

January/February Newsletter

NCDHR Initiatives

The new team.

NCDHR was happy to welcome new members in the team:

Mudasser Ahmed our new Media & Communication Officer.

Alice Caillot, a new intern coming from France has arrived on 25th January and will spend one year with NCDHR to support the National Dalit Movement for Justice and the media and communication Unit.

JANUARY events

National Dalit Movement for Justice (NDMJ)

On 30th January 2010, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 has completed 20 years of its coming into effect. On the eve of this twentieth anniversary of the act, since NDMJ suggestion for a review and certain amendments to this act is being 'examined' by the different state governments and other enforcement bodies, the movement organized public action in different State capitals, demanding a review of the implementation of the act and necessary amendment to this act.

In the course of January, NDMJ has taken part to two conferences: The first one was a National-level Conference on the review of implementation of the SC & ST (PoA) Act in its twentieth year. It was organized on 21st January 2010 by the Law Department of the Mumbai University, with the support of National Dalit Movement for Justice. NDMJ presented its study on the implementation of the act and the suggested amendment to this act of the National Campaign on SC & ST (PoA) Act. The second one was organized by Human Rights Law Network, Maharashtra on 30th January 2010 in Mumbai on the issue of Custodial Violence and NDMJ presented on why and how it is mainly Dalits who are mostly victimized by this form of atrocity.

NJDM has also been very active in the course of January by organizing several fact finding missions following atrocities committed on Dalits and by conducting legal interventions to make sure charge-sheets are being filed. The movement also met with some lawyers to discuss on the status of 4 selected cases and the strategy for legal intervention in these cases and organized advocacy meetings and interventions in selected cases in Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab.

NDMJ kept filing on RTI applications for enforcing the provisions of SC&ST on POA Act in the states of Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh and was successful in Maharashtra where the District Magistrates of 20 districts have already responded by calling for investigation of their documents and thereby get the information regarding the enforcement of the SC & ST (PoA) Act. NCDHR has already started the investigating the documents in the districts of Akola, Amravati and Washi.

NDMJ has also organized a Training of Trainers along-with Indian Institute of Paralegal Studies and Centre for Social Justice in Ahmedabad. In this programme 17 participants from the States of Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh were trained. They have drafted a good training manual. A plan was also decided on training of 345 paralegals on the issue of SC & ST (PoA) Act, Domestic Violence, RTI, NREGS and Land issue.

All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch (AIDMAM)

In January and February, AIDMAM has been deeply involved in networking by meeting with Dalit Activists, with social activists, Human Rights Organization, Women Sarpanches and officials in Orissa, Punjab and Haryana. The aim of these meetings is to share the objectives and work of AIDMAM, raise the voice against violence against Dalit women and to defend and promote their rights.

AIDMAM has also conducted fact findings missions in cases of rapes and murders of Dalit and has followed up cases in the Courts in the 3 States, participated in rallies to build relationships with other organizations and strengthen its network. AIDMAM has organized and participated in several meetings, trainings and workshops in the states above mentioned to deal with various issues such as issues related to the dalit women, the issue of violence, the

access to budget, the fight against atrocities, the future plan of actions of AIDMAM, the share of experience, work done, the lobby and advocacy etc...

FEBRUARY events

Seminar on Dalits and Private Sector -

- **Visit of Professor G. Mohan Gopal, director of the National Justice Academy, February 2, 2010.**

NCDHR has welcomed the Professor G. Mohan Gopal, director of the National Justice Academy, an institution aimed at strengthening the Administration of Justice through Judicial Education, Research and Policy Development. For an hour Professor G. Mohan Gopal has presented the area of work of his institution (improve the efficacy of the SC/ST Atrocities Act and improve the social justice) and his ideas of justice and poverty.

- **Entraide et Fraternité, February 4, 2010.**

NCDHR has welcomed Karl Wintgens from the Belgium association « Entraide et Fraternité » whose aim is to strengthen Dalit Civil Society and Dalit Organizations in India. After a presentation of NCDHR, the discussion was focused on the possible support both organizations can provide each other. “Entraide et solidarité” could help building a Dalit Rights Campaign for inclusion in economic budgets, higher education and give a link to strengthen Dalit Rights advocacy in India as well as in Belgium. NCDHR could support the partners in Dalit Rights Advocacy Capacitation and provide logistic base for « Entraide et Fraternité » in Delhi as well as any support for Campaigns.

