



DALIT SOLIDARITY NETWORK UK

Dalit Solidarity and Decent Work

The UK Dalit Solidarity Network (DSNUK) is part of an international network campaigning for the recognition of caste discrimination and how people can take action to end this human rights abuse.

DSNUK aims to change values and practices through policy changes worldwide. We are working towards equality and social justice for Dalits both in the UK and other cast affected countries. We work jointly with other like-minded groups, for example :SKA * ; building strategic alliances to maximise advocacy opportunities and build a stronger network of organisations raising the issue of caste discrimination both in the UK and in caste affected countries.

DSNUK can offer a selection of educational and campaign materials on caste discrimination to individual groups, Unions, Ingo's with significant presence in caste affected countries, and (importantly) in the Corporate Sector. This includes a caste discrimination training programme in which DSNUK hopes to raise awareness and give practical advice on caste discrimination and how to combat it.

Partnering with other like minded groups - SKA *

Safai Karmachari Andolan (SKA)* is a national movement committed to the eradication of manual scavenging and the liberation and rehabilitation of all such safai karmacharis (manual scavengers) into dignified occupations. SKA's major focus is to organise and mobilise the safai karmachari community around issues on dignity and rights, accompanied by strategic advocacy and legal interventions.

Whilst focussing primarily on the rights of persons engaged in manual scavenging, we are also (alongside SKA) committed to working with all those engaged in 'unclean' occupations, such as pit or septic tank workers, sewage workers and sweepers, who fall within the ambit of 'safai karmacharis'.

SKA is one of the first organisations to organise women from the safai karmachari community to assert their right to a life with dignity. In this way DSNUK and SKA work in close collaboration with other Dalit and human rights organisations committed to rights of socially excluded communities.

Internationally

DSNUK - Calls on the Indian Government to :

1. The Indian Government - to immediately release the Rs800 crore set aside for the liberation, rehabilitation and re education of Manual Scavengers and continue funding until rehabilitation is complete.
2. The Indian Government - to undertake an extensive evaluation into how money already released for the rehabilitation of manual scavengers has been spent.
3. The Indian Government - to ensure that all Districts construct safe forms of sanitation to replace dry latrines.
4. Free health and Sanitation Programmes - should be provided to protect and care for former Manual Scavengers whose health has been adversely affected by their occupation.
5. International institutions, Governments, Humanitarian organisations, Labour organisations and companies - to acknowledge manual scavenging and the massive human rights abuse that it represents. Stepping up efforts to eradicate this practice should go hand in hand with a commitment to support rehabilitation and training programmes for alternative livelihood and sustenance providing a living wage and **Decent Work**
6. In the lead up to the Commonwealth Games 2010.- DSNUK call for affirmative action programmes for Dalits to be introduced to ensure that employment created by the Games is equally accessible to Dalits
7. In September 2009, - a delegation from the International Dalit Solidarity Network (including Dalit Solidarity Network UK and Safai Karmachari Andolan) gave Navi Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights at the U.N. in Geneva a piece of brick - not just any brick - but a piece of brick from a smashed and torn-down dry latrine once cleaned by a Dalit Manual Scavenger.

In her opinion piece of 8 October 2009, Navi Pillay wrote:

“As a woman of colour from a racial minority growing up in apartheid South Africa, I know a thing or two about discrimination. Today, caste affected communities and civil society activists are hoping to tear down the much bigger invisible wall of discrimination by trying to promote new international standards of equality and non-discrimination. I have tremendous respect for their determination and courage”.

United Kingdom

DSNUK - Calls on the UK Government to :

1. The UK government to express concern on this issue - and the lack of progress on legislation intended to eradicate this practice in the delivery of goods and services as well as employment within the UK.
2. The UK government's department for International Development - to use its programmes and funding in India to actively support the implementation of eradication and rehabilitation programmes to end this human rights violation.

Update UK :

Recent Equalities Bill - ammendment

The Equality Bill has been making its way through the UK Parliament over the past three years. DSNUK have been campaigning since 2006 for the inclusion of caste as a 'protected characteristic' alongside sex, race, religion, gender etc. This was steadfastly refused on the grounds that all the evidence was purely anecdotal. This, despite amendments being laid down in the House of Commons by supportive MPs across the parties. Thus, DSNUK leading a coalition with other Ngo's and communities in the UK took the campaign to the House of Lords during its reading of the Bill

On March 24, 2010 the House of Lords passed an amendment to the Equality Bill empowering the British government to include "caste" within the definition of "race". The amendment to the Equality Bill will empower the British government to include "caste" within the definition of "race". On an International level, this threatens India's much-touted success in keeping caste out of the resolution adopted at the 2001 Durban conference on racism.

This provision to outlaw caste discrimination within the UK came as a direct consequence of intensive lobbying by the DSNUK led coalition of Dalit groups and Communities within the UK.