

Jagaran Media Center (JMC)



"Media Alliance Against Caste Discrimination"

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"We have, in fact, two kinds of morality side by side: one which we preach but do not practice, and another which we practice but seldom preach."

- Bertrand Russell (1872-1970)

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Condolence

Jagaran Media Center Family expresses its heartfelt condolence in the demise of Rosa Parks (4 February 1913 - 24 October 2005), whose act of civil disobedience in 1955 inspired the modern civil rights movement. Parks' moment in history began in December 1955 when she refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama.

Her arrest triggered a 381-day boycott of the bus system by blacks that was organized by a young Baptist minister, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. The boycott led to a court ruling desegregating public transportation in Montgomery, but it wasn't until the 1964 Civil Rights Act that all public accommodations nationwide were desegregated.

Parks' act of defiance came one year after the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision that led to the end of racial segregation in public schools.

She was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1996 and the Congressional Gold Medal in 1999.

She is known as the mother of the new civil rights movement that has left an impact not just on the , but on the

entire world. She was a real apostle of the nonviolence movement.

Parks was the subject of the documentary "Mighty Times: The Legacy of Rosa Parks," which received a 2002 Oscar nomination for best documentary short.

All of us, who are in the social and civil rights movement - and all of us who believe in equality and equity - will miss her very much. Her works & thoughts were inspiring and was idol for us.

Suvash Darnal - Chairperson & JagaranMediaCenterFamily

Blockade among Dalits for not playing drum during dasahain

The so-called upper caste people of the Sakarpura VDC of Saptari district have accused some six households of Chamar community of the same VDC for not playing drum during Dashain and also not clearing the carcasses. As a result, the so-called upper caste has imposed blockade on the Chamar community.

It may be recalled that the Chamars have stopped playing drums and clearing carcasses since last two years. However, the meeting of the so-called upper caste people held at Ugratara Bhagawati temple on the day of Dashain had decided to force Chamars to continue this work again. In the village meeting, Chamars had immediately opposed the decision. For this, several members of the Chamar community (Bhagwat Ram, Birendra Ram, Dukhi Ram, Rajkumar Ram, Kameswor Ram and Laxman Ram) were forcefully thrown out of the meeting. Those who were leading such unwanted activities against the Chamar community include Indra Narayan Jha and Shiva Kumar Thakur Jha of Sakarpur VDC-3, VDC secretary Bishnu Dev Singh, Sakal Dev Singh and Kesari Singh of ward two, acting VDC chairman Ganu Mukhiya Malah, Narayan Mandal Dhanuk, Mahabir Shah Ha! Iuwai and Ram Dev Mandal of ward 5, Binod Dev of ward 1, and Chhoti Mukhiya of ward 7.

The second meeting, called on October 13 2005, had decided to impose blockade to the six households of Chamar community. The leaders have directed the people of the area to prevent Chamars from entering and entertaining public places including shops, medicine shops, rice mills and public roads. They even prohibited the villagers to speak to the Chamar community. Ugrakanta Jha, a local youth, tells us that servicing or helping the Chamars in any way would be fined Rs 501.

These Dalit families are cultivating some 5 *bighas* and 7 *katthas* land belonging to the so-called upper caste people. Though the paddy in some two bighas of land is ready to harvest, the so called upper caste does not allow the Dalits to harvest or even touch the paddy after they had forcefully imposed the blockade against the Chamars.

Victims said that they were not provided medicine from the only medicine store of the place owned by Buchchi Singh. Singh informed that she was unable to sell medicine because of the collective decision made by the villagers. The place is situated at the 20 kilometers southeast

part of the district headquarters Rajbiraj. To buy food, medicines and other essential, they are now forced to walk up to Hanuman Nagar in north, which is some 9 kilometers away or to Kunauli in the south, approx. five kilometers away. Tara Devi Ram, 50, said they were forced to live without food for several nights. "Adults can live without food for some days but it's hard for the children," she said.

Jamunadhar Jha, who used to buy one liter of milk every day from Dalit Laxman Ram since last two months, has stopped buying after the imposition of blockade. Ram used to earn some money to maintain the household but has not received the dues from Jha. He could not even demand his dues because of the blockade.

Victims have reached the District Administration Office last Tuesday and demanded to end the suppression and to provide safety from the possible attack on them. They have also demanded appropriate punishment to the culprits.

Meanwhile, Chief District Officer Tilak Raj Sharma has said that he has already directed district police office to arrest the guilty and take necessary action on them.

Dalits for nationwide movement against royal takeover

The Joint Dalit Struggle Committee (JDSC) has decided to organize a nationwide movement against the "unconstitutional and undemocratic" royal takeover of February 1 and to restore democracy and ensure protection of human rights in the country.

"The third extended meeting of the committee held here yesterday has decided to stage a mass movement," said Padma Lal Biswakarma, who had chaired the meeting, held here on last Saturday, 22 October 2005. The meeting has decided to go ahead in a united manner against the royal takeover after reaching the conclusion that the takeover has annulled people's rights granted by the people's movement of 1990 and has also blocked efforts to provide reservation to suppressed Dalit communities.

"The JDSC will also join the ongoing movement of the seven-party alliance," Biswokarma said. Next week an interaction will be organized in the capital on the role of the Dalit community in the movement for the democracy. Thereafter protest meets will be organized in various parts of the nation.

Protest programmes will be organized at Dhangadhi of the far-western region on November 12, Nepalgunj of the mid-western region on November 14, Pokhara of the western region on November 24, Birgunj of the mid-region on December 1 and Birtamode of the eastern region on December 23, 2005.

