



Solidarity for Dalit Rights & Social Inclusion

Dalit Solidarity

A Quarterly Bulletin of JANA UTTHAN PRATISTHAN, Vol. 7, Issue 4 October-December, 2006



"You must have firm belief in the sacredness of your mission. Noble is your aim and sublime and glorious is your mission. Blessed are those who are awakened to their duty to among those whom they are born."

—Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Dalit Parliament, a 'Mock' but a 'Symbolic'

Rastriya Dalit Network (RDN) organized Dalit Parliament from 9-10 December 2006 at Kathmandu. The concept of Dalit Parliament is great in itself. The parliament thus organized explicitly mentioned that existing political parties will nominate one or two Dalits in the forthcoming parliament but they are not going to do

much. Those nominates will serve the interests of their masters than the interests of Dalits. In such a situation, a great pressure from all parts of Dalit



movement is required. From this point of view the Dalit parliament was good. But on the other hand, Dalit parliament program was same as the old traditional program. There was nothing substantial rather delivering the speeches and crying for the help. Since Rastriya Dalit Network has 3 years experience of organizing the same, it would have been nice, if it had been organized in a real parliamentarian way. The first day was the opening day with raising agenda from different sectors.

If all stakeholders of Dalit movement in Nepal take it seriously, the concept of Dalit Parliament will be seeds for constituent assembly. As there had been an invitation to attend Dalit Parliament called by Rastriya Dalit Network (RDN) Nepal, it was a 'mock' but a symbolic parliament, and there would be no restriction for all the Dalits and like-minded people

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Dalit Children Died of Poisonous Substance

On November 24, 2006, back to her home from her maternal home at Hanshapur, Arghakhanchi, bringing food for her children, the mother – Bijuli Pariyar, found the critical condition of her children; they died at her face. However, the eldest son among her 3 children is staying at her maternal home place as she could not take care of all the 3 children.

Due to her endemic poverty, Mrs. Bijuli Pariyar was raising her children from menial jobs. Despite her physical toil, she was working hard to sufficiently feed her family. Her husband had been to abroad 4 years ago leaving 3 children and herself. Whereabouts of him is not yet known.

According to Mr. Shovakhar Panthi, a teacher of Sankhetari Secondary School as well as a journalist, 2 children died of starvation. Due to lack of food, and since they were hungry, they might have eaten something poisonous which caused them for death."

A social worker Mr. Ram Bahadur Chettri who is also local area member of CPN (UML) said, "Having seen her children tackling to death, Bijuli asked for help. We then came to her place and came to know that the children have already died of the poisoned seed cake stored for killing mice at nearby field. It is true that they were compelled to eat poisoned seed cake due to hunger and they being mere child were not aware that it was poisonous food that they were taking." It reflects the poverty of Dalits in Nepal.



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*Best wishes for A
Peaceful & Prosperous
World On the Occasion of
Merry Christmas &
Happy New Year-2007*

Jana Utthan Pratisthan (JUP)

Editorial



Jana Utthan Pratisthan (JUP-Nepal) a pioneer national Dalit NGO has been actively involved for human rights protection, environmental justice and socio-economic empowerment of Dalit community of Nepal.

Since its inception, it has been engaged in raising voices against caste-based discrimination, incidents of untouchability and atrocities upon Dalits by non-Dalits. Reports of these events have been disseminated to the national as well as international community through media advocacy.

To disseminate and communicate the information on several issues and concerns of Dalit community, JUP-Nepal has been laying due emphasis to the publications part. For this purpose, it has been publishing as well as disseminating several Nepali journals, magazines, brochures and progress reports. In order to globally disseminate the contemporary issues and concerns of Dalit community, JUP-Nepal has, with support from various development partners, been publishing the English bulletin "DALIT SOLIDARITY" since 2002. The bulletin has gained popularity and by providing factual on the crosscutting issues of Dalits. This is the fourth issue of this year.

This issue strives to cover specific issues of Dalit community. In this regard, it has extended priority to Dalit Parliament as a symbolic parliament organized by Rastriya Dalit Network on 9th and 10th December of this year. In addition, it has covered several other information including interview with Mr. Tilak Pariyar, Nepali Dalit honored in new Delhi, Dalit children died of poisonous substance, first envoy from dalit community proposed, Dalit minorities conference to be held in US, first chief justice of supreme court from Dalit in India, Dalits in interim constitution drafting committee unable to raise voice, severe violation of human rights, condolences to late Mohanlal Kapali, Kanshi Ram, B. G. Murthi and Golchhe Sarki, two articles – 'Building Inclusive Microfinance- A Global Campaigning' and 'The Complexity of Dalit Identity and Discrimination' and remarkable achievements of JUP-Nepal.

However, JUP-Nepal has been making substantial efforts to increase the overwhelming participation of Dalits in the run up election to the constituent assembly. It has, since its genesis, been lobbying and advocating for the proportionate representation of Dalit community in each sphere of life. Likewise, JUP-Nepal is always guided with the philosophy "Proportionate representation is the basic human rights of each mankind".

Indeed, JUP-Nepal takes pride in bringing out this fourth issue. We are highly indebted to all those, who have duly contributed from their own to bring out this publication. In real term, without their dedication, effort and goodwill, the bulletin would not have been published at all. We, therefore, would like to request all of them for their continued support for future issues.

On the happy occasion of Merry Christmas and New Year 2007, JUP-Nepal extends its best wishes and greetings to all its development partners, contributors and countrymen in general, and Dalit community in particular, for the progress and prosperity as well as perpetual partnership with all the mankind in this planet. ❖❖



Interview with

Mr. Tilak Pariyar "No Alternate to Republic"

The most prominent figure in Dalit movement, Tilak Pariyar was born in Banke district of Nepal. Mr. Pariyar was actively involved in Dalit movement after he resigned from the post of a teacher in 2021 B.S. He is the president of Nepal Dalit Liberation Front, the sister organization of CPN (Maoists). Since the Jhapa movement, he formally entered into politics and developed his career in that direction. He had greatly contributed in the peoples' movement-I in 2046 B.S. He, who got torture and spent several years of his life in the prison, feels liberation of Dalit community through democratic republic. Mr. Pariyar spoke to JUP correspondent regarding the above mentioned topic. Excerpts from his interview:

JUP-Nepal: How did you enter in politics?

