

April Newsletter

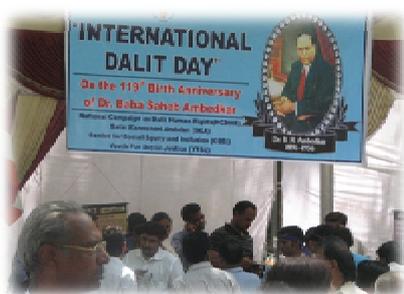
New team member

NCDHR was happy to welcome a new member in the team:

Asha Kowtal, the new General Secretary of All India Mahila Adhikar Manch (AIDMAM)

April events

- 14th of April 2010: 119th Birth Anniversary of Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar, at the Parliament Street.



Ambedkar Celebration, Parliament Street

Dalit community across the country have celebrated 119th birth anniversary of Baba Saheb, Dr. B R Ambedkar as the "International Dalit Day". Every year, Dalits reach the parliament in huge numbers to pay their tributes to Dr. Ambedkar and to carry forward the struggle for their dignity. Dr Ambedkar's birth Anniversary is a really important event because we commit ourselves for the rights of all the socially and economically excluded social sections and intensify the struggle for what we deserve.

National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights had set up a stall in association with Safai Karmchari Andolan (SKA), Center for Social Equity and Inclusion (CSEI) and Youth For Social Justice (YFSJ) to celebrate this day as the day of liberation and freedom, to extend its solidarity with the struggle for the dignity of the Dalit community.

Local organizations and individual activists were invited, as well as Sarpanches from different area. In order to raise to attention of the government, NCDHR wrote a letter addressed to the Prime Minister and carried out a massive signature campaign. More than thousand letters were submitted to him.

- People's SAARC 2010

Since the last 3 months, NCDHR has worked to convince the PSAARC through powerful and persuasive presentations and interventions in the preparatory meetings, workshops and as well as plenary (held on 23rd April at the School of Social Science, JNU) that caste discrimination and exclusion are major factors determining the consequences in all the wide-ranging issues that take up prominent attention in PSAARC: poverty, food security, health, climate change, disasters, political participation.

NCDHR took part in the people's SAARC through the organization of a workshop on Social Exclusion and Caste Issue on Wednesday April 21 2010 in the Indian Social Institute.



Asha Kowtal, PSAARC 2010, JNU

NCDHR then attended the conference organized in the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi to present the workshop and the questions raised. Finally, in order to influence the PSAARC process, NCDHR members drafted a statement to be incorporated in the final declaration, as in all the previous declarations, caste was not recognized as one of the key determinants of poverty, exclusion and violence on Dalits and the 'lower' castes.

Thereby, impacting all aspects of life, politics and public policy.

- 20th of April 2010: National Consultation with the Members of Parliament on 20 Years of SCs & STs (POA) Act at the Speaker Hall of the Constitution Club in New Delhi..

The National Consultation with the Members of Parliament on 20 Years of SCs & STs (POA) Act, 1989, was organized by the National Coalition for strengthening the SC and ST Prevention of Atrocities Act 1989. Through the month National Campaign For Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) regularly went to meet the SC/ST MPs on the issue of its effective implementation in order to invite them to the consultation. More than 20 MPs attended.



20 Years of SC/ST PoA Act 1989, Constitution Club

National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) has initiated consultations in Delhi about the status of implementation of the SC and ST (POA) Act through one of its core units, National Dalit Movement for Justice (NDMJ). Tribes, Dalit, human rights organizations and movements, as well as activists and experts from various States who participated in the consultation, formed themselves into the National Coalition for Strengthening the SC and ST Prevention of

Atrocities Act and have organized series of consultations in Delhi and other states.

The Coalition prepared a status report and drafted Amendments required in the Act and other related Acts under the guidance of Shri PS Krishnan, IAS (Rtd.). Apart from the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and the Home Ministry, the Coalition has based its work on various recommendations of the National and State Commissions, Dalit people, Human Rights and Civil Society organizations and experts.

National Dalit Movement for Justice (NDMJ)

- Meeting with Fr. Aloysius in NCDHR Office on the 22nd of April. The purpose of the meeting was to find out how to build consistent relationships with MP's and how to sustain NDMJ intervention, as well as planning and thinking about a way to develop the movement in the future.

- Fact Finding of Mirchurp Carnage against Dalits on 21th of April 2010. NDMJ with organization Anhad and a high-level team of human rights activists facilitated a fact-finding visit to Mirchpur in Haryana's Hisar district. 18 Dalit houses were gutted by fire, 14 Dalit houses were looted and a 17 years old girl along with her 60 years old father were burnt alive.



Press Conference, Indian Women's Press Corps

The victims, District Magistrate, Superintendent of Police and Chairperson of National Commission for Scheduled Caste, Shri Buta Singh were met. The proceedings of 'Maha-Khaap-Panchayat,' consisting of heads of 48 'Khaap-Panchayat' of 4 different States were investigated.