According to Biswakarma, who is also the president of the Society for the Liberation of Oppressed Dalit Castes Nepal, the meeting has also decided to fight for restructuring the state to provide equality, social justice and proportionate participation of Dalit community in all sectors of the country.

Besides, the meeting has also demanded the government annul all ordinances and declarations made by the present 'unconstitutional' government, including the one on media, states a release issued by the committee.

Presently the struggle committee includes Padma Lal Biswakarma, Jitu Gautam of CPN UML, Min Biswokarma from the Dalit body of NC (Democratic), Rajan Biswakarma from NC, Kesh Man Shreepaili from a leftist party and Aahuti.

"No Dalit organizations support the monarch," he claimed, adding that all the national level Dalit organizations have expressed their solidarity for their movement in black and white. A gathering of all Dalit organizations formed JDSC right after the royal takeover on March 5, 2005.

Stinking carcass thrown at Dalit village

When a local Dalit refused to throw animal carcass, so called upper caste people threw the carcass at the centre of the Dalit village. This is now creating chaos at the area.

Jagadish Ram, a local Dalit, informed us that he had left this work three years ago. He had rejected the repeated request of Hira Yadav, a resident of Farsaith VDC- 6 of Saptari district whose buffalo had died some three weeks back.

After Ram's refusal, Hira Yadav, Satya Narayan Yadav, Shyam Narayan Yadav along with other so-called upper caste people of the same VDC threw the carcass at the side of the Dalit village where eight households reside.

Dukhiya Devi Ram, a 60-year-old Dalit, said it is difficult for the villagers to even breathe due to the stench of the carcass thrown by the so-called upper caste people. "If they were to throw carcass at the cultivable land, they could have buried the carcass that would have solved the problem," he commented.

Asarfi Khanga, president of Dalit Network Saptari, said they had left the work as they were very much suppressed and discriminated by the so-called upper caste people just because they were on the profession to clear the carcasses. "Therefore we have decided to quit the profession" Asarfi quoted the locals. He also said that different Dalit organizations have jointly filed a case at district administration office demanding punishment to those who were involved in the incident that has violated the rights of Dalits. Dalit activist Asarfi Sada has vowed not to step back until the victimized Dalits receive justice.

When contacted, Hira Yadav admitted that he had left the carcass at the Dalit village. He claimed that he has freedom to throw whatever he likes at his land.

A number of local Dalit organizations have jointly demanded punishment to the guilty. They include Dalit Network - Saptari, Dalit Janachetana Sangam - Saptari, Dom Utthan - Saptari, Nepal Swotantra Dalit Vidhyarthi Sangathan - Saptari, Saraswoti Samudayik Bikas Manch, Nepal Sada Sangh - Saptari and Nepal Ram Samaj Kalyan Sangh - Saptari.

Attack on peaceful programme of Dalits

Many Dalit people participated in the function organized to mark the third anniversary of the Nava Jyoti Dalit Janajagan Radio Listeners' Club and to celebrate Dashain festival on 13 October 2005. The program was organized on the premises of Sharada Secondary School situated at Jugeda of Dhangadhi Municipality in Kailali.

Padam Bahadur Singh, a Junior Technical Assistant (JTA) working at Agricultural Development Section Rukum, showed up with a group of hooligans and harassed the people at the functions. Their motivation was that the gathering would disturb the harmony in the society. They displayed Khukuris (knives) and *lathis* (wooden stick), which made the situation tensed right from the beginning of the program.

They had smashed all the banners, curtains and even cut the microphone wires. Ganesh B.K., president of Rastriya Dalit Network (RDN) Nepal, who was the chief guest of the function, also informed that the RDN Nepal was preparing to file a petition demanding necessary action to the culprits. Organizing a press conference last Thursday the organizing Nava Jyoti Dalit Janajagan Radio Listeners' Club informed that the hooligans beat up participants including Satya Raj Rasaili.

JTA Singh had opposed the programme because the chief guest was from the so-called lower caste. A press release issued by the RDN Nepal has demanded necessary action against the culprits and appropriate compensation to the victims. Besides, they have also requested the journalists, human rights activists, social workers and intellectuals to help investigate the case and provide justice to the victims.

Dashain celebrated as a festival of harmony

Dalits from different parts of the country celebrated this Dashain as a festival of unity and harmony. To give continuity to its practice the District Dalit Network (DDN) Kailali had organized a programme to exchange wishes among each other on the day of Ghatasthapan—the first day of the ten-day long Vijaya Dashami.

As decided during the very meeting some 100 members of the Dalit families received *Tika* from Dalit leaders including member of the National Dalit Commission Tek Bahadur Raika, Dal Bahadur Sunar and Rabindra Singh Gahatraj at the residence of Gahatraj on October 13, 2005. The collective celebration was designed to eliminate internal discriminations among the different Dalit groups. During the same function, all the participants of the celebration were served *Dahi-Chiura*—curd and beaten rice.

Similarly, on the day of Vijaya Dashami, which was on October 12th, numerous Dalit families received *Tika* and *Jamara* from another Dalit leader Chandra Bahadur B K, who is also a member of DDN Kailali, at his residence situated at Jugeda of Dhangadhi Municipality-12.

On 14th October, Dashain was celebrated collectively at the premises of Kalika Temple situated at Ramshikharjhala VDC with the joint effort from Dalit Jagaran Samaj

Ramshikharjhala and Dalit Jagaran Samuha Pahalmanpur. During the program that was supported by the Regional Dalit Network (RDN), Dalit families received *Tika, Jamara* and blessings from 80-year-old Kriti Singh Sarki and 50-year-old Sher Bahadur Nepali. On the occasion, president of RDN Nepal, Ganesh B K highlighted the importance of unity among Dalits and the present Dalit movement.

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