

May Newsletter

May Events

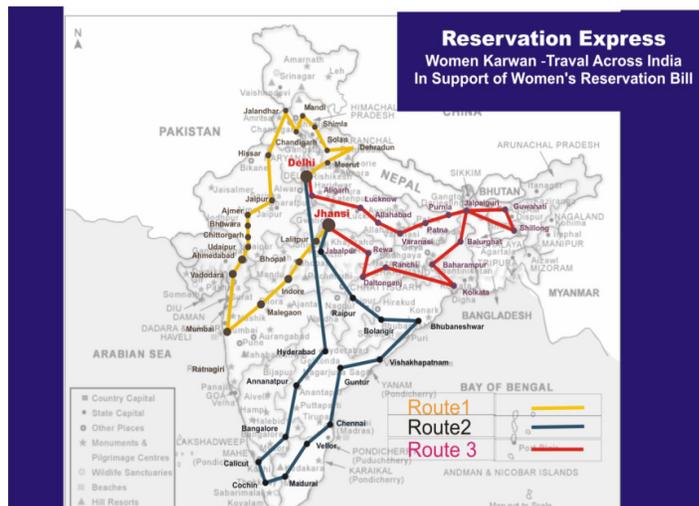
- May 20,2010: AIDMAM's Endorsement to Women's Reservation Bill



Campaign Reservation Express in support of the Women's Reservation Bill initiated by Act Now for Harmony and Democracy (ANHAD) was launched on May 20, 2010. AIDMAM was one of the organizations supporting the Reservation Express Karwan. The Campaign aroused the public support and took signature on the specially designed postcards addressed to the Prime Minister.

Three Karwans were flagged off from Jhansi on May 20th and culminated at the constitutional Club in Delhi on June 6th with a convention. The three women karwans covered 56 cities and towns covering approximately 15,000 kilometers.

All participating women activists reached Jhansi on May 18th evening. On 19th May a one day orientation programme was organized. Each karwan carried 20 women representing various endorsing organisations, young students and film makers. 6 AIDMAM's representatives' i.e Anita, Seema, Meena, Akkamahadevi, Eshwari and Anandi participated throughout the Karwan on three routes.



Final routes and route map

Public meetings and press conferences were organized in each city by local host organizations. Local activists, women leaders, artists, intellectuals and other civil society members participated in these meeMansi Sharma, who works for ANHAD, was the leader of one of the caravans. Speaking about her travel across 22 cities in 17 days, Mansi said: "The open interaction with the people and the media

made us realize that even though there are genuine concerns, there is no opposition of the Bill."

Besides generating pro-reservation support, the Campaign also drew attention to existing gender disparities in the political spaces of the country and the importance of assertion of women's political rights. Many distinguished women leaders spoke about the need to attain the important goal of empowering women in the country.

Campaign's culmination in Delhi was sort of celebration, all the women were garlanded and awarded trophies. Karwan's representative had a meeting with UPA chief Sonia Gandhi to get the bill pass in its present form.

For more details:

<http://reservationexpress.org/>

<http://www.hinduonnet.com/2010/06/07/stories/2010060760250300.htm>

National Dalit Movement for Justice (NDMJ)

- **11th and 12th May 2010: Program Coordination Meeting**

The full time members from the National Secretariat and all the State Coordinators and State Secretaries joined together in Delhi to review and plan their activities for the next 6 months. The team decided to follow-up with the major strategies below:

- Taking on various activities like filing RTI Applications, organizing State Consultations with the SC & ST MLAs and also lobbying with various stakeholders for ensuring the regular meetings, participation of the members and regular reporting of the District-level and State-level Vigilance and Monitoring Committees.
- Filing RTI Applications and approaching with representations to the enforcement authority officials at both district-level and state-level, for sensitizing them and thereby ensuring of various monitoring mechanisms according to the SCs & STs (PoA) Act, 1989 and Rules, 1995 .
- Maintaining of a 'Case Diary' of selected 2-3 cases of atrocities on the process of investigation and trial of the cases till conviction, for documenting them
- Identify and document the case study of the cases where the Dalit Human Rights Defenders rights or protection are threatened for preparation of a National-level Workshop on the Rights of Dalit Human Rights Defenders
- Continuing follow-up of the Public Interest Litigations that are already filed in the High Courts of Bihar, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh and also to file a new Public Interest Litigation in the High Court of Orissa on the enforcement of the SCs & STs (PoA) Act, 1989 and Rules, 1995.

- **Follow-up of the Mirchpur Carnage through Public Interest Litigations**

After the National-level Fact Finding on 24th April 2010, of the Mirchpur carnage, where 18-year-old girl Suman and her 70-year-old father Tara Chand were burnt alive, a Press Release was organized on 27th April 2010. It resulted in the media coverage in some of the leading. On 15th May 2010, NDMJ along-with DDVA and Anhad, filed a Writ Petition praying for making arrangements for the accommodation of the approximately 150 victims residing in New Delhi and paying each family Rs. 10, 000/- per month, as well as for paying compensation of Rs. 10, 000, 00/- per victim, for reconstructing all the destroyed / damaged houses , and permanently rehabilitate the victim families by relocating them at Talwandi in Haryana. Finally, the cancellation of the gun licenses of all the dominant caste families in accordance with SC & ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Rules, 1995 was also claimed. Taking a serious view, the Supreme Court issued a notice to the Haryana Government for its response to the petition. Deputy Commissioner, Hissar was directed to appear in the Court on 02.06.10 with the relevant facts and issue of rehabilitation of 150 Balmiki families.