Mr. Tilak Pariyar: I was born to a poor family of Dalit community. That time, our society was tyrannical patriarchal Hindu Brahmin society. For the class liberation, I had to involve in politics. I was a teacher as well as a diehard supporter of communism. I thought that there is no peace without revolution. Simultaneously, I made up my mind to carry on struggle and spend a life of prison. Accordingly, I entered into politics.

JUP-Nepal: Why did you leave teaching profession?

Mr. Tilak Pariyar: There is difference between education and ideology. The people even holding PhD lacks ideology. No class gets liberated without firm ideology. Ideology is recognized worldwide. First understand and change yourself then try to understand and change the world. The significance of education cannot be considered until it does not focus the human culture, thought and ideas. Education is also a weapon. Education without ideology is futile. Education should support the oppressed class against the feudal class of the society. Education should incorporate the concept of conflict based on materialism that changes the world as per the need of society. So, I left the profession of teaching and involved in politics.

JUP-Nepal: Why did you choose revolutionary party?

Mr. Tilak Pariyar: Revolutionary ideology prevails in the revolutionary party. No party exists unless it has revolutionary ideology. Firstly, it is important whether we are rooted and guided by revolutionary ideology or not. Secondly, united revolutionary ideology runs the revolutionary party. Revolutionary party forwards unity, transformation and struggle.

JUP-Nepal: Where do you find Dalits when you see from revolutionary ideology?

Mr. Tilak Pariyar: Different races of people in Nepal have created the problem of untouchability and exploit oppressed class. The problem of Dalits in Nepal is not racial rather class domination. The complete continuation of Class Liberation Movement, Racial Liberation Movement and Cultural Revolution is the best way out for Dalits.

JUP-Nepal: Currently the state is going to hold the constituent assembly election at earliest possible where and what do you see the rooms for Dalits in Nepal?

Mr. Tilak Pariyar: Constituent assembly election is a process through which people can decide their fate and future. They gain their sovereignty through it. The whole mechanism which is



persistent on tyrannical patriarchal Hindu Brahmin society should be restructured through constituent assembly. Restructure means restructuring everything including Nepali army through constituent assembly. Dalit should reach in federalism and hold republic, republican state governance, and special rights for Dalit and women in all respect of state governance. Henceforth, constituent assembly is very important for Dalits.

JUP-Nepal: How do you think the inclusion of Dalits can be ensured through constituent assembly?

Mr. Tilak Pariyar: Constituent assembly is very important. We cannot respect the people until we go for constituent assembly and political parties cannot gain their existence either. More importantly, the promotion and development of Nepali Dalits can be ensured through republic which can be achieved through constituent assembly. In constituent assembly, Dalits should be united and vote for secular democratic republic to restructure the state. Dalits who do not go against their inherent enemy, I don't think they want Dalits' liberation. Thus, all Dalits should actively exercise to wipe out monarchy.

JUP-Nepal: What type of electoral system will be suitable for overwhelming inclusion of Dalits in CA?

Mr. Tilak Pariyar: Equal competition between inequalities is not feasible. Due to Hindu culture, we Nepali Dalits have been made backward and electoral system should be competitive. The competition should be made among Dalits, rather than between Dalits and Non-Dalits. Then it can be called the real democracy/Loktantra, if not so, it is only a ploy and Dalits will be losing always. Unequal electoral system should not be entertained.

JUP-Nepal: For Dalits liberation, what sorts of state governance should be formed through constituent assembly?

Mr. Tilak Pariyar: Dalits should not hesitate to cast their vote against tyrannical patriarchal Hindu Brahminism monarchy and should be united for republican secular state and then Dalits won't have to repent in their whole life. Therefore, we request all Dalits to be united against our inherent enemy who exploited our ancestors and tried to harm us. This is the exit point for Dalit liberation. Whatever the people say, there is no alternate to republic.

Building Inclusive Microfinance- A Global Campaigning

- Man Bahadur Bk

Microfinance provides financial services to millions of the world's poor. Poor people, like the non-poor, may use financial services for many purposes and in different ways throughout their lives, but they are particularly vulnerable since their income is small and unstable. Thus it is difficult for them to anticipate when the need for small but critical amount of money than that which they would normally have access to. These amounts help them to overcome the problem of unstable income, for example by allowing them to pay school fees, pay for events such as wedding and funerals, or cope with crises as a result of illness or natural disaster. These amounts mostly are invested in income generating activities which help to reduce poverty. Throughout most of the world, poor people have little or no access to financial services that most of us take for granted. Financial institutions such as banks, insurance services and others have generally regarded 80 % of the world's population as an unprofitable market and have focused their attention on serving the richest 20 % (Simanowitz and Brody, 2004).

Thirty years ago, a group of development revolutionaries created a new strategy for attacking global poverty by providing small, uncollateralized loans to some of the poorest people in the world. Families were able to start or expand tiny businesses and, as a result, many found a dignified route out of poverty. Microfinance became one of the most powerful tools to address global poverty, and it has been doing so in a way that builds self-esteem in the individual and self-sufficiency in the institution providing the financial services. It works in synergy with other development interventions such as those that promote health, nutrition, democracy, and education. When executed effectively, it can 1) relieve suffering, 2) bring dignity, and 3) become sustainable, and 4) inspire supporters (Harris, 2006). Microfinance is a key strategy in reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and building global financial systems that meet needs of most poor people (Hashemi, 2004).

