

International Consultation on Caste-Based Discrimination - Good Practices and Strategies

In the case of Buraku discrimination in Japan

Dowa Special Measures under Special Measures Law

1. Report of Cabinet Council on Dowa Problem in 1965

*** Dowa is the administrative term referring to Buraku*

“Buraku problem is the gravest social problem in Japan, and an immediate solution of the problem rests with the state as well as its citizens.”

Recommendations made by the Cabinet Council:

- Improvement of environment of Buraku districts.
- Promotion of social welfare.
- Improvement of education.
- Stabilization of industries and employment.
- Protection of human rights including prohibition of discrimination and provision of a method of redress.
- Improvement of the legislation to support these solutions.

2. Enactment of the Law on Special Measures for Dowa Projects in 1969

Under the special law, budgets were allocated at the national government level. Planning and implementation of special measures were responsibilities of local governments. Under the law (1969 to 2002), special measures were designed and implemented at the local level for 33 years.

Achievements:

- 1) Improvement of environment in Buraku districts – housing, road, water system, sewages, etc.
- 2) Increase in the enrollment rate into senior high school, and employment in civil services – community centers, child-care centers, medical clinics, etc.
- 3) Broadening of the scope of people working on Buraku problem -

4) Buraku residents' participation

** 3) broadening of the scope of people working on Buraku problem;

Teachers – through Dowa education

creation of the National Dowa Education Research Council (teachers association) (1953)

Researchers - creation of Buraku liberation research institutes (1968)

Labor sector - Central Joint Conference for Buraku Liberation (1975)

Business sector- National/local association for Dowa and human rights issues (1978)

Religious sector - National ecumenical organization for the solution of Dowa problem (1981)

Shortcomings:

- 1) Some undesignated Buraku districts were left behind the improvement.
- 2) Improvements rather concentrated in the environment of Buraku districts, and policy development was weak in the areas of education, industrial activities and employment. The public awareness-building was also weak.
- 3) Measures were taken against the results of discrimination, and not much against the cause of discrimination (institutions and systems)

3. Other developments through 33 years' implementation of Dowa Special Measures

- a. Buraku discrimination problem as a national issue was officially and widely recognized. (but not eradicated or eliminated)
- b. Message of “Buraku discrimination is to be eliminated” was widely delivered.
(message was wide-spread, but not achieved)
- c. Dowa education was promoted.
- d. Buraku liberation movement gained more power by involving other sectors.
- e. Human rights education was initiated by private sectors including the business, labor and religion.
- f. Local governments have adopted declaration on promotion of human rights.
- g. Local governments have enacted ordinance on elimination of Buraku discrimination.
- h. Enactment of the law for the promotion of human rights education at the last stage of the Dowa special measures.

4. Present Challenges

- a. Eradication of discriminatory attitude among the public - especially at the time of marriage and in the course of real-estate business.
- b. Deterioration of Buraku conditions after the special measures – widening the gaps in economic situation, educational achievements, .
- c. Hate crimes on the Internet – against Buraku and other minority communities
- d. Appropriate remedies for victims of human rights violation and discrimination

For these challenges, the following agendas are to be achieved:

- a. More effective human rights education should be promoted.
- b. Law on prohibition of discrimination should be enacted in accordance with international standards
- c. Law on provision of remedies to victims of discrimination and human rights violations should be enacted.
- d. National human rights commission should be established.
- e. Government should have a specific department which is directly responsible to the solution of Buraku problem.

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