THE INCLUSIVITY PROJECT

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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About The Inclusivity Project

TIP is a research and analysis institute which plans to conduct research on the under developed, under reached and invisible communities in the world through providing ground level research data, evidence and information to the world. It also aims to map and network these communities and build capacities of these communities and individuals from the communities through trainings, study courses, conferences, discussion groups and exposure visits for understanding the conditions and magnitude of the concerns. The institution will be also working on the sustainable development goals (SDGs) especially on the monitoring and follow up/review as well as providing data and evidence for the nation state for effective and inclusive program implementation.

Globally there are many communities and groups which are underrepresented in the development paradigm. Lack of information or data (or disaggregate data) has proved catalytic in their social/human, economic and political under development of these communities. They have been socially excluded due to various socio-cultural determinants like race, class, caste, ethnicity, age, sexuality, location or linguistic representation. These communities have been invisible to many developmental programs and services, which made them unreachable to developmental dialogues and participation.

The scarcity of research and data has played a crucial role in their inability in inclusive and effective procurement of the basic services, thus making them vulnerable to any forms of positive and equitable action. This has also contributed to their low socio-cultural integration, thus inversely affecting their economic and political participation. The Sustainable development goals (SDG) has opened a new prism of data collection and sharing which would bring the various groups and communities to come together.

These communities are found all over the world, without an identity or common name, and more over unaware of the others existence. In lack of credible research and data, there is no platform for a unified identity for these communities within and among the countries. Thus TIP tries to provide research, data and information resources for these groups and communities for ensuring integration and inclusion through systematic and sustainable mechanisms.

The Inclusivity Project in 2020

The year 2020 was a year of historic significance to the human kind. The scale of the disaster caused by COVID-19 was unprecedented and unexpected, with more than 77 million people were affected by one of the greatest pandemics in history. While many were restricted to their homes for safety, virtual meetings have thrived in the absence of travel and physical meetings. The Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD) rights work has continued in the midst of the calamities and grew and thrived despite all the adversities the year brought.

While the year began like any other, however with several countries imposing lockdowns and restricting travel from March, programmes after March 2020 were either held virtually and/or with a limited number of participants present physically. Here are some of the highlights of the year:

CONFERENCES/EVENTS

NATIONAL CONSULTATION - LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND - INDIA VNR 2020

The national consultation on Leave No One Behind- India VNR 2020: Localizing SDG through Dalit Perspectives was held on 28 January 2020 in Conference hall in YMCA, New Delhi. This consultation was organized by National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) in association with NITI Aayog, UN India and WNTA; and co organized by Dalit Human Rights Defenders Network (DHRD Net), Indian Institute of Dalit Studies (IIDS), National Federation of Dalit Women (NFDW), Jan Sahas, Safai Karmachari Andholan (SKA), National Coalition for Strengthening SC/ST PoA Act (NCSPA) and Asia Dalit Rights Forum (ADRF).

The Inaugural session was chaired by Ms Beena Pallical (NCDHR). She invited Ms Sanyukta Samaddar (Advisor, NITI Aayog), Ms Lubna Qadri (WNTA) and Mr Paul Divakar (ADRF) for providing their inaugural address in the National Consultation. Ms Sanyukta Samaddar (Advisor, NITI Aayog) said that VNR is the highest review process on SDG. It explains how the country has progressed on the aspect of leave no one behind. She further emphasized that we have tried to localize the SDGs at local level, even beyond the state level and sensitize how

the developmental programme can be based on SDGs. She further added Land rights, access to physical resources, access to basic services, these issues need to be addressed to improve the lives of the Dalit community. Broader issues – caste discrimination these are not as visible as they used to be, however it is still experienced by the people. More we go out of urban India this discrimination is entrenched and here the role of civil society comes forward. Political participation in the local governance system - representation of SCs and STs has yet not taken in the way it should have.

The special reflections of the workshop session were provided by Ms Renata Lok Dessalien, UN Resident Coordinator, UN India. She said "we are charged with many missions at the UN and SDGs guide the work. Behind this is a mantra which we repeat of LNOB, frequently, but who is left behind and how to ensure they aren't left behind is an enormous task." India will be presenting its VNR, we engage with them to see how we do it, and we do it with CSOs, that help with consultations to understand the issues better and help Govt reporting. This will not only be limited to the VNR but also feed into amplifying voices way beyond Government's national report, but also feed into UN's own reflection as UN turns 75 this year. Consultations with all groups will feed into our listening and way forward.