In 1997 from 2 to 4 February, the first Global Micro credit Summit had been organized to streamlining the microfinance activities practiced globally as a tool for poverty reduction. At the summit more than 2900

people from 137 countries gathered in Washington, DC. The summit focused on catalyzing the international development community to recognize that scaling up microfinance was essential to reaching the MDGs and creating a just world. At that summit, delegates launched a bold campaign to reach 100 million of the world's poorest families, especially the women of those families, with credit for self-



Author with the pioneer of microfinance and Nobel Peace prize-2006 winner Dr. Muhammad Yunus during the Global Microcredit Summit, Halifax, Canada

employment and other financial and business services by the end of 2005 (Harris, 2006). The main themes of the Micro credit Summit Campaign are as follows;

- Reaching the poorest
- Reaching and empowering women
- Building financially self-sufficient institution
- Ensuring a positive, measurable impact on the lives of clients and their families.

The Micro credit Summit Campaign plays a unique role in this field. The main components includes: 1) setting bold goals for micro credit, 2) measuring progress, and 3) removing barriers to achieving those goals. The Micro credit Summit Campaign has been dedicated to transforming that "moment in history" to a decade of positive change (Harris, 2006). In 1998, UN general assembly proclaimed the year 2005 as the 'International Year of Micro credit' to recognize the contribution of Micro credit to poverty alleviation. "Building inclusive financial sectors to achieve Millennium Development Goals" was the official slogan for the year (UNCDF, 2006). Its resolution A/58/488 further expanded the mandate for the year by 'stressing that people living in poverty in rural and urban areas need access to micro-credit and microfinance that enhance their ability to increase income, build assets and mitigate vulnerability in times of hardships' (CMF, 2006). The International Year of Micro credit 2005 has five overall objectives as bellow;

- To contribute to the MDGs by assessing and promoting the contribution of microfinance to achieve the goals,



- To increase the public awareness and understanding of microfinance,
- To promote inclusive financial system,
- To support sustainable access to microfinance by increasing the capacity of microfinance providers and
- To encourage innovation and partnerships.

To achieve these objectives, various activities have been undertaken in national, regional and international level. Despite the broad consensus regarding the importance of microfinance as a poverty alleviation tool, it is estimated that over two billion people are currently excluded from access to financial services. The situation is particularly dire in most Least Developed Countries (LDCs) where often more than 90% of the population is excluded from access to the formal financial system (UNCDF website). Thus 'Building Inclusive Financial System' has been the main theme of the year. At the conclusion of the 2005 International Year of Micro credit, one of the main recommendations of the Advisors Groups to the Year was that 'the UN should appoint a group of experts, for a limited period not exceeding two years'. Following the recommendation, the UN Advisors Group on Inclusive Financial Sectors was established in 2006 for a term of two years consisting of 25 individuals representing governments, central banks, regulatory agencies, microfinance institutions, civil society, development agencies and donors, and academia from all over the world. The main role of the Advisors Group is to advise the United Nations system and members states on global issues relating to inclusive finance (*Ibid*).

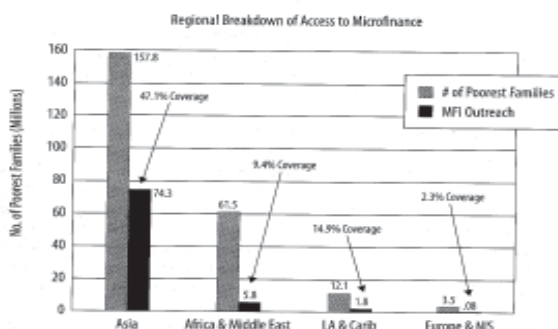
The next important event on this issue is the Global Micro credit Summit 2006, held from November 12-15 in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. The main attraction of the conference was the presence of prominent leaders of the microfinance including Dr. Mohammad Yunus, the novel peace prize winner for 2006 and Sofia, the queen of Spain. The Campaign was re-launched with two new goals for Phase II (Harris, 2006):

1. Working to ensure that 175 million of the world's poorest families, especially the women of those families, are receiving credit for self-employment and other financial and business services by the end of 2015.
2. Working to ensure that 100 million of the world's poorest families move from below US\$1 a day adjusted for purchasing power parity (PPP) to above US \$1 a day adjusted for PPP, by the end of 2015.

As per the report presented in the summit, by December 31, 2005, 3,133 microfinance institutions worldwide reached 113,261,390 clients with a current loan, 81,949,036 of whom were among the poorest (in the bottom half of those below their country's poverty line or below US \$ 1 a day) when they started with the program with (*Ibid*). Ninety-one percent of the poorest families reported are in Asia, a continent that is home to some 67 percent of the world's people living on less than US \$ 1 a day. The growth from 7.6 million poorest at the end of 1997 to 81.9 million poorest at the end of 2005 represents a growth of 978 percent during that eight-year period (*Ibid*). If the goal of reaching 175 million poorest clients is achieved by the end of 2015, the total number of clients will be 242 million affecting 1.2 billion family members.

Year	Number of Programs Reporting	Total Number of clients reached	Number of poorest clients reported
12/31/97	618 institutions	13,478,797	7,600,000
12/31/98	925 institutions	20,938,899	12,221,918
12/31/99	1,065 institutions	23,555,689	13,779,872
12/31/00	1,567 institutions	30,681,107	19,327,451
12/31/01	2,186 institutions	54,932,235	26,878,332
12/31/02	2,572 institutions	67,606,080	41,594,778
12/31/03	2,931 institutions	80,868,343	54,785,433
12/31/04	3,164 institutions	92,270,289	66,614,871
12/31/05	3,133 institutions*	113,261,390	81,949,036

Extracted from State of the Micro credit Summit Campaign Report 2006.



Extracted from State of the Micro credit Summit Campaign Report 2006

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The Complexity of Dalit Identity and Discrimination

- Sambriddhi Kharel

(Sambriddhi is a Sociology PhD candidate and a teaching fellow at the University of Pittsburgh, PA, USA. She is currently in Nepal for her dissertation field research that examines the complex and changing dynamic of Dalit identity within a context of growing resistance and against caste discrimination and exclusion. Concurrently, she is also the special contributor of this bulletin)

How do grassroots Dalit communities view themselves and how do they understand their Dalit identity? What are the implications and consequences of being a Dalit? The findings suggest two types of understanding of the term 'Dalit' in both the *Podae* (sweeper) and the *Kami* (metalworker) community. A small group had a general and a more political understanding of the term 'Dalit' as that of historically suppressed, oppressed, deprived, and excluded people i.e. in its originally intended meaning. The majority understood the term in its everyday connotation – as denoting low caste people or untouchables.

