

Selected 2011 news on caste discrimination in India

[UN expert “particularly concerned” about Dalit human rights defenders in India](#): In a statement concluding her January visit to India, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Margaret Sekaggya, raised particular concern for the situation of Dalit human rights defenders and noted widespread deficiencies in implementation of laws to protect human rights defenders. [Read more here](#)

[World Food Programme says India is home to 25% of the world’s hungry poor](#): According to government figures, around 43 per cent of children under the age of five years are malnourished and more than half of all pregnancy women aged between 15 and 49 years suffer from anaemia. Caste discrimination is a key contributing factor keeping Dalits poor and hungry.

[Human Rights Watch: Clinton urged to address human rights violations against Dalits on visit to India](#) In a letter to Hillary Clinton, HRW urged her to raise with India the need to protect the rights of women, Dalits, and other vulnerable groups. HRW mention specific steps to ensure the protection and promotion of Dalit Rights that need to be discussed with the Indian administration.

[Study: Caste discrimination in access to health services puts Dalit children at risk](#) The study, published by UNICEF and IIDS, finds that the consequences of discriminatory practices severely limit Dalit children from accessing health services, and are attributable to the poor health and high level of mortality of Dalit children. The study calls for developing safeguards and codes to check discriminatory practices at all stages of service delivery.

[India among top 5 worst places in the world for women](#) A survey just released by Thompson Reuters/Trustlaw ranks India as one of the top 5 worst places in the world to be a woman. Dalit women are discriminated double making the situation even more desperate for them. The Guardian highlighted [the case of Kusum, a Dalit woman in India](#), in their coverage of the survey.

[Hundreds of Dalit homes bulldozed without warning](#): India: 750 huts were bulldozed as residents fled. Residents were not warned of the demolition or given time to collect their belongings.

[India’s Budget: Dalits denied funds](#): Funds that were meant to be allocated to Dalits and Tribals have not materialised in India's new national budget. Dalit activists and organisations are fed up with the Government shortchanging the most vulnerable groups in India.

[Dutch Parliament adopts motion to prioritise combating caste discrimination](#) The motion to keep combating caste discrimination firmly on the Government agenda was adopted with a large majority.

[UN Rapporteur: Better protection needed for victims of caste systems](#) “Despite Government efforts to eradicate this type of discrimination through constitutional guarantees, legislation and affirmative action programmes, caste -based discrimination remains deplorably widespread and deeply rooted,” the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, Mr. Githu Muigai, states in his [new report](#). He recommends that legal measures be taken hand-in-hand with awareness-raising of the judiciary, the police and civil service.

['End of Free Speech' – Online Control in India](#) The Dalit Network Netherlands Coordinator, Gerard Oonk, [explains the possible repercussions](#), for the work of human rights defenders and the right to freedom of speech, of India's new "Information Technology Rules, 2011". Recent developments include [a Dalit poet being accused of provoking class warfare](#) and The Indian government increasingly requesting [Google to block content](#) criticising politicians or officials.

[Supreme Court: Caste discrimination is holding up India's progress >>](#) India's SC is pushing law enforcement and state Governments to stop caste discrimination by clamping down on discriminatory practices. Recent verdicts include a ban on using different cups for Dalits in tea shops in Tamil Nadu, cracking down on honour killings and outlawing the use of derogatory caste names. This IDSN article sums up the latest developments with comments from IDSN network members

[India: Police kill at least six Dalits in shoot out – evidence of torture also found](#)

People's Watch Tamil Nadu have undertaken a fact finding mission on the police shooting of at least 6 Dalits on Sunday 11 September in Tamil Nadu. The preliminary findings confirm that police were to blame for the incident and that several of those allegedly shot dead had been subjected to police torture.

[Caste discrimination in flood relief work >>](#)The study, 'The uncertainties of life : Living through Waters of Dejection' has just been released by the National Dalit Watch and documents caste discrimination in relief work following the Yamuna floods in India in 2010.

[Minority Rights Group International zooms in on caste](#) In their annual report MRG highlight numerous cases of caste discrimination and lend much focus to Dalit issues. [Read the many excerpts on caste discrimination form the report here >>](#) MRG also recently published the articles [Nepal: Dalits hope their true numbers will be revealed in census](#) and [India: Gauri's Story](#) of discrimination against Dalits.