Further to this shocking and an eye-opener carnage, a press release was organized with Anhad and Human Rights Activists on the 27th of April 2010, at the "Indian Women's Press Corps", in New Delhi, where the fact finding report was released. The Hindu and the Times of India covered this issue.

Dalit Arthik Adhikar Andolan (DAAA)

In April, two interns from the Tata Institute of Social Science were welcomed in DAAA to complete their Bachelor in Social Work and Human Resources Management.



Meeting with Sylvain, officer of the CCDF

- Two Review and planning meetings took place in NCDHR office with the officer of the CCDF, Sylvain, and with Mr Deepak, the project coordinator from OXFAM India.

- Analyses on the SCP Watch Report and the Tribal Sub-Plan budget were conducted in order to work out how much money is allocated and denied for the period 2010-2011.

- The Foreign Educational Institution (Regulation of Entry and Operation) Bill, 2010. This bill seeks to regulate the entry and operation of foreign institutions (universities and schools), which will set up center and offer degrees in India. In other words, the government invites foreign universities to come to India. Beside the fact that the State is taking up the educational advantage of setting up foreign institutions (enhancement of choices, benchmark quality), The Foreign Educational Institution (Regulation of Entry and Operation) Bill, 2010 is harmful for poor and Dalit communities. Some of the main reasons are the non-existence of reserving seats for SC/ST's students, the fact that these kind of structures are depending on capitation fees, and the present legal structure in India does not allow granting of degrees by foreign educational institutions. The consequences are that the quality of this education will totally be out of reach of Dalits, minorities and backward classes, increasing once again the existing gap.

DAAA is therefore, working to sensitize the government and the people about this. To do so, DAAA is planning to shortly organize seminars in five - six States. It will strive to get the SC/ST Ministers reserve a voice in the Parliament in order to raise the attention of the prime minister and the other ministers on the issue.

- Finally, on April 20, 2010, DAAA team has been attending the World Bank Energy Strategy Consultations.

All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch (AIDMAM)

- Apart from the Monthly review and planning meetings with coordinators as well as the regular meetings with Dalit Women Sarpanches and activists to review the situation and find out how AIDMAM team can provide help, AIDMAM has conducted major fact findings. Amongst them is figuring the case of Dalit people having been beaten and sexually harassed by dominant caste of the Jatt community and false cases filled on them in Punjab on the 13th April 2010.



*Meeting with DWS (Punjab)- A.Kowtal,
S.Mathur*

- All India Mahila Adhikar Manch has also been following up several cases of rape, and rape with murder:
 - The judgment of the case of rape and murder of Km. Neha in Delhi, an eight-year-old Dalit girl, by her teacher on the 23rd of March 2009. The accused, Deepak Kumar has finally been sentenced on the 8th of April 2010 to life imprisonment for bludgeoning to death Km Neha after criminally assaulting her. He has been imposed a fine of Rs.2.40 lakh after holding him guilty of murder, rape, kidnapping and destruction of evidence under the Indian Penal Code.
 - The Nilankanthapur rape case, committed by a political leader, Rabi Nanda, belonging to the Brahmin Community against Kabita Mallik, a 30 years old illiterate Dalit on the 28th of January 2010. AIDMAM went with the victim to meet the DSP, who ordered to search and arrest the accused person immediately. But Rabi Nanda is still free because his son is a lawyer in the high Court of Orissa, and the victim hasn't received any compensation.. Finally, AIDMAM has been dealing with a case of discrimination and atrocity faced by Dalit Women elected representative "Mukhia" in the village of Nima Aaryan.



*S.Nigam, Sunita Raj Munda and District
Coordinators, case study in Bihar*

- Several case studies were completed in Haryana, Orissa and Bihar on Reserved Panchayat Women.
- Advocacy meetings on issues related to Dalit Women Sarpanches, distribution of meal and child labor took place in Punjab and Orissa. The request to open a center for children "anganwadi" was made. AIDAM team intervened to get the complaint lodged, which previously denied by the police, and demanded an inquiry into the matter.

- Capacity building programs: 3 paralegal trainings were organized in:

-Aurangabad

- Arwal

- Madhubani



DWS training, lawyer and Sarpanch women

During these training, the attendees were made aware of the SC/ST PoA Act 1989 and Rules 1995, NREGA and Right to Information Act. Information about compensation to victims under SC/ST PoA Act 1989 and about Fundamental Rights were also provided.

As per the discussion, support groups were formed with the consent of people. In total five support groups were formed in District Munger, Bihar along with the date for a next formal meeting with support group in their respective area was finalized. The attendees finally presented their achievements, challenges, their learnings from the sessions.

In Rajasthan, district level workshops were organized with Dalit Women representatives. 16 Dalit Women Sarpanches and 10 Panchayat Samiti members attended.

- Media: AIDMAM team met with the chief editor of "Hashiya", a monthly magazine in Punjab. AIDMAM expressed the need to highlight the issue of Dalit Women Sarpanches in the next publication.