In the Poda community, those who had a more political understanding of 'Dalit' expressed anger at the fact that Newar castes (Dalits) were withdrawn from the Dalit category by the National Dalit commission. For them, this move is an attempt to deny the caste-based discriminatory practices prevalent in the Newar community, which only serves the interests of upper caste and elite Newars. The respondents felt that this fails to address the deep-rooted social problems of lower caste Newars who include Podaes (*deulas*). One respondent said, *"What about the low caste Newars? They have tried to remove us forcefully from the category of Dalits. There is a question mark on our Dalit identity despite the fact that our conditions have not improved. We are where we were before—excluded deprived, poor and oppressed"* (Interview July 2, 2006). This group of politically conscious individuals has used Dalit scholarships for their children's education. For them, not identifying as a Dalit is harmful as they will be deprived of special rights, and the economic problems of the community will not improve if their problems are not identified. They also feel that the usage of the term 'Dalit' will go away once untouchability is removed. Dalit activists also support this view. One activist articulates the importance of keeping a Dalit identity in this manner: *"We should not hide our identity. A sick person will never be cured by hiding the illness. Unless*

you identify a problem, you cannot redress it. We can let go of our Dalit identity once we achieve total freedom and equality for all Dalits in Nepal." (Interview, May 10, 2006). They believe that identification as Dalits will increase because of the possibility of proportional representation and special rights for marginalized groups with the recent discussions on inclusive democracy.

Despite the political understanding of term 'Dalit', many respondents seemed upset with using the 'Dalit' because of the stigma attached to it. They note that 'Dalit' sounds degrading and they do not view themselves any less than other castes. The *Podae* community would prefer to call themselves "*deula*". *Deula* means to take turns in temples as god's gatekeepers (*deutalai palo dinu*). They proudly note that even the king receives *prashad* (holy offerings) from their hands when he comes to the temple. They want to conceal their *Podae* (caste) identity by writing *deula* as their surnames, which sounds more respectable. They write *Podae* (caste) in their citizenship cards. They would rather emphasize their god's gatekeeper role although not everyone is active in that role. The *deula* status conceals the stigmatized status of the sweeper or *Podae*. A 19-year-old respondent told me that when her friends ask her what *deula* means she simply says, "newar" and her non-newar friends do not probe further. Many people in Kathmandu do not know that *deula* surname is that of the *Podae* caste. She further notes, *"I wish I was born into a higher caste. When people call us Poda, gu swarna (people who clean toilets) ridiculing us, I feel hurt and sad."* (Interview October 20, 2006). The *Podae* identity is not concealed for lack of reason. Many adolescents have lost friends once they have revealed their Dalit identity. They have been mistreated and humiliated in school and have refused to go back to school for fear of being called "*Podes*". Parents note that many children in the community drop out of school due to discrimination, financial problems and some drop out in search of a job. Few make it up to SLC (School Leaving Certificate). This limits their social and occupational mobility.



The *Biswakarmas* have a political understanding of the term Dalit partly because of the lack of confusion in categorization as in the case of Newar Dalits. Many have used surnames that are similar to upper caste names like Rijal and Risal. They admit that the surnames similar to Bahun and Chettri (upper caste) surnames work to their advantage because people treat them nicely until they find out that they are Dalits. Despite identifying themselves as 'Dalits' they are still hesitant to bring up caste issues, and they avoid revealing their caste membership in an attempt for assimilation into the society. Moreover, being a Dalit has a cost, what (Bennet, 2006) aptly calls 'the caste penalty.' Caste and ethnic identity are socio-cultural and structural barriers to ending discrimination and poverty, and to promoting economic growth. Being a Dalit has resulted in discrimination and exclusion. Many Dalits in Kathmandu are denied houses for rent and services once they reveal their caste and Dalit children are still treated badly in school

Findings also reveal contradictions in their narratives of the caste system. Dalits reject their stigmatized status and provide a critique of the caste system. At the same time, they buy into the caste hierarchy when they refer to other Dalit castes. For example, respondents of both communities use their caste identity to feel superior to each other. *Podeas* note that *damais* (tailors) and *Kamis* (metalworkers) are lower than them, and *Kamis* note that *Podeas* are lower than them in the caste hierarchy. But they also reject the caste system and support equality through expressions such as "if your hand is cut, it bleeds, if mine is cut, it bleeds, so how are you and I different?" and "we are all human beings. There are only two jats (castes), men (*lognae manchae*) and women (*aimai*)." It is not surprising that caste ideology and practices are reproduced among Dalit groups. Dalits are a part of the Hindu social structure and have an internal caste hierarchy. They feel that this hierarchy even though imposed on them is a tradition that started very long ago and hence it is hard breaking away from the system. This complexity has resulted in non-Dalits washing their hands of the responsibility of dealing with caste based discriminatory practices. As noted by one activist, "the so-called higher castes tell us that unless our own (Dalits') problems are solved and unless we end caste discrimination amongst ourselves, we have no right to talk about them. This attitude preserves their caste privilege and hinders positive change by justifying the status quo" (Interview May 18, 2006).

These findings show that caste identity is still salient in Kathmandu despite modernization, urbanization and development. Caste identity is a crucial social marker for Dalits, as for other castes. While this identity marking benefits Brahmin and Chettri groups, it costs the Dalits dearly. Activists talked about how caste prejudice and negative stereotypes of Dalits are deep-rooted and persistent. Although professional Dalits may be educated, clean, and of middle class status they are still seen as

polluted because of their birth. Their capabilities are also questioned. Activists spoke of good friends to whose houses they were never invited.