[Dalit Women and Girls threatened by a spate of rapes in India](#)The BBC reports on the escalating amount of rapes in Uttar Pradesh that is shocking India. An expert reveals that in his analysis of rapes in UP "90% of victims were Dalits and 85% of Dalit rape victims were underage girls." The BBC tells the story of howrape victim Sarika and her parents left their home village after she was attacked

[Police threaten violence against Dalit villagers protesting against the take-over of their land by steel giant POSCO](#) "The human rights of Dalits have been blatantly violated in the POSCO project villages. An embargo type of situation has been created in these villages through police terror to suppress the peaceful resistance of the people," says Paul Divakar, General Secretary of NCDHR.

[EU: MEPs speak out on caste discrimination:](#) Following a February hearing on caste discrimination in the European Parliament several MEPs are urging the EU to do more to fight one of the biggest human rights issues in the world and have issued press releases and an opinion piece including comments on the EU-India FTA. IDSN presented at the hearing alongside UN and EU experts. [Read the IDSN press release on the hearing >](#) & [Read MEPs statements and press releases >](#)

[**AHRC report on human rights in India:**](#) A report on the state of human rights in India from the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) highlights widespread caste discrimination in access to justice, health care, land, social services and right to food. It also outlines cases of atrocities committed against Dalits and points out that India's treatment of caste issues as an 'internal matter' only exacerbates the problem. [Read relevant excerpts from the report here](#) or the [full report here](#).

[**ITUC report highlights caste discrimination**](#)

Several important references to caste discrimination are included in the *Core Labour Standards in India* report for the WTO September review of India's trade policies, by International Trade Union Confederation

[**The ILO and manual scavengers in India: Paving the way towards the elimination of caste discrimination**](#)

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is working with the Government and social partners in India to address caste discrimination and improve the effectiveness of legislation and policies, including the scavenging community itself in the process. [This article from the ILO highlights their efforts and offers statements from ILO specialists on the issue >>](#) The article, [Dignity Defiled: Law And Policies For Manual Scavengers](#), highlights the issues of lack of implementation of laws and the video [The inhuman practice of manual scavenging lives on](#) from CNN-IBN documents that Dalits are still used as manual scavengers and risk death as a result of their work.

[**Dalit homes destroyed by Delhi authorities, no warning given**](#) Yet another ruthless and unlawful demolition of Dalit homes has been carried out in New Delhi by municipal authorities

[**NHRC find that Tamil Nadu police committed grave human rights violations against Dalit activists:**](#) The National Human Rights Commission in India has directed the Tamil Nadu government to compensate five Dalit human rights defender trainees at People's Watch, who were unlawfully arrested in August 2010. The verdict came in a letter to IDSN who alongside a wide array of other networks and organisations had written to the NHRC about this case. The NHRC have also recently acted [on a case of abuse of a Dalit boy](#).

[**Dalits employed in exploitative child Labour in India's Hand-Woven Carpet Sector**](#) The account finds that children as young as 10 years of age are coerced to work 16 or more hours a day weaving carpets for export to Europe and North America. All of these children are poor, low-caste or Dalits who are either paid a pittance for their efforts, or are exploited through outright bonded and forced labour.

[**Dalit girls working under slave like conditions in India's garment industry >>**](#) Multinational clothing brands are sourcing from cotton spinning mills in Tamil Nadu that exploit teenage girls, subjecting them to what the ILO terms the 'worst forms of child labour'.

[**The cost of cotton - Every 30 minutes an Indian farmer commits suicide >>**](#) India is failing to address its farmer suicide crisis, says NYU's Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, in a report finding that farmer suicides are on the rise and caste discrimination only exacerbates the problem. The report identifies the dominance of the cotton market by multinational corporations and the use of expensive GM cotton seed as key contributing factors.

[**Dalit millionaires warn that the caste system prevails despite India's economic boom >>**](#) Even a Dalit millionaire in India can't buy a house for his mother in the 'upper caste' part of her village. Despite the economic success of a small fraction of Dalits, discrimination prevails and a top economist argues that in fact discrimination is what underpins India's economic growth, forcing Dalits into low paid and insecure labour