ASIA PACIFIC FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 2020

The first major program, ADRF has intervened, since the pandemic. While there has been limitation in the programmes due to the virtual nature of the event, DWD Dalit constituency were able to make a statement on the key issues faced by the communities in achieving the SDGs. While this meeting was held during the initial stages of the pandemic, the discussions were often limited to the impact of the lockdown on the marginalized communities in Asia. Paul Divakar, Executive Director, The Inclusivity Project, spoke on behalf of the DWD Dalit communities in the APFSD 2020.

DWD Dalit Constituency Statement APFSD 2020

The COVID19 has brought the world closer and provided a much-needed reality check on the sustained and transformative development aimed by Agenda 2030. We appreciate the tremendous work done by governments, doctors, nurses, sanitation workers, police and other essential service people. While the world readjusted to work from home and lockdowns; people from marginalized communities have been quietly been suffering the sad fate. Among the most affected communities, DWD Dalits communities face unprecedented vulnerabilities which are mixture of current crisis with the existing socio-economic exclusion in the countries. These are wide reaching impacting on the society from on the one hand in cities becoming migrant refugees without work, wage, food or shelter and on the other hand in villages, violence is unleashed as they are stigmatized as the vector of the violence.

Their human capacities and wellbeing are under challenge as most among the DWD communities depends on daily wages and unskilled/semi-skilled work thus lockdown has affected their and their family's livelihood. Lack of sustainable and just economic capacities ha limited their inabilities to pay for their food and shelter as migrants in the cities. The environmental concerns are high among these communities as COVID19 spread among them could be drastic as they often stay in ghettos with unclean environment. Food and health sustainability is another concern with lack of state support, hunger and inaccessible healthcare services have reciprocated the plight of DWD communities.

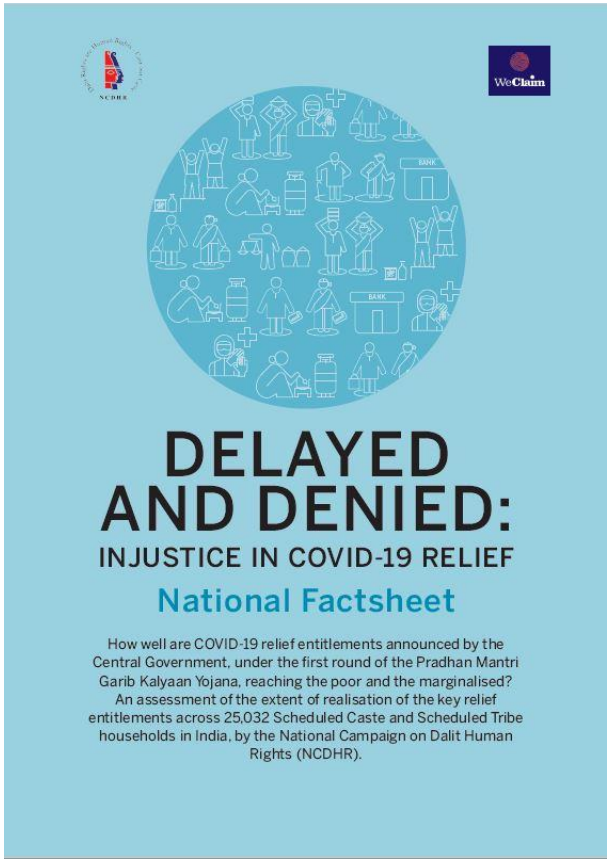
We call for proper implementation of the aid and services to be ensured for the DWD communities in the countries as well as protection from caste related violence which has increased as part of the lockdown and COVID Mitigation Measures.

COVID-19 WEBINARS AND COUNTRY-WISE IMMEDIATE ASSESSMENT PAPERS

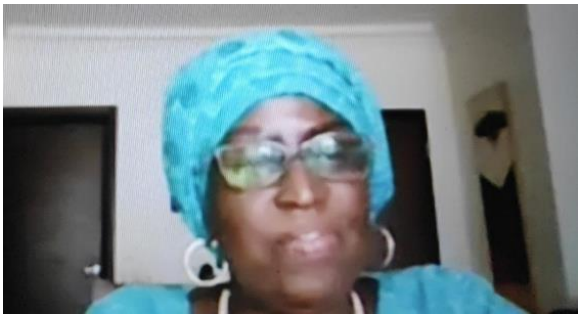
With increasing information on the negative impact of the COVID-19 and administrative mishaps during this time, ADRF has called for a meeting on collating immediate assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on the Dalit communities in South Asia. The immediate assessment was completed in the Bangladesh, India and Nepal on the impact of COVID-19 on Dalit communities and the first set of webinars were held in the month of June.