Despite living in Kathmandu (urban space), Dalits still face discrimination although the nature of the discrimination may differ across communities. In the case of *deulas*, respondents felt that discrimination has slowly declined in the city, especially in places of work due to modernization and their employers' open attitudes. Older respondents said they are treated well by their employers because they are judged by their work rather than their caste. The most pressing problem for the community is that of employment. Their caste identity no longer guarantees them their traditional jobs as sweepers and cleaners in the city. The unemployed respondents narrated the difficulty of finding jobs because of employment bias in favor of Bahuns and Chettris, some of who know people in high places. *Deulas* see their occupational right being taken away by other castes. Moreover, the new generation is losing out badly. Even though they may manage to study up to SLC, they are unable to compete with other castes in the open labor market and they are unable to find their traditional jobs. Many are underpaid in the private and semi-private sector due to subcontracting of their occupations. Their Dalit status, their poverty and their inability to negotiate for fear of losing the job have resulted in the super-exploitation of their labor. A sweeper working in the airport told me that she earns only Rs.1900 (around \$28) a month because the middle-man (*thekdar*) takes away a large amount. A 38 year old man working in a private organization earns around Rs.2,500 (around \$35) with no benefits. He has received no raise in salary despite working for 19 years. He and the other workers are scared to organize for fear of being fired.

In the case of *Kami* workers, the older generation is losing out. Their old profession of making agricultural tools is rendered obsolete as Kathmandu moves toward a service-oriented economy and an open market. Some are still active in the contractual system and are paid very little. The new male generation who are willing to take on the modern version of metal making, for example making silver ornaments are doing relatively well if they find good employers and they get good orders. However, some are severely cheated and exploited. Many respondents talked about how boys (some young as five) are kept in conditions similar to bonded labor, under the pretext of training, in a workshop owned by a Dalit (*Biswakarma*), one of their own caste members. They are paid nothing for three years and are not allowed to go home. Once their training is over, they are paid only around Rs. 500 a month. The respondents in this community felt that it might benefit their children by guaranteeing them employment later. My findings contradict previous findings that suggest that modernization has in fact provided good employment opportunities to Dalits.

In conclusion, living in Kathmandu has not subverted communal bases of caste. Instead, it has produced modern forms of oppression and inequality. Dalits in Kathmandu still face discrimination and shroud their origins as a coping strategy.



Achievements of JUP-Nepal

Training on Constitution Making Process

JUP-Nepal, with support from ActionAid International Nepal, organized two slots of training on constitution making process. The first slot was organized at Biratnagar from 1-3 December 2006 and the next was organized in Kathmandu from 21-23 December 2006, respectively.

The primary purpose of the training was to sensitize Dalit activists including Dalit political leaders at different levels about the process of Dalits' inclusion and their



proportionate representation in constituent assembly. The training was conducted to train Dalit activists and leaders from ActionAid partners and from various alliance members of JUP-Nepal. Meanwhile, the trained cadres would be deployed in their respective districts and transform their knowledge and skills to the community. Duration of training was three days in both the districts. The training thus organized covered the course including what, why and how constituent assembly? electoral system for Dalits inclusion in CA, Dalits' representation in CA, constituency divisions for Dalits inclusion in CA, proclamation of parliament, fundamental provision of new constitution, reservation and proportional representation and special rights of Dalits, and problems and issues of Dalits. Altogether, 75 activists/cadres attended the training.

In Kathmandu, the training was opened by Honorable Vice-Chairman of Upper House, Ram Prita Paswan, who was the chief guest as well.

At the closing of the session, participants prepared the action plan and submitted to JUP-Nepal. In the wrap up of the training, Mr. Yam Bahadur Kisan, the general secretary gave away the certificates to the training participants and expressed gratitude.

Bhim-Maya Janautthan Appreciation Prize Distributed

JUP-Nepal organized "Bhim-Maya Janautthan Appreciation Prize Distribution Ceremony" on 21 December, 2006 by coinciding the release of collection of poems "Mato ra Manchhe" composed of Mr. Man Bahadur Bk, alias "BK 'Sewak'". Mr. Ram Prit Paswan, the Honorable Vice-chairman of Upper House and academician Ramsaran Darnal jointly released the collection of poems. Mr. Paswan was the chief guest of the function.

"Bhim-Maya Janautthan Appreciation Prize" was awarded to Nawa Adarsha Multiple Campus of Palpa District. Mr. Kabi Raj Adhikari, the Chairperson of Campus Management

Committee, received the prize. Mr. Manoj Lohani, the treasurer of JUP-Nepal, chaired the function. Likewise, Mr. Rajan Lohani welcomed the participants and also presented a brief description



on why and how the award was established. Mr. "BK 'Sewak'", poet of the book and the instigator of the award explained the content of the book and objective of the award. Mr. Yam Bahadur Kisan, General Secretary of JUP-Nepal, highlighted on how the award was officially established. Ramsaran Darnal, the Academician and Mr. Padam Sundas, the president of *Nepal Dalit Sahitya tatha Sanskriti Pratisthan* said a new literary figure has entered in Dalit literature. Other speakers of the function shared their views on the Inclusion of Dalits in constituent assembly and added the importance of writing poem from Dalit perspective and providing award to inspire the people of Dalit community for sending their children to school.

Graduation Ceremony of JUP Peace Volunteers Held

JUP-Nepal had launched peace volunteer programme with the aim of bringing cultural and social harmony and sustainable change through the active involvement of peace volunteers in the conflict-hit districts of Nepal.



After the completion of tenure of JUP Peace Volunteers, JUP-Nepal held graduation ceremony on 3 December 2006. Mr. Man Bahadur Bk, the founder president assured that JUP-Nepal would give continuity to this program. He explained, such program would be further extended and made more advanced in the days to come.

Another participant of the program Mr. Nabin Karki, representative of Samuhik Abhiyan said JUP-Nepal has developed the new concept to promote peace culture in the society by developing Dalit professionals.

