

To

Political parties
Convener of Election Manifesto Preparation Committee

November 22, 2008, Bangladesh

Subject: Include the demands of Dalits and Excluded people in the Election Manifesto

Sir,

Greetings from 55 lakh (5.5m) Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM)!

We all know that 9th National Parliamentary Election is ahead of us. And consequently you are busy in final preparation for the upcoming election either under alliance or your own party banner. It is very unfortunate that although we, the people of the Dalit and Excluded community, are worthy citizens of the country, but we are deprived of our political power. This causes thousands of people from the Dalit and Excluded communities to be united to realize their political as well as other human rights. In this crucial moment of the country, we like to place our expectation through you to the newly elected government that they will take initiative to address the political, social and economic rights of Dalits and Excluded people of the country. We like to see the reflection of our demands and proposals in the election manifesto of all political parties and alliances.

Our Demands:

1. Stop all kinds of discrimination and untouchability against Dalits and Excluded communities. Declare untouchability a punishable crime.
2. Form a special Dalit Commission in order to develop the socio-economic conditions of Dalits and Excluded people in Bangladesh. We also demand to create a special cell in the newly formed National Human Rights Commission to oversee the affairs of Dalit and Excluded people.
3. In government schools and colleges, create special quota for Dalit and Excluded students. Ensure employment of educated Dalit people as per their competence.
4. Promote the status of Dalit women, form a special cell in the Children and Women Affairs Ministry as well as in local level government bodies for the development of Dalit community.
5. Cleaning jobs in the municipality must be reserved for Dalits. We are demanding this as we have limited scope to get other jobs. Dalits are traditionally doing this job.
6. Ensure equal rights of Dalit women in inheritance rights.

7. Dalit colonies under every City Corporation and municipality should be allotted permanently to present Dalit inhabitants and sufficient electricity, gas and water supply should be provided.
8. Build Dalit villages/colonies in government owned (khas) land and give permanent allotment.
9. Dalit freedom fighters should get proper recognition the government.
10. Establish free primary health care centers in every Dalit village/colony.
11. Allocate elderly allowance for old age people of the Dalit community
12. Create opportunities for every Dalit and Excluded community to have primary education in their own language.
13. Lease public toilets of every City Corporation and municipality to the Dalit sweepers.
14. Create a quota for Dalit and Excluded people in all government and non-government services.
15. Ensure Dalit representatives in all committees of political parties at national and local level.

We hope you will consider our demands for your election manifesto and take positive action.

Thanking you,

Milon Das
General Secretary
(BEDRM)

Babulal Sardar
President
(BEDRM)