- **Advocacy & Lobby Workshop 13-16 February 2010 at Hotel Bharat Continental, New Delhi.**

Four days National Workshop on professional Lobby and Advocacy was organized by the Indraprastha Public Affairs Centre (IPAC) at Hotel Bharat Continental, New Delhi. The main purpose of the workshop was to expose the participants (about forty members of NCDHR coming from the different States) to new techniques in influencing decision making processes for Non-profit sector, lobbying, in particular. The workshop was to build on the experiences IPAC and the participants have had in non-profit advocacy and lobbying for years.

Mr Govert, an Independent Consultant, from Netherland, Cordaid, and Mr. Swatantra Gupta from IPAC were the main facilitators of the workshop.

The workshop was on the principle of participation of all, where everybody got the opportunity to share their views and discuss the matters of concerns through groups activities and presentations.

This workshop was designed to facilitate each movement in thinking and reflecting upon their routine roles and how they would take on the role of a lobbyist, to ultimately benefit the powerless for whom NCDHR works, by influencing policy decisions, at the same time supporting the grassroots in performing their role efficiently and encouraging them to make direct grassroots intervention.

➤ **Orientation and Training Workshop for State and District Coordinators of AIDMAM, February 18-20, 2010 at AIDMAM National Secretariat, New Delhi.**

A three days national workshop was organized by AIDMAM for State and District Coordinators of the Movement. The main purpose of the orientation and training workshop was is to equip AIDMAM team and impart training on the issues concerning Dalit women elected representatives. This training will help to improve the understanding of participants regarding PRI issues and help carry out AIDMAM's work in this area. 23 state coordinators coming from different states (Delhi, Punjab, Orissa, Bihat, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Haryana.)attended this workshop.

Dalit Watch

➤ **Coordination & training meeting for the Dalit Watch monitor, 3rd February 2010, Sewa Kendra, Kurji, Patna, Bihar.**

The network Dalit Watch has emerged after NCDHR's work experiences during the 2005 Tsumani in Tamil Nadu, followed by the recurrent floods in Bihar in 2007-2008. Dalit Watch aims at securing equity and inclusion in all government schemes and relief and rehabilitation schemes for Dalits, who lose even the little they have. After the Bihar flood experience, Dalit Watch went national, spreading its monitoring exercises and intervention during disasters in other states of the country, focusing on Dalits who have been suppressed for ages.

The meeting was called for all the monitors from across the state, who are associated with Dalit Watch-Bihar, acting during the disaster situations in Bihar, since the year 2007. This meeting aimed at facilitating the convergence of thoughts and ideas of these coordinators, at understanding their comprehension of Dalit Watch, to organize them towards the new project of Dalit Watch-Bihar, and to guide them with appropriate actions required.

- **Dalit Watch has initiated a special survey from 23rd February to 2nd March 2010 to bring out the excluded cases in Relief and Rehabilitation entitlements of flood affected Dalits in Kurnool and Mahabubnagar districts of Andhra Pradesh.**

The objective was to bring out specific cases of exclusion, the reasons behind it and the lethargic attitude of the authorities in tackling these discriminatory issues, so that corrective steps could be taken by the state.

Dalit Aarthik Aadhikar Andolan (DAAA)

- **District Level Workshop on Dalit Budget. Dalit Aarthik Aadhikar Andolan-NCDHR Jaipur, Rajasthan, February 7 2010.**

A district level one day workshop was organized by the state chapter-Rajasthan of Dalit Aarthik Adhikar Andolan-NCDHR in Jaipur on February 07, 2010. The workshop was presided over by the Smt. Maya Devi Mahavar and the chief guest of the workshop was Mr. Ashutosh Kumar Vishal, National Coordinator Dalit Aarthik Adhikar Andolan-NCDHR.

The workshop aimed at evolving a strategy to effectively implement the Special Component Plan through the participation of Scheduled Castes and availing the benefits of the existing schemes to the Scheduled Caste member by creating awareness among them.

Nearly 25-35 people attended the workshop which consisted of Panchayat member, civil society's members, youths and general people. The participants of the workshop were told about the SCP, its guidelines and schemes etc. The women's participation was emphasized in the whole process of empowerment. The workshop resulted into the formation of two committees. One at district level and another at block level to take up responsibility for the effective implementation.