On the occasion, the peace volunteers shared their happiness and grievances amidst a function. They further added that the program has inspired and encouraged them to think seriously about the problems and conditions of

Dalits. They felt, such task is not possible from external forces alone and needs more internal human approach. It means that cultural and social harmony and sustainable change can be realized through the active involvement of peace volunteers. They also suggested utilizing local resources to the best possible extent rather than knocking at the gate of donors.

At the end, graduation certificates were given away to the peace volunteers by extending thanks for their contribution in volunteerism. After the conclusion of the programme, JUP Volunteers formed JUP Volunteer Alumni under the chairmanship of Mr. Suman Bramhashakha with the aim of promoting peace volunteerism on wider scale.

Contemporary News

Nepali Dalits Honored in New Delhi

Nepali Dalit leaders and journalists were felicitated and awarded on the auspicious occasion of 23rd National Conference of Bharati Dalit Sahitya Akadami. The program was organized in Talaktora Indoor



Stadium, Delhi, India. In the program, Central Minister - Meera Kumar, Member of Parliament - Ram Das Athawale and Former Rajyapal Dr. Mata Prasad felicitated and awarded the prize. Likewise, advisor of Dalit intellectuals Mr. Shankar Prasad Bishwokarma and journalist-Chandra Kumar Gadai were awarded with Dr. Ambedkar Excellency Award and International Ambedkar Brotherhood Award respectively. Mr. Gadai has been working as a Dalit journalist since past three years and has contributed a lot in Dalit movement. Mr. Gadai is recognized as the first professional journalist from Dalit community.

Mr. Om Prakash Bishwokarma (Leader of Dalit Pratinidhi Mandal and the president of Nepal-India Dalit Maitri Sangh) and the Dalit intellectuals of India raised the issues of Dalits and did serious discussion on it. Dalit leaders of India were found serious about the problems of Nepali Dalits. Other Dalit leaders including Tej Sunar and Subhag Harijan were awarded with Sewa Padak. Hari Om Bishwokarma, Mahendra Kumar Bishwokarma, Bir Bahadur Kisan, Surya Bahadur Budapriti, Lok Darsan Bishwokarma, Jagat Bishwokarma and other 15 were awarded with Dr. Ambedkar Fellowship Award. Indian ministers, members of parliament, Dalit intellectuals and leaders attended the function.

First Envoy from Dalit Community Proposed

The Nepal Government first time proposed an Ambassador from Dalit community, Mrs Guna Laxmi Sharma BK, for

Manmyar. Mrs. Guna Laxmi Sharma, an inhabitant of Dolakha District, was born to a Bishwakarma family. Mrs. Sharma had intercaste marriage to Mr. Gopal Thapaliya who is journalist by profession, as well as a leader of UML. Earlier, she had been serving as an Acting Director, Logistic Management Division (LMD)/Dept of Health Services until March 2003. Currently, she is working as Head of District Public health office in Teku. Originally, she entered in the nursing job and also ruled the Nursing Association as a president. In addition to her professional career, Mrs. Sharma BK was also associated with the democratic and human rights movement since the Panchayat regime. At that time, democratic leaders of Nepal used her house as their shelter for carrying out political activities. However, she has made significant contribution in both the people's popular movements of Nepal in 1990 and 2006 respectively, by mobilizing medical professionals including doctors, nurses, among others to restore LOKTRANTRA AND HUMAN RIGHTS.

This apart, she is only Dalit lady, who has been able to capture the higher post (Second class officer) in the government bureaucracy. She is the life member of 'Jana Utthan Magazine of JUP- Nepal'. JUP-Nepal extends hearty congratulation to Mrs. Sharma and thanks to Nepal Government for nominating her in such a dignified post of ambassador (envoy) from Dalit Community.

International Human Rights Day Observed

State Minister for Women, Children and Social Welfare Urmila Aryal and CPN-UML central committee member Shanta Manavi criticized Dalit representatives in the Interim Constitution Drafting Committee for being unable to get a hold of anything for deprived community. The interaction program on "Issues of Dalit Human Rights" was organized by Dalit NGO Federation on 10th Dec 2006. Each speaker expressed solidarity to fight for the rights of the Dalits. The function was organized to mark 58th International Human Rights Day.

Dalit speakers urged state minister Aryal and Manavi to raise their voice for the Dalit communities in a rather aggressive tone. Aryal and Manavi suggested the victims pressurize the government.

"I am probably the first person to begin politics by raising the issues of the Dalits," Aryal said, adding that she would do her best to support the cause of the downtrodden communities. Representation alone is not sufficient when the representatives cannot stand with the agendas," Aryal said. Manavi said Min Bishwokarma should have called on the Dalit leadership if he was unable to negotiate. Aryal said that a budget of Rs 10 crores has been allocated for the Dalits which would be released by the Ministry of Local Development every year.

Former Member of Parliament Bijul Biswokarma said that even after the April movement, so-called higher class people



has been flourished in the state mechanism. "We won't accept any form of autocracy," he said, adding that the political leaders were also following the path of the king which was 'unfortunate'.

On the same occasion, International Commission for Dalit Rights (ICRD) issued a press release. The press release issued by D.B. Sagar, The general Secretary of the commission mentions "Over the years, 260 million Dalit people in the world have been facing caste (work and descent) based discrimination and obstacles to fully enjoy their fundamental and socio-political rights. Caste or work and descent based discrimination is major cause of human rights violation and poverty in the South Asia and part of Africa. Without addressing caste-issue in South Asia, it is impossible to fight poverty as the theme of International Human Rights Day 2006. Dalit people have not been able to protect and promote their rights in Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and other parts of Asia and some of the African Countries due to deep poverty and lack of access. Sadly, the UN, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other international policies have not been addressing caste-agenda as a major challenge of poverty, barrier of democratic process, human rights and social justice. However, global human rights and social justice movement have been trying to build solidarity and supports to establish Dalit rights in the contemporary world."

At the end, the press release urges all Governments, United Nations, Aid Agencies, international and national civil society to fight together against caste or work and descent based discrimination and consider it a major cause of poverty, violation of UN Human Rights Declaration and rule of laws.

