

LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

INCLUSION OF DALITS AND MARGINALISED SECTIONS
IN SENDAI FRAMEWORK OF ACTION 2015-2030



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Asia Dalit Rights Forum

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Disaster Profile of South Asia

While South Asia is being touted to be fast growing economy by the World Bank's recent estimates, as second to East Asia and the Pacific, the vulnerability of the region to natural disasters like flood, cyclone, and landslides calls for immediate attention by humanitarian stakeholders and policy makers. More than 50 percent of the population in the region were affected by at least one natural disaster, leaving almost 230,000 deaths and about US\$45 billion in damages during the period of between 1990 and 2008.

A rigorous compilation and analyses of disaster data during the year 2011 demonstrated that the South Asia had experienced climate change induced hydro-meteorological and geophysical natural disasters (Flood, coastal



floods, mass movement and Earthquake) . The areas and populations that face the highest risk from natural disasters are located in Bangladesh and Nepal. However, number of events in 1990 – 2011 in India alone are recorded to be 320, killing 5538.4 and affecting 91, 53, 10,733 per year.

Over the years, principles and means for achieving disaster resilience among the vulnerable and deprived communities is laid down and agreed upon in Hyogo Framework for Action, the Sphere Humanitarian Charter, and other such (national) standards, which need to be transformed into social policies and operational mechanisms for the respective organizations in addressing exclusion.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights (Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights from 1948). Therefore, Dalit rights violation should be paid adequate attention and mainstreamed into the humanitarian programmes of the civil society and the government.

To make this inclusion possible, the very first step is to have the knowledge of their pre-existing vulnerabilities of Dalits that get worsened in disaster

Castes divide in disasters in South Asia

There is no disaggregated data available on the no. of lives affected by disasters by natural disasters and climate change patterns, in South Asia. Given the consolidated government figures on total no. of people affected, studies by civil society organisations have shown that the Dalits in South Asia constitute the majority of victims facing this form of structural discrimination, which leads to marginalisation, social and economic exclusion and limited access to basic services, including water and sanitation even in disaster times. Otherwise also, they live in conditions that render them vulnerable, and this vulnerability gets compounded on disasters. Be it the changing and unsustainable agricultural practices owing to climate change patterns, or the natural (water based) disasters induced by climate change, they are the ones at the receiving end. Given their direct dependence on agriculture and precarious living (as mostly landless marginal farmers and share croppers), their capacity to bounce back is low.

A brief profile of Dalits in South Asia

Over 210 million Dalits live across South Asia today:
201 million in India (16.6% of the total Indian population)
3.5 million in Nepal (13.2% of its total population of 26.5 million)
3.5 to 6.5 million in Bangladesh (3-4% of total population)
330,000 in Pakistan (13.6% of its 2.44 million Hindu minority population)

Caste Based Neglect in Disasters in South Asia

India

In August 2008, more than 35,000 villagers were displaced by a massive flood along the Kosi River in Nepal. In December 2010, the Nepalese government was at the final stage of accomplishing its billion rupee relief and rehabilitation programmes for the Kosi deluge victims. The Chief District Officer's High Level Task Force team, created to assist with flood-related matters, which included representatives of a local volunteer body of villagers blatantly, lacked representation from the Dalit community. There was no safe drinking water available for 80 households in just one ward. The community lavished in agony for want of basic amenities until after two years, UNDP provided pipes and hand pumps for the villagers . In India this has been continuous trend of Caste



We are doing labor work on others agriculture land, We are Dalit and poor, they don't provide us any support, government provided distribution material while looking at our face

Arbiya Devi from Benga Village- Kishanpur Block , Supaul

based Discrimination in all natural disasters. ADRF has seen this evidences right from 2001 Gujarat earthquake up to Bundelkhand drought 2016

Pakistan

The situation of Dalits in Pakistan was reported to be highly deplorable. According to Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network (PDSN), hundreds of thousands of Dalits were affected by the floods in Pakistan in mid August 2010, and many of them were denied access to relief camps by Muslims while they also experienced other forms of discrimination when seeking assistance. There is only limited disaggregated data available on the affected population. Moreover, the federal government's ban on non-governmental organisations and international donors to work in these areas for "security reasons", added to their agony, while the government itself was still to commence their relief operation.

Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, 40 per cent of its inhabitants live below poverty line and are frequently susceptible to natural disasters. In terms of accessing relief and rehabilitation at the time of disasters, both Muslim and Hindu Dalits face discrimination to some extent. They are not given due help or co-operation because of their identity. In the villages, the local authority tries to oblige the non-Dalits, even though they might not need any help/co-operation for disaster mitigation. Again, in the selection of items during relief etc., Dalits do not have any voice or choice; whereas the non-Dalits are allowed to select items at their own choice .

Srilanka

In Sri Lanka, caste discrimination is most prevalent among the Tamil speaking part of the population, especially in the tea plantation areas, but also practiced in the Sinhala community and within the realm of Buddhist culture. Tsunami struck Sri Lanka with devastating force and aggravated the tensions among those who already were displaced by ethnic tension and forced to move to low-lying land. They were then denied dry food rations in the refugee shelter, apparently for hailing from the so called lower caste.

Nepal

On April 25th, a magnitude 7.9 earthquake Nepal, and more than 100 aftershocks have also struck the region including a 5.2 in the mountains causing a landslide. It was the biggest earthquake to strike the country in 80 years. The earthquake was felt across the region from India to China and left immense destruction, flattening sections of Kathmandu and triggering avalanches in Mount Everest. The catastrophic earthquake that struck Nepal in April 2015 will remain imprinted in the memory of the people forever. The destruction left more than 10000 people dead, injured 21952, flattened more than 5 million houses and affected more than 13 million people of 31 districts.



The earthquake response assessment in Nepal has once again shown that there is no respite for the affected



Dalit population and there were discrepancies with regard to rescue and relief operations done in the process of post disaster response. There has been majority of instances of Caste Biases by local officials, political parties and people in power in the process of immediate response and early recovery. The immediate needs assessment done has revealed that only 35% Dalits have received rescue services, only 20% of families have shared that they have received relief services. Whether they were able to access the rescue services and shelter on time, 65 % of the respondents replied 'no', while only 35% said 'yes'. In addition to the proper relief and rescue Dalit communities have complained that there

²Caste Discrimination Affects Disaster Relief Efforts for Dalits in Nepal, May 9, 2011, By Asian Human Rights Commission

was discrimination based on caste while distributing the relief material, providing shelter and doing the loss assessment. 60 % of the affected Dalit Population have shared that they have experienced discrimination in relief and rescue services in comparison with the dominant caste communities.

LOCATING DALITS IN SENDAI FRAMEWORK OF ACTION 2015-2030

While the HFA focused on achieving resilience building and reduction in economic losses, it also needs to recognize the vulnerabilities and multiple marginalizations when several factors like gender, age and disability integrates with caste. In the event of disasters, this exacerbates the conditions of these communities as vulnerability gets compounded and recuperation process among the discriminated communities. Discrimination based on work and descent (DWD).

While the HFA talks about addressing underlying risks and vulnerability, the need is to recognize various heinous societal forms of social exclusion and marginalization. In South



Asia, the implementation of HFA and the South Asia Regional DRR Framework which is aligned with the priorities of HFA has resulted in significant

progress in the area of creating legislative and policy framework for DRR. Reducing underlying risk factors and mainstreaming DRR into sector oral planning process remains a challenge; and these underlying risks do not officially recognize caste based discrimination and intersections of gender, age, disability, children, elderly etc.



Spent 100 rupees in to call mukhiya but no one came Left all belongings and came out from the floods.
Tiliya Devi - Dalit Women from Benga Village- Kishanpur Block , Supaul

DEMANDS TOWARDS INCLUSION OF DALITS IN SENDAI FRAMEWORK OF ACTION

Acknowledging the findings of vigilant monitoring by civil society groups in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka that has revealed the consistent pattern of discrimination and exclusion faced by caste affected and discriminated Dalit vulnerable communities in all interventions pertaining to disaster response, mitigation and risk reduction, and climate change adaptation; we call upon the humanitarian stakeholders including the state in the SAARC region to ensure the following for Dalit inclusion in disaster risk reduction Agenda:

Humanitarian aid is defined by humanitarian principles of neutrality, humanity, independence and impartiality. Caste-based discrimination in the provision of humanitarian aid is a direct violation of those principles and a violation of international human rights law.

In order to ensure that humanitarian aid targeting disaster prevention, response and sustainable recovery is not susceptible to caste-based discrimination, humanitarian actors involved in funding or providing humanitarian aid should implement the following recommendations:

Principle

Publicly recognise the problem of caste-based discrimination and exclusion in disaster prevention and response in their organisational mission, work plans, and public engagement.

