening the candle along with other dignitaries from Haryana. In her inaugural speech, she said that Haryana is witnessing rampant violence against women and young girls due to deep rooted patriarchy and male chauvinism. Mr Rajni Tilak also presented the issues indentified during the **March** and demanded that the government of Haryana should be prompt and take concrete steps to curb the ongoing violence against women.

Ms Pinki Panchal (Beti Bachao Beti Padhao) expressed her concern over the gender disparity and high exploitation of women in Haryana and demanded effective implementation of the scheme in Haryana.

Ms Sumedha Boudh, RDMA, Delhi state president said that women in Haryana are subjected to violence and discrimination and emphasized on girl's education. Sharing her experience from the Long March, she said that girls in Rai block have to travel a long distance for their education as the schools are far away from their home and on their way to schools; they face eve-teasing, harassment etc. She demanded for stringent implementation of POA act in the state.

Ms. Reena Panchal, famous woman football player from Slum Soccer India team emphasised on girl's education and said that education can liberate women from old age exploitation. **Ms. Puspalata, principal of government school** emphasized on women empowerment and called for spreading education in the area.

Ms Poonam Boudh, woman activist from Haryana who was part of the **Yatra** team shared her experience from the Yatra. She said that Dalit women in Haryana are landless and forced to work in the field owned by upper caste. She called for providing land to landless Dalits. **Ms Usha** another woman activist from Haryana highlighted the village level problems that the Dalit households are languishing in their daily lives and demanded for targeted intervention. Finally, a memorandum of demand was given to Government of Haryana through the local administration.

In this occasion, the woman volunteers from 40 villages of Rai block presented their problem in this mega meeting. This culmination meeting has brought together policy makers, academician, knowledge leaders, experts and officials from government departments to share their views on combating violence

against women in Haryana. It highlighted the voices and concerns of Dalit women who have subjected to violence and atrocities in their lives. This program brought Dalit women voices from the ground to highlight the challenges faced by them in accessing government service.

Children from Underprivileged Communities in Haryana Observe Children's Day in the Wake of Universal Children's Day 20th November

In the wake of Universal Children's Day 20th November, National Confederation of Dalit Adivasi Organisation in Partnership Action Aid celebrated Children Fair (*Bal Mela*) on 15th November in Pundri Block of Kaithal District and in Rai Block of Sonapat District of Haryana State to increase the awareness of people towards the rights, care and education of children of underprivileged communities. In this occasion, thousand of Dalit and Muslim children participated in Children Day Celebration to showcase their creativity and talents. During the Children Faire, children met in a fun and laughter-filled environment to produce the best results of their non-academic activities.

Bal Mela was an attempt to provide a platform for children to enhance social interaction, leadership, healthy recreation, self-discipline and self-confidence. At Bal Mela, we strived to conduct, organized and supported non-academic activities by promoting creativity of children. In the side-line of it, exhibition of Teaching Learning Materials were put for showcasing. Bal Mela was an occasion for the children to engage in fun and frolic irrespective of any discrimination based on socio-economic status. Children enjoyed a lot with peer groups with performance of different programs like dance, songs, music, quizzes etc.

The date 20 November marks the day on which the Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, in 1959, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in 1989. This Convention sets out a number of children's rights including the right to life, to health, to education and to play, as well as the right to family life, to be protected from violence, to not be discriminated, and to have their views heard. But it is matter of concern that Dalit Children in India are the victim of caste discrimination and atrocities. They are prone to multiple vulnerabilities like malnutrition, marriage at an early age, domestic labour and exploitation. Dalit and Muslim children are subjected to discrimination in the school in India. Parents / Guardians of the children do lack resources to make contribution towards the education of their children. In addition to this, children do lack the required scholastic materials and training materials. Majority of the children cannot access proper nutrition which leads to poor health.

In this context, NACDAOR in partnership with Action Aid is working for Children's rights. Dr Ambedkar Children Centres are being developed in 40 villages of Haryana to improving overall well being of Dalit Children and making them role model for other children, including those of non-Dalits. NACDAOR is striving to promote and celebrate children's right on the Universal Children's Day, and continuously working to build up a living-friendly environment for children in India through dialogues and actions.

Empowering Women and Girls: Focusing on the Multilayered Inequalities

5th December 2105, New Delhi

Organised

Rastriya Dalit Mahila Andolan (RDMA) in Partnership with NACDAOR

Rastriya Dalit Mahila Andolan (RDMA) women unit of NACDAOR organised session on “Empowering Women and Girls: Focusing on the Multilayered Inequalities” on 5th December 2015 in 12th All India Convention of Dalit Adivasi Organisations on “Transforming India and Achieving SDGs: Strengthening the stake of Socially Excluded” held on 4 – 5 December, 2015 at Mavalankar Hall, Rafi Marg, New Delhi. Many renowned women rights activists, academia, authors and grass root leaders participated in this convention. The objective of the session was to deliberate on how to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls which is part of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The sustainable development goals seek to change the course of the 21st century, addressing key challenges such as poverty, inequality, and violence against women.

Ms. Kamla Bhasin, SANGAT South Asian Feminist Network facilitating the session said that the Dalit and Adivasi leaders have been keeping the dreams of the struggle alive active. She urged the political parties either to give equal rights for women and Dalit and Adivasi or to accept and mention in the constitution that this couldn't be fulfilled in India. She talked about the linkages between the patriarchy, hinduvatva and discrimination & exploitation the Dalit women face in their daily lives. Ms. Kamla Bhasin also spoke about the ongoing global One Billion Rising and its importance in India for spreading awareness on women rights.

Ms. Lalita Kumaramangalam, Chairperson, National Commission for Women said that different approach and ideology is needed for Dalit and Adivasi women to raise their voice against discrimination and demand for the safety, security and identity with dignity. She spoke about the empowerment of women and representation at the village and district level. Ms. Nivedita Menon (JNU), professor of Centre for Comparative Politics & Political Theory School of International Studies emphasised on political empowerment of Dalit women and Ms. Kavita Krishnan from All India Progressive Women's Association (AIPWA) emphasised on changing the system and governance structure that subjugate and discriminate women. Ms. Rajni Tilak, national convener of RDMA expressed her concern on the growing atrocities against Dalit women in India and advised the participants to work at grass root level for the empowerment and emancipation of Dalits and Adivasi women

Prof. Vimal Thorat (National Convener, All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch) emphasised on empowerment of Dalit women where as Ms. Vasudha Ratawal (RDMA) stressed on changing the attitude of male towards women and said Dalit women are subjected to triple forms of discrimination being Dalit women, being poor and being women and she called for developing strategy for addressing

such discrimination. Ms Vasudha also suggested a host of indicators for measuring the progress to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls which is part of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

All these email bulletins have been authorised for upload and provided by:

Mr. Sukanta Chandra Behera
Program Manager (Program Development & Implementation)
National Confederation of Dalit Organisations (NACDOR)
M-3/22, Model Town-III, Delhi 110009 INDIA
Mobile no :+91 -9555946636
Telephone: +91-11-27419002 Fax: +91-11-27442744
website: www.nacdor.org