Severe Violation of Human Rights

The death sentence of Saddam took place in the headquarters of Hussein's former military intelligence service in Baghdad's Kadhimiyah neighborhood.



He was hanged on Saturday morning, Dec 30, 2006 for crimes against humanity in the mass murder of Shiite men and boys in the 1980s. Saturday morning he was escorted from U.S. military prison cell Camp Cropper, near Baghdad airport, handed to Iraqi officials. He was executed on the day Sunni Muslims, of which he was one, were to begin celebrating the Muslim festival of Eid al-Adha. Freedom to life is the inherent human right of the human being. Iraqi government has deliberately violated the universal basic human rights to life, by executing Saddam Hussein. JUP-Nepal strongly denounces such heinous job of Iraqi government, terming it as a severe violation of human rights.

Saddam Hussein was born on April 28, 1937 to a peasant family in Tikrit, about 100 miles north of Baghdad. His stepfather apparently mistreated him as a boy. Saddam Hussein was the President of Iraq from July 16, 1979 until April 9, 2003, when he was deposed during the 2003 invasion of Iraq. As a leader of Iraq and head of the Baath Party, he espoused secular pan-Arabism, economic modernization, and Arab socialism. As vice president under his cousin, the frail General Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr, Saddam tightly controlled conflict between the government and the armed forces by creating repressive security forces and cementing his own firm authority over the apparatus of government. As president, Saddam ran an authoritarian government and maintained power and stability in the country. During his rule the Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988) and the Gulf War (1991) happened. He repressed movements deemed threatening to the stability of Iraq, particularly those of ethnic or religious groups that sought independence or autonomy along tribal lines. He was and remains a popular hero among many Iraqis and Arabs for standing up to Israel and the United States.

Saddam Hussein's government collapsed as a result of the 2003 invasion of Iraq led by the United States, and he was captured by American forces on December 13, 2003. On November 5, 2006, he was convicted of crimes against humanity by the Iraq Special Tribunal and was sentenced to death by hanging. On December 26, Saddam's appeal was rejected and the death sentence upheld.

Dalit Minorities Conference to Be Held in US

According to the Times of India (Jan 8), the next international Dalit and Minorities Conference is slated to be held in the United States in 2008. According to Mr. Sanjay Singh, spokesman of the Lok Janshakti, the date and venue of the conference would be decided later and Dr. S Nakadar and Dr K P Singh will be the Chairman and Convenor of the next conference respectively. This programme was decided by adopting a resolution at the end of the two-day Dalit Minorities International Conference held in Delhi on December 27 and 28, 2006. The meeting also decided that the international conference would be held every two years in a foreign country and a minimum of six state conferences would precede each global meet.

The meeting also appointed 27 Conveners for 23 countries, including the US, India, UK, Nepal, Bangladesh, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Sri Lanka, Japan, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Canada, Germany, Belgium, New Zealand and Australia.

First Chief Justice of Supreme Court from Dalit in India

Despite Dalit community in India still faces widespread discrimination; a member of India's so-called lowest Hindu caste became chief justice of its powerful Supreme Court for the first time in the history of India. Justice K.G.





Balakrishnan, 61, will take over on Jan 14 when the incumbent, Y. K. Sabharwal, retires. Balakrishnan's selection to one of the most powerful posts in India was approved by President A.P.J Abdul Kalam. Balakrishnan is a member of India's Dalit community formerly known as "untouchables". He is from the communist-ruled southern state of Kerala, which has India's highest literacy rate and some of the country's best social indicators including for Dalits. Dalits, who make up about 16 percent of India's 1.1-billion population, still face intense prejudice and even violence in many rural areas and small towns. In many areas, they are still not allowed to enter temples or even sit next to upper caste Hindus. In this regards, his appointment will certainly influence on inclusion of Dalits in South Asia.

Dalit Movement Lost some Dalit Leaders

During this quarter, Dalit Movement lost some renowned Dalit leaders. JUP-Nepal expresses its heartfelt condolences over the demise of Mohanlal Kapali, Kanshi Ram, B. G. Murthi and Golchhe Sarki respectively.

Mohanlal Kapali (Nepal)

The living history of Dalit Movement, Mohanlal Kapali died on 28th of November 2006, around 11 am because of cardiac arrest. He was 84 but living almost a healthy life as other than old age complications, he was not seriously ill. At around 8 am he felt uneasiness in his heart and was taken immediately to Sahid Gangalal Heart Hospital. He was checked thoroughly and given only some iron tablets and returned back home. When he was about to enter the home, he passed away.



Since the time of Rana autocratic and oligarchy regime his whole family was very revolutionary and did not accept the practice of untouchables in any form. To combat such inhuman practices of the time he developed himself as a sports man and did body building. He along with some other friends were able to create fear among the so-called upper caste society that if caste based discrimination was practiced with him, he would revolt against it. He was politically also conscious and affiliated first with the founder of Nepali communist movement Pushpalal and later on till his death associated with Ganeshman Singh and Nepali Congress. Because of his sportsmanship he became famous and was able to establish linkage with the royal family (king Tribhuwan and Mahendra) that link was instrumental to bring new civil code 2020 replacing the old civil code of 1910.

During 2019-20 Dalit leaders including Mohanlal Kapali did various Movements, many in the form of symbols to

influence King Mahendra. Eventually having a big gathering of Dalits at Khulamanch (Tundikhel Open Theatre), only after that King Mahendra brought the new civil code. Therefore, Mohanlal Kapali should be regarded as one of the founders of the Dalit movement. Mr. Om Prakash Bk. has written his bibliography

Kashi Ram (India)

A prominent political leader of the lower caste Dalits in India, Kanshi Ram, died on October 2006 at his home in the capital, Delhi. Mr. Ram, 72, founded the Bahujan Samaj Party, a regional party which he led along with Mayawati, a former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh state. He was ailing and bedridden for the past two years. Mr. Ram emerged as the symbol of a growing political role for the Dalits in Indian politics in the 1980s. In his condolence message, Indian PM Monmohan Singh described Mr. Ram as "one of the greatest social reformers of our time...his political ideas and movements had a significant impact on our political evolution". However, "He had a larger understanding of social change and was able to unite various underprivileged sections of our society and provide a political platform where their voices would be heard," Mr Singh said.