- **RTI Applications for Enforcement of SCs & STs (PoA) Act**

For a better enforcement of the provisions of the SCs & STs (PoA) Act, 1989 and Rules, 1995, NDMJ started filing RTI Applications every month, from May 2010, in order to get the information on the various monitoring mechanisms by the different enforcement authorities and thereby sensitize the officials on their role and importance of the aspects of the provisions of the Act.

Dalit Arthik Adhikar Andolan (DAAA)

- **State Consultation in Bihar, 23rd May 2010**

SC/ST Welfare Minister Mr. Jeetan Ram Manjhi and the Chairman of the SC/ST Committee in Bihar Legislative Assembly, Mr Rameshwar Chaupal, were present in the state consultation on SCP/TSP in Bihar. Almost 100 participants from civil society, academicians and students came to attend the programme. Mr. Ashutosh Kumar Vishal, addressed the consultation and tabled the situation of SCP and TSP in Bihar. Mr. Pramod Singh, Sudha Vargese stressed on difficulties in Schemes not reaching the community. The Minister admitted that things are not implemented as it should be, and he assured that due to DAAA continuous interventions, he has placed the issue in the legislative assembly and more allocation will be done in next budget and 789 codes would open in Bihar. Chaupal also stated that all SC/ST will be considered as below poverty line from now onwards.

- **Success Story of Advocacy in Rajasthan**

DAAA has met MLAs from different Political Parties and shared the current situation. BJP MLA, Mr. Rao Rajendra Singh, agreed to raise some questions in the Assembly. The questions were regarding the low allocation and the under utilization of SCP and TSP for last ten years, the Non Opening of Minor Code in some departments and the increase in the number of Sambal Gram Panchayats from 2463 to 4110. Rajasthan Home Minister, Mr. Shanti Dhariwal, answered these questions and announced that the State Government will resolve these issues and make budgetary expenditures on SC and STs according to their percentage of population in the state. Giving response from the side of Social justice and Empowerment Minister, he ensured that there will be a full utilization of funds allocated to these sections, and that separate budgetary heads would be identified in the 2011-12 budget to guarantee complete expenditures for SCs and STs. He also ensured that the actual expenditures would be spelt out every year in future. Lastly, he appealed to the members of the House to give suggestions on the best way to implement this system. Subsequently, the Chief Minister, Mr. Ashok Gehlot, also accepted the low allocation in SCP/TSP and during the passing of State Budget promised that in SCP and TSP, actual allocation according to population percentage will be done and result oriented targets will be set.

- **Visits in Akbarpur, Navada (Bihar)**

DAAA visited a girl school, a motivation center and a college, where some issues of sanity, quotas of Dalits in schools established for them and children not getting their right to have decent food and clothes were raised and not resolved. So DAAA has been intervening to help them to change the situations.

All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch (AIDMAM)

- **Asian Women Human Rights Defenders Meeting, Kathmandu on May 24 – 30th**

Asha Kowtal from AIDMAM was attending the Asian Women Human Rights Defenders Meeting held at Kathmandu. It was a very important meeting for women human rights defenders and peace builders from several Asian countries to meet each other, to tell their stories, to learn from each other's courage and to decide how the 'mainstreaming of women participation in conflict resolution, human rights defense and accountability to women' looks from the perspective of grass root people and civil organizations. It was

an exploration of innovative ways in which women can use their apparent abilities and experiences to transform the devastating conflicts through active civil society responses.

AIDMAM represented the issues of Dalit women in India and the challenges faced by Dalit women elected representatives. Along with the coalition of other Dalit women leaders, the need to identify and strengthen the Dalit women cadre in India was deeply felt. WinG {Women in Governance} a new coalition of women representing Dalit and women from North East India was also introduced to AIDMAM. This networking opportunity enables AIDMAM to take further the challenges relating to Dalit women in local self governance.

This was an excellent space for women to share and explore from each others experiences and thus was a great space to build new friendships and pledges for work together in future. AIDMAM is now building a concrete lobby strategy with the support from IPAC, which we believe will go a long way in paving the path for future work of AIDMAM.

National Dalit Watch (NDW)

- Creation of a blog

National Dalit Watch announced its presence on e-bloggers. All updates of NDW and the different reports of collaborative studies are now available on www.nationaldalitwatch-ncdhr.blogspot.com.

- Upcoming events

NDW is contemplating a *National Consultation on “Dalit Exclusion during disasters: Advocacy for effective civil society monitoring, enabling policy regime and well defined state entitlements to counter exclusion”*, in the month of June, possibly on the 18th and 19th in Delhi.

This Consultation aims to bring together civil society organizations, International NGOS, experts in the field of disaster response, mitigation and preparedness and government functionaries (NDMA, SDMAAs and MHA) to deliberate on the exclusion of Dalits from all disaster related interventions, so as to develop viable policy and legislative solutions that lead to effective inclusion. The Consultation would review the existing evidence and experiences of exclusion, develop guidelines for developing tools to monitor dalit exclusion, map caste-induced vulnerabilities by civil society organizations and finalize an agenda for advocacy. Although the initiative is being taken by NDW to organize this National Consultation, it is sincerely desired that this Consultation should be jointly organized by many civil society organizations. Efforts are on to bring in several organizations into conceiving, planning and organizing this consultation. To this end, a preliminary meeting of all concerned and interested organizations and individuals was arranged on the 18th of May 2010, at NCDHR office, from 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.