The first series of webinar was held by ADRF Nepal, who brought out the key findings from the various organisations working on the Dalit issue including the finding done by Dalit NGO Federation (DNF) in coordination with other key Dalit organisations in Nepal, Feminist Dalit Organisation (FDO) and Samata foundation. The various organisations provided insights of the key issues facing the Dalits in Nepal including the impacts of the lockdown, first responders and sanitation workers. Further emphasis was provided towards the Dalit women, children and old people. One of the key interventions was to highlight the horrific caste-based violence leading to murders of young Dalit boys and girls.

The second of the series was focused in impact of COVID19 the Dalit communities in India. NCDHR and other supporting organisation has held this India meeting with various concepts on the effects on migrants, Dalit women, children, manual scavengers and other sub groups. The webinar brought a great deal of interventions for the Dalit communities in India and effects of the COVID19 on the fight for equality and justice in the country. The webinar also highlighted the impact made by rights-based organisation around the country in providing basic services to the Dalit households. NCDHR and its partners have reached more than 40,000 Dalit households in India. Another key impact was made by the widespread survey which was plan to understand the situation of Dalits in India through app-based survey named WeClaim. This app helped in creating a systemic understanding of the issues in the country during the pandemic through analysis of the key schemes for basic welfare of all the communities in the country.



HLPF 2020 – SIDE EVENT/INTERVENTIONS



ADRF and Global Forum on DWD (GFoD) held the Side event on the ***DWD communities in COVID19: Mitigation Measures for Transformative Development*** on July 14, 2020 through web conferencing. The webinar was moderated by Prof Penda Mbow (GFoD Advisor) who stated (the) question of people discriminated based on descent and work is a profound question relating to a very old society. She further adds, vulnerability everywhere in the world means that we need to look very deeply into what is happening for our communities. These people are less capable of protecting themselves against COVID 19. They are poor, sometimes living in terrible conditions, including crowded houses in urban areas, inadequate water, and poor sanitation. This discrimination is still going on, and we have to take measures to protect these vulnerable people.

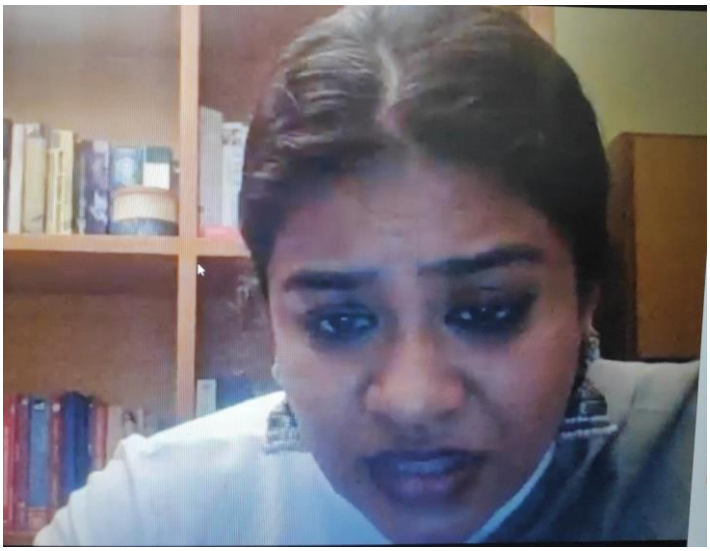
The Executive Director of TIP, Paul Divakar expressed the expanded marginalisation faced by the Communities Discriminated based on Work and Descent (CDWD) while stating historically oppressive conditions of these communities in COVID 19 today are pushing them towards a downward spiral of progress. The data that we have and the case stories point to too many from the DWD community being left jobless, vulnerable to health hazards, lacking access to services, facing hunger, and lacking decent shelter. The direct impact of COVID 19 has crippled the livelihood of DWD communities. He further adds, the wider society has failed miserably to identify with disaggregated data and recognized the deaths, discrimination, and exclusion of DWD brothers and sisters in this pandemic. Today, I invite you to dream big to bind ourselves together and fight for our rights and strength and dignity. In the words of our leader, Dr Ambedkar: for ours is a battle not for wealth of power; it is a battle for freedom. It is a battle for the reclamation of human personality with justice on our side.

On the struggles faced by the Roma communities in Pandemic, Ms Gabriela Hrabanova (Executive Director, ERGO Network) stated Roma are exposed to racism by their co-citizens within some countries. One-third to half of the population don't want to have a Roma colleague according to the fundamental rights agency. With increasing police brutality in most of the European states, Roma has been further vulnerable during the pandemic. She further adds, it's critical to recognize that human rights and socio-economic crises, particularly for vulnerable groups, are not over after the end of the pandemic. It's also essential to acknowledge that Roma have experienced a crisis all along, not only now during COVID 19. Short impact solutions for vulnerable communities will not resolve the overall long-term consequences of the parent crisis.