Under Mr Ram's leadership, the BSP won 14 parliamentary seats in the 1999 federal elections. The BSP, founded in 1984, has led the government in the restive and politically crucial northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh several times. In 1995, Mayawati, who was groomed by Mr Ram, took over and became the first leader of a Dalit party to head a state government in India. Apart from Uttar Pradesh, the BSP has a considerable presence in Punjab as well as the central state of Madhya Pradesh. Analysts say Mr. Ram was an astute politician and was hugely influential among India's Dalits or untouchables. Under Mayawati's leadership, the BSP has now toned down its anti-upper-caste rhetoric to broaden its support base, reaching out now to the upper-castes and to Muslims.

B.G. Murthi (Bangladesh)

B.G. Murthi very promising Dalit Leader of Bangladesh died on October 2006. He struggled in his own country to assert the rights of Dalits as well as brought the issue of Dalit to draw the attention of international community. It is an irreparable loss to the international Dalit movement in general and Bangladeshi Dalit movement in particular. The settlement of BG Murthi was in extreme adverse situation. Their settlement was erected over sewerage and they were forced to live in such an unhygienic condition and it must be one of the factors for his untimely death.

It was very difficult for us to believe that caste based discrimination exists in Bangladesh since it's a Muslim country. However, the 1.5 million Dalits of Bangladesh are going through extreme form of discrimination than in other



Hindu countries where root of caste based discrimination emerged. His life history was also full of struggle as he was an employee of government tax office working as a sweeper (his whole community is compelled to be on this menial and filthy job) and was not allowed to serve tea to his Muslim fellow Bangladeshi. He decided to leave the job and bring in forefront the agony of Bangladeshi Dalits by forming Bangladesh Dalit Human Rights Organization. Over the last 25 years of his untiring work for his fellow brothers and sisters, he has been successful to draw the attention of major political parties of Bangladesh and brought the case into international arena. Since there is a long way to go for the Bangladeshi Dalits, his death has caused an irreparable loss to the entire Bangladeshi Dalits.

His participation in the international consultation meeting on caste based discrimination held in Nepal in 2004 and World Social Forum-Karanchi in 2005 respectively was remarkable where he reverberated the misery and issues of Bangladeshi Dalits and reaffirmed his commitment to the struggle of Dalits of the whole world. Mr. Murti formed Bangladesh Dalit Human Right Organization in 2001, the pioneer and first organization of Dalits in Bangladesh.

Golchhe Sarki (Nepal)

Former Minister and Dalit politician, Mr. Golchhe Sarki passed away on Friday, December 29, 2006 while undergoing treatment at Norvic Hospital. He was suffering from diabetes for a long time. Late Golchhe Sarki from Dalit community was born in Kathmandu district. Prior to his entry into Nepalese politics, Mr. Sarki was subsisting his living from his own indigenous occupation of shoe making or shoe polishing. Late Sarki was elected as a member of the National Assembly from the CPN-UML in 1990, and came to limelight after beating a popular Minister Mr. Ram Chandra Paudel (NC), while the parliament session was at progress. He was the erstwhile President of Utpidit Dalit Utthan Manch, the largest network of Dalits.

His contribution to Nepalese Dalit movement is worthwhile, particularly for enhancing the awareness of rights of Dalits for nearly two decades. Late Sarki was politically famous during the 1990s, whilst it created positive impact on the awareness level among the Dalit people. Irrespective of his significant contribution towards the rights and protection of Dalit community, he was bitterly criticized by Dalits and politicians for joining royal cabinet and quitting the CPN-UML party, thereby, changing his political ideology. However, Nepalese Dalit community must remember him for his contribution in Dalit movement.

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to participate in the two days program. If we see this event from the perspective of Dalit movement in Nepal, there is indeed a great need of the real Dalit Parliament, which can embrace all Dalit political forces in the country. This is particularly a need of this time, when a process of forming an interim national parliament and the government has begun with the sole aim of carrying out constituent assembly election to be held sometime in the year 2007. What we have seen in the most recent developments is that all the Dalit political forces in the country have been absorbed by the national political parties into their respective Dalit wings as their sister organizations. This disintegration of Dalit forces has had direct negative impact on consolidation of ongoing Dalit movement into a single force. Dalit political forces are clearly divided, there is no doubt about it, and this is not something that is unexpected. It is natural that Dalit people like the people of any other groups cannot be expected to be in a single ideological affiliation under one banner of a single political party, especially in the era of democratic republic of present day society. The people's minds are diverse as many as the people themselves. They can have diverse political ideologies, and can be affiliated to any political line of their closest leaning. This must be accepted by one and all. However, we in the Dalit movement should have a single agenda (Democratic Republic) to bring all full rights to Dalits. And, this agenda should be a meeting point for all Dalit

political forces, no matter how they differ in the rest of their political agenda as per their own party line. Therefore, this meeting should make the concept of Dalit Parliament more relevant to serve as the single platform to address the single agenda, which everyone agrees too.

The concept of Dalit Parliament must be pushed forward with greatest seriousness by one and all. If all the stakeholders of Dalit movement can get together in a series of proposed Dalit Parliament that will be the beginning of the real Dalit Parliament in Nepal, which must be recognized by the new constitution of Nepal to be formed through the constituent assembly.

It is clear that Dalit population could put forth their rights as too strong a case in the formation of Nepal's Interim Constitution which is currently on the offing. They relied too much on the seven parliamentary parties. However, let us hope that Dalits will get some space during the interim period. Whatever we may get during the interim period will be no means enough for the space Dalit population deserve in the country, by simple measure of the magnitude of their population. We need to put forth a manifold stronger front to acquire the space we deserve. Only way to achieve this exclusively representative front is to form a Dalit Parliament. Let's meet and have wide intellectual debate on these issues.