National Dalit Movement for Justice (NDMJ)

NDMJ devoted the month of February to prepare the report card on 20 years of PoA Act and to file RTI Applications on Enforcement of PoA Act. After the National Convention on 11th September 2009, launching the National Campaign on Strengthening PoA Act, the National Coalition for Strengthening PoA Act, started the process of preparing a 'Report Card', a report on the performance of the State, in implementation of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and Rules, 1995.

Mr. Henri Tiphagne with the help of the Secretariat of National Coalition for Strengthening PoA Act drafted the model format of RTI Application and instruction manual to help the RTI applicants to easily file as many RTI applications in as many districts as possible. This model application and manual was circulated so that RTI applications can be filed to the respective District Magistrates / Collectors and Superintendent of Police, which will make enforcement officials to regularize certain mandatory provisions, like constitute, organize the meetings of vigilance and monitoring committees, review of public prosecutors, investigations, relief and rehabilitation, etc. to be implemented, to ensure our activists to demand for the enforcement of such provisions.

MEDIA Events

NCDHR has been actively involved with media to advocate for the issues related to Dalits and in the month of February NCDHR invested a lot of energy in highlighting the Special Component Plan (SCP). The efforts paid dividends as many news papers published features related to SCP. The prominent being Business Standard, The Hindu, Times Of India and Nai Duniya.

Apart from print media doing features on SCP, electronic media was also involved as NDTV Profit interviewed Paul Divakar on budget allocations. The program titled "The Unstoppable Indians" featured Paul Divakar talking about the SCP and the ground realities of SCP's implementation, hence advocating for more innovation so that the money can reach and benefit the SC people.

The people's budget initiative

www.ndtv.com

For the upcoming National Consultation on Special Component Plan (SCP) happening on March 9, 2010, efforts are underway to draw as much as media attention possible and bring the issue to light by involving more and more media organizations. A constant exchange of information is taking place and press is being updated about development of event.

Paul Divakar has been invited along with Prasad Sirivella and Dr, R Christudas Gandhi to address the SC Parliamentary Forum Members on the 23 Feb evening specially to address the issue of Special Component Plan. About 18 MPs and one minister participated in the Forum meeting which was held in the Parliament. DAAA team Ashutosh, Umesh also participated and briefed the MPs.

Paul Divakar and Vimal Thorat address the Seminar - National Consultation for Bridging Research and Practice: Interface Between CSOs and Academic Institutions on Strengthening Dalit Leadership in Local Government for Ensuring Social Justice on the 24 Feb at the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) and co-organized by PRIA and IIPA.

Budget Analysis exercise – on Feb 26 the budget was presented by the FM in the Parliament and DAAA/NCDHR analyzed the budget and sent in a brief note on the SCP and TSP to the media and to the MPs and policy makers.

NCDHR upcoming events

- **The National Consultation on Special Component Plan (SCP) for Scs, March 9, 2010.**

The national consultation held on 9th of March 2010 in New Delhi is being organized by National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) and National Action Forum for Social Justice (NAFSJ) with support from Indraprastha Public Affairs Centre (IPAC).

The purpose of the consultation is to arrive at a consensus of the steps needed to be taken by all the stake holders for effective implementation of SCP both at the Union level as well as at the state level.

Shri Mukul Wasnik, Honourable Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment has agreed to be the Chief Guest and Dr. Narendra Jadhav, Member Planning Commission has confirmed as Guest of Honour for this National Consultation.

86 Hon. Members of the Parliament have also been invited as special Invitees of whom about 11 have already confirmed.

NCDHR and NAFSJ are also inviting leaders of all collaborating partner organizations and other leading organizations from different parts of the country who have been concerned about the welfare of the SCs and are keen to strengthen the SCP to make it effective towards achieving the goals of economic liberation, education parity at all levels and social dignity of SCs.

➤ **People's SAARC 2010**

NCDHR is part of People's SAARC, a regional convergence of peoples' organizations and movements for sharing, forging and strengthening solidarity linkages among like-minded action groups, resource agencies, progressive individuals and others, with the common aim of promoting a movement for democracy and justice, and to build a people's resistance against the forces of globalization across nations. A two day People's SAARC event will be held in Delhi in April 22nd and 23rd 2010. NCDHR is deeply involved in the SAARC process by being part of the group of Civil Society organizations of India that coordinate and lead the People's SAARC 2010 as well as by attending the several discussions and meetings aimed at organizing the event.