On the impact of COVID-19 in Asia, Ms. Durga Sob (Co-Chair Asia Dalit Rights Forum) expressed in terms of Dalit communities, the COVID 19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown has brought many devastating effects in the lives of the DWD community. The majority of them have been compelled to live on near-daily wages without saving. The majority of them are migrant workers, domestic workers, sanitation workers, farmers, and

health workers. The pandemic has hit them hard. If we see the situation through the gender lens, an increase in violence has been reported. Adding to her statement, she recommends, the universal coverage of Dalit and DWD communities' infected people is all social protection schemes on the mission mode of insert intricate budget, including sexual and domestic violence.

The UN Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination member, Ms. Rita Izsak-Ndiaye, reassured the UN's commitment towards the CDWD and other marginalized communities, stated the first challenge is access to information and especially access to information in minority and indigenous languages. We also have to talk about food security and the lack of access to water. Also, healthcare access has always been a structured inequality. The problem is now the lack of tests and the lack of healthcare professionals' willingness to visit minority communities. We also have to remember the challenge we have with stigma. We know that stigma is a process of dehumanizing and devaluing people in specific population groups, often based on disgust.



Addressing the challenges of women specifically DWD women, Ms Nishtha Satyam (Deputy Country Representative, UN Women India) stated as the agency that leads work on women, we are asked about the impact of COVID-19 on women from marginalized communities. Sanitation workers across the cities and we know that at the front line of COVID 19 across the world and particularly in India are thousands of healthcare professionals and workers, but mainly for the sanitation workers, a sense of abandonment prevails. Those who are at the margins are providing safety to those who are visible. Estimates point out that there are about five million sanitation workers in India, most of whom belong to Dalit communities. She further adds, we know that the lockdown and the normalization of social distancing have deepened existing caste differences in the country. Regardless of the intent, the lockdown was not preventive, but it is a lockdown from access to food, water, shelter, medicines, livelihood, employment, and dignity. The only

way we can use the reset button in front of us is to prioritize change for everybody. My recommendation is for inclusive COVID 19 mitigation measures to address the hierarchies and barriers to end gender equality, poverty, and discrimination, consciously and actively promoting and supporting the leadership of women from DWD communities. I think the union budget everywhere in the world should prioritize women at the forefront of change.

On overcoming pandemic through fiscal policies and infrastructure, Dr Riccardo Moro (Co-Chair, Global Call to Action Against Poverty, GCAP) expressed if we try to gather some common elements of the situation, we have a particular financial need that has been called up by the crisis. This includes income support because the lockdown cut the economic opportunity for a lot of people, particularly the most vulnerable. Being able to build communities starting from the most vulnerable is a fiscal exercise, an exercise of citizenship. Everybody has the right to have a say in this community; from the discriminated to the most powerful, everyone has the same rights.

REMEMBERING MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT (BANGLADESH) – MD. ISRAFIL ALAM

Late Md Israfil Alam was a pioneer of DWD Dalit rights in Bangladesh died untimely due to complications of COVID-19. He was one of the first Member of Parliament who raised the issues of Dalits in Bangladesh Parliament. He was instrumental in attainment of reservations for government jobs in Bangladesh for Dalits. A poet-philosopher-politician aimed for social justice and equity, was Co-Chair of Asia Parliamentarians Forum on Dalit Concerns (APFDC) and founding member of International Parliamentarians Forum on DWD (IPFoD). His memorial meeting was held in 10 August 2020 through zoom. GFoD, TIP and ADRF members were present and express their grave shock and sadness on the passing of the great leader, who redefined the lives of many Dalits in Bangladesh and DWD communities around the world.

IPFoD EVENT ON DISCRIMINATION BASED ON WORKED AND DESCENT WITH THE PERMANENT MISSION OF GERMANY TO UN NEW YORK

An Event on Discrimination based on Work and Descent was held on 14 September 2020, hosted by Permanent Mission of Germany to UN New York. This meeting was organised by GFoD, ANDS, ADRF, IPFoD, CONAQ, ERGO Network, AIM, DSiD, TrustAfrica and The Inclusivity Project as the pre-engagement to UNGA and UN 75. The meeting featured representation from over twenty civil service officers and parliamentarians from Germany, Senegal, Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Mali, Mauritania, Nepal, Niger, Pakistan, the U.S., and Sri Lanka. Participants included Ambassador Cristoph Heusgen, Christine Haimerl, Romeo Franz, Omid Nouripour, Manuela Ott, Zakir Hossain, Gloria Jarhna Sarker, Prof. Givania Certo, Dr. Carmela Zigoni, Gabriela Hrabanova, Dr. Ebrima Sall, Olivia Tchamba, Thol Thirumavalavan, Dr. Ramesh Nathan, Beena Pallical, Ali Bouzou, Elid Mohameden M'Bareck, Brahim Ramdane Abeid, Meen Biswakarma, Anjana Bishnuke, Durga Sob, Bhakta