1. Humanitarian actors should explicitly declare their adherence to humanitarian principles and publicly acknowledge that discrimination and exclusion on the basis of caste are violations of these principles and of international human rights law.
2. Humanitarian actors should ensure that a strong understanding and public recognition of the societal processes of caste-based exclusion at work in communities form the basis of their engagement and

³Chowdhury, I.U. Caste-based Discrimination in South Asia: A Study of Bangladesh, IIDS

⁴Sri Lanka Discrimination, displacement and determination mark Sri Lanka's tsunami relief effort

decision-making for humanitarian aid provision.

3. Humanitarian actors should recognise in their work and their public engagement that the inclusion of caste-affected communities, such as Dalits, is possible only through interventions that specifically engage with these communities and groups.

Practise

Encourage and adhere to a common approach to addressing the risk of caste-based discrimination in humanitarian programming across the spectrum of interventions from disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

This includes a range of steps that could be reinforcing:

1. Encourage a common approach: Working with other humanitarian actors operating in the sub-region or local area to build a common approach to addressing caste-based discrimination across interventions from disaster reduction, to response and recovery.
 - a) This should include the use of participatory methods such as Participatory Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (PVCAs), social equity audits, participatory needs assessments, post-disaster needs assessments and inclusion monitoring and accountability tools.
 - b) It should include the collation of disaggregated data for assessments purposes, monitoring, regular information sharing as part of a co-ordinated disaster prevention or response strategy and the development of strong networks of good practice.
 - c) It should seek to represent the delivery of existing sector-wide standards like SPHERE and build up a community of best practice on addressing caste-based discrimination that can further inform these standards.
2. Build on existing accountability commitments across the sector: Incorporating a strong focus on reducing the risk of caste-based discrimination to the delivery of accountability standards like Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP). For example:
 - a) Including reference to addressing caste-based discrimination in its accountability framework and implementation plan for the accountability framework.
 - b) Ensuring appropriate understanding of caste-based discrimination as part of staff competency requirements.
 - c) Ensuring appropriate targeting and engagement of excluded groups for information sharing commitments.
 - d) Incorporating appropriate mechanisms for addressing caste discrimination (such as vulnerability mapping or inclusion monitoring tools) in delivering on participation commitments.
 - e) Having a specific approach to complaints mechanisms and complaints handling that takes into consideration the context of caste discrimination and how it can occur in the delivery of a programme and in the handling of complaints about that programme. This could include an inclusion monitoring tool as part of regular accountability reviews and complaints handling reviews



Women always has to struggle a lot in comparison to men. No food, No safety, No care for kids, No medicine from government makes us more vulnerable.



**If government would have provided us the boat on time , we would have not lost our son, who was just 1 year old
Kamaldev, village kamaldaha, panchayat Bauraha- Supaul**

⁵The UN official terminology as of now for caste based discrimination

throughout the project phase.

- f) Building a strong organisational commitment to learning and continual improvement in accountability and addressing caste discrimination both within HAP certified agencies and across the wider sector.
3. Tailor participatory approaches for programme planning with a good analysis of the risk of caste-based discrimination in different sectors: Using relevant participatory tools for assessment of the context and the risk of caste-based discrimination for programming at all stages of intervention, from vulnerability assessments and disaster risk reduction work to preparedness, response and recovery of particular importance are:
- a) Understanding pre-existing vulnerabilities of Dalit and other excluded groups, and the cross-cutting issues of e.g. gender, age and ability that will also affect members of these groups.
 - b) Collecting and using disaggregated data through participatory information gathering and needs assessments.
 - c) Understanding the issues of documentation and formal identification.
 - d) Understanding the particular context of risks of discrimination related to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), medical aid and provision and preparation of food.
 - e) Understanding the context of forced labour and economic exploitation.
 - f) Understanding specific challenges related to settlements, housing and shelter, including in terms of documentation.
 - g) Understanding context and discrimination risks related to caste-based violence and protection, with a particular consideration given to gendered dimensions within caste-based violence.
4. Remain aware of the particular vulnerability of Dalit women and the cross-cutting issues that affect exclusion: It is essential to ensure recognition of and action against the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination against caste-affected women. Cross-cutting issues of gender, age, ability and any factors that may affect vulnerabilities and access to disaster prevention and response programmes must be duly considered.



Policy and legislation

Support the development and implementation of inclusive and appropriate disaster management laws and policies at local, national and international level that enable the effective targeting of marginalised and excluded groups for disaster prevention and response, with a specific focus on caste-based discrimination.