Biswakarma, Amina Balla Kalto Loutou, Gian Chand, Dr. Sono Khangrani, Thilakarajah Mylvahanam, Dr. Sivapragasam, Mr. Milind Awasarmol, Dr. Deepak Nikarthil, Fr. Aloysius Irudayam, and Paul Divakar Namala.

In his statement, Ambassador Christoph Heusgen said "recently, through the Black Lives Matter movement, we were made aware of how systemic racism and discrimination are embedded in societies globally. This conversation also includes Discrimination based on Work and Descent, which affects more than 200 million people across the world. Communities such as the Dalits in South Asia, the Bantu in Sudan, Roma in Europe, etc have all been victims of human rights violations and system violence for generations. In Germany, we are more aware because of our tainted history and our proximity to Roma people all over Europe. The Covid-19 pandemic emphasized this necessity. Marginalized groups around the world are those who are suffering most." The Ambassador standing in solidarity to eliminate DWD said "Germany is committed to fighting discrimination and racism in any form. You'll always find support in Germany and in New York."

DALITS STRIVING FOR DEVELOPMENT JUSTICE IN CONTEXT OF THE PANDEMIC

An event on Dalits and Development Justice in the context of Pandemic in Asia was held in the Asia Pacific People's Forum on Sustainable Development on 27 November 2020- 2.30-4.30pm. The thematic event explored the impact of the pandemic on the Dalit communities in Asia. The social prejudice against the Dalit communities forces to stamp them as the vectors of Covid-19 without evidence to prove and thus stigmatizes the entire community as socially excluded groups.

Mainstreaming the holistic impact of the pandemic on the DWD Dalit communities in Asia. The economic impact of the communities has been well documented; however, the socio-

psychological, civil, and political economy of the marginalized communities have been underreported. While the communities have been resilient throughout the process, the public response has been limited. This session aims to address the impact of DWD Dalits in the countries and create a draft charter of demands for the greater inclusion, equity, and participation of Dalits in the context of mitigation of this Pandemic.

Key Recommendations were:

1. Inclusive, universal coverage of all Dalits under exisiting national security schemes particularly those for livelihood and income support, preventive and curative healthcare, food and nutrition security, on an urgent and priority basis.
2. Economic packages (cash and in-kind assistance) oriented towards Dalit communities which allow for flexibility in access to these packages (in terms of documentation required, ability to access the packages etc.) must be rolled out
3. Introduce social security measures especially for livelihood and income security of informal/unorganised sector workers.

REASSESSING HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMING PROJECT

Covid-19 had caused delays in getting the project off the ground in the initial stages and the work is now progressing well. Although a great deal of background work in streamlining the proposal and having the institutional partnership Purpose is finalised, setting up the organisational infrastructure needed for this project, recruitment of key personnel took place in July and the early part of August, the substantive work of the project finally kicked off in mid-August and our entire focus in the last three months has been on the country case studies which is really the first major element of this project. Country Reports are being prepared In Brazil, India, Philippines, Kenya, Turkey, Hungary and the US. Due to COVID -19, it is still not clear if a culminating conference in April 2021 with all the reports will be held in Sril Lanka or not. Most probably we will be seeking a no cost extension to complete the final deliverables.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The Stakeholder Group - Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD) is now one of 23 constituencies of the Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGoS) Coordination Mechanism. This means that CDWD will be involved in facilitating multi-stakeholder inputs into the HLPF (High Level Political Forum of the SDGs) programme through UN DESA (Department of Economic and Social Affairs) and at meetings with the UN ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council, which is one of the key bodies of UN). CDWD will be able to propose draft programmes for Expert Group Meetings and other related events that address themes relevant to our work in the context of the SDGs and facilitate the integration of CDWD perspectives among other MGoS constituencies and at the HLPF. It will enable us to facilitate dialogue and mobilize actions and concrete outputs that will strengthen our influence in the HLPF.

This is yet another step towards reaching our goal of a UN Declaration on the Rights of the Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent! This also means we have so much work and responsibility ahead!