1. Recognise principles of inclusion in laws: Government laws and policies to address disaster risks and response must be developed and implemented in line with commitments to the Hyogo Framework for Action and internationally recognised standards like ICRC/NGO Code of Conduct, SPHERE and HAP. These must include appropriate measures to address caste-based discrimination and its role in aggravating vulnerability and undermining disaster preparedness and effective response. In order to do this government laws and policies should:
 - a) Explicitly recognise the context and specific needs of vulnerable groups, including Dalits and other marginalised groups.
 - b) Explicitly recognise humanitarian principles that guide emergency aid and international standards for the delivery of that aid including SPHERE and HAP.
 - c) Require the inclusion of representatives of Dalits and other marginalised groups, at national, sub-

regional and local level in the development and execution of government disaster laws and policies. This should include their representation in relevant bodies and committees.

2. Build institutional structures and procedures for inclusive disaster prevention and response: Steps and procedures should be laid down through specific operational guidelines so that complete inclusion of Dalits and other marginalised groups is ensured as a non-negotiable entitlement. Requirements should be in accordance with the HAP commitment to accountability and transparency and include:
 - a) The officers of state agencies and humanitarian agencies should be trained and expected to recognise the societal processes of caste-based exclusion at work in communities and hence should directly reach out to these affected communities and vulnerable groups, avoiding any mediation of people from the powerful dominant communities.
 - b) Government agencies should seek to collect and use disaggregated data including information on marginalised groups defined by gender, caste, ethnicity, age and disability.
 - c) Legislated requirements for the inclusion of representatives of Dalit and marginalised groups on village level committees.
 - d) Establishing of village level information systems to enable the timely flow of information on Government schemes to vulnerable and excluded populations, and the articulation of the needs of vulnerable groups to the district administrators.
 - e) Establishing complaint mechanism through Help Desks or complaint boxes placed in intervention areas to allow beneficiaries to report or complain of discrimination or any other issues and check corruption to address the issues at the very start.
 - f) Provision of legal aid to victims of human rights violations based on caste, ethnicity or gender.
3. Monitor for inclusive policies: Government legislation and policies should include measures for independent monitoring of their disaster prevention and response strategies, with a specific focus on inclusivity and addressing caste discrimination.
 - a) Working with international agencies and across the humanitarian sector national governments should support the appointment of committees or 'Ombudspersons' to look into grievances related to exclusion of caste-affected communities in disaster prevention and response programmes.
 - b) Adequate guidelines and procedures should be laid down and administrative facilities provided for such committees to fulfil their functions effectively. Their recommendations should be binding for the executives, and governing boards of organisations should be liable to monitor the implementation of the recommendations for inclusive practices.
4. Reinforce accountability and inclusion through advocacy: Local, national, regional and international humanitarian actors have an important role to play in monitoring and holding governments and other humanitarian actors to account for ensuring that their humanitarian aid is inclusive and in line with humanitarian principles and international human rights law.
 - a) Support information-sharing and organisational learning on addressing caste-based discrimination in humanitarian programming.
 - b) Support financially and politically the monitoring of caste-based discrimination and exclusion in disaster prevention and response programmes by local and national organisations, including representative groups specialised in the field.
 - c) Recognise good work and build on best practice in addressing caste-based discrimination in humanitarian aid.
5. International donors should require inclusion and should fund advocacy to ensure accountability:
 - a) Donors, whether governments, UN agencies or NGOs, should require measures to address exclusion and caste-based discrimination in all the programmes they fund, with a particular emphasis on supporting measures to address caste-based discrimination as part of a comprehensive commitment to implementing HAP in programming.
 - b) Donors should allocate specific funding to local national, regional and international organisations working to develop the understanding and evidence for what works and engaged in monitoring and holding government and humanitarian actors accountable to humanitarian principles that include impartiality.
 - c) Donors should include as a standard indicator in funded projects the staff diversity of implementing entities, whether in the government, UN agencies or NGOs, looking at the efforts made to recruit Dalit staff & Partners.

ADRF is a platform of civil society organizations in Bangladesh, India, Japan, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka working for the empowerment and emancipation of the communities subjected to descent and work based discrimination and violence. It aims at addressing the rights and entitlements of these communities in the respective countries and collectively in Asia and at international level. ADRF is a platform of civil society organizations in Bangladesh, India, Japan, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka working for the empowerment and emancipation of the communities subjected to descent and work based discrimination and violence.



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