DALIT MONITOR

(E- Newsletter of the Dalit Human Rights Monitoring Project of People's Watch – Tamil Nadu)

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Voices of Dalit Victims of Tsunami

The process of exclusion of the Dalits by upholding the caste hegemony could be seen in many parts of the tsunami hit areas of the coastal regions. The following extract from the *Indian Express* gives us a clear picture of the nature of caste discrimination in the tsunami affected areas in Nagapattinam,

- In the GVR Marriage Hall Relief Camp, Dalits cannot drink water from tanks put up by UNICEF. The Meenavars say they ''pollute'' the water.

- In the Nallukadai Street Relief Camp, a Meenavar *Thalaivar*, or leader, grabbed all cartons of glucose biscuits delivered by a Coimbatore NGO. The Dalits were told: these are not for you.

- At Puttur Relief Camp, the Meenavars have hoarded family relief kits, rice packets, new clothes and other relief material. When the Dalits asked for some, they paid a heavy price—they had to spend the night on the road.

- At the Neelayadatchi Temple Camp, Dalits are not allowed inside the temple, especially when rice and cash doles are being handed out.

- Dalits from three villages taking shelter at Ganapati cinema hall in Tharambagadi are thrown out every night because the Meenavar fisherwomen say they did not ''feel safe'' falling sleep with Dalits around.

- ''In Nagapattinam, three relief camps we went to denied us shelter saying they had no space. At the Nataraja Damayanti high school, the watchman refused to let us in,'' says Murugeshan.

- In the neighbouring GVR camp, Dalit fishermen said they are being nudged out of relief and compensation queues. ''We are inside the camp but kept in the far corner. Whenever officials and trucks come to give food, we are left out because nobody allows us to get near the trucks. Some men form a ring around us and prevent us from moving ahead in the queue,'' says Saravanan, a Dalit survivor.

- ''The Meenavars are more privileged as they get to sleep inside the rooms and are first to receive food and water. We have to sleep outside in the verandahs or in the open ground,'' says Jivanana.

- Kesavan, a Dalit of Nambiarnagar, says he was prevented from drinking water from a plastic tank put up in the hamlet on Monday. ''We are forced to bring water in plastic cans from outside the village. The Collector's office has put up the tank here and provides clean water but it is not for us,'' he says.

- V Vanitha, a Class X Dalit student, says adolescent girls are prevented from using toilet areas at Tharambagadi. ''Small children have no problem but it is an ordeal for us. There are no toilets here and they prevent us from going to the area which serves as an open toilet,'' she says.

- Activist Darpaya says ''Dalits are not allowed to drink water from tanks put up by UNICEF. Even in relief camps, Meenavars don't want to sit with Dalits and have food. Some of them manage to get rice but other relief items coming in like biscuit packets, milk powder and family household kits are denied to Dalits.''

- M Jayanthi, a coordinator of South Indian Fishworkers Society (SIFS) states that ''Dalits are facing discrimination in all relief camps where they are present. But society does not want to raise the issue as it would complicate things further. Without making it public, we are opening separate facilities for Dalits exclusively,'' she says

Courtesy: The Indian Express, 7th January 2005.

DHRM Activities from Dec 2004 – February 2005

1.Dr. Ambedkar Death Anniversary:

On December 6th 2004, in memory of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's death anniversary, our DHRM National Interns organized a meeting at People's Watch – Tamil Nadu. Mr. Vadivel Ravanan a Dalit activist and writer gave a lecture on the life and principles of Dr. Ambedkar.

2. DHRM National Capacity Building Program on Skills in writing Human Rights Fact Finding Reports:

This program was held from 14th – 18th December 2004 at Pillar House, Madurai. There were totally 46 participants out of which 8 were women. This program was to capacitate the trained DHRMAs in writing qualitative fact-finding reports.

3. National Internship Programs:

Mr. Praveen Bhai from Gujarat, Mr. Shailender from Uttar Pradesh and Mr. Ajay Kumar from Kerala were the sixth batch of interns who started their 10 weeks of DHRM

4. National Internship :

Mr. Umakant and Sr. Urmila Bahan of NCDHR did their one month internship from 1st February 2005 at the DHRM national office.

5. DHRM National Capacity Building Program on Skills in writing Human Rights Fact – Finding Reports:

This program was held from 28th February – 4th March 2005 at Pillar House, Madurai. There were totally 35 participants out of which there were 7 women.

6. DHRM in Tsunami Relief Work:

The National interns along with Mr. Pradip, DHRM Program Co-ordinator went to Nagapattinam immediately after the Tsunami and stayed there for 1 month and involved themselves in assisting in the legal issues like filing an FIR for the dead and missing people of the Tsunami affected areas.

Programs Ahead

S.No.	Program details	Dates	Place
1.	National Capacity Building Training Program (NCTP)	17th – 26th April 2005	Bhubaneshwar, Orissa
2.	NCTP on Skills in Writing Human Rights Fact Finding Reports and Bihar State Review Meeting	9th – 13th Ma 2005	Patna, Bihar
3.	NCTP on Skills in Writing Human Rights Fact Finding Reports and Uttar Pradesh State Review Meeting	15th – 19th May 2005	Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh
4.	NCTP on Skills in Writing Human Rights Fact Finding Reports and Rajasthan State Review Meeting	21st – 25th May 2005	Ajmer, Rajasthan
5	National Capacity Building Training Program (NCTP)	5th – 13th June 2005	Chandigarh/Punjab

State Focus

In this issue of 'State Focus' we are introducing the issues dealt with by our DHRM in the state of Tamil Nadu, one of the 12 DHRM states where we have our trained DHRMAs who are informing the National Office of various human rights violations against Dalits in their districts and who also undertake fact-finding missions. Presently we have 52 trained DHRMAs (19 Women and 33 Men), from 29 districts of Tamil Nadu. The DHRM Tamil Nadu State Co-ordinator is Mr. Killivalavan and the Co-ordinator is Ms. Kalavathy. Given below is a list of few of the major cases dealt on the atrocities against the Dalits specifically in the state of Tamil Nadu. Fact-finding missions in these cases are undertaken by the DHRMAs and the Monitoring unit of People's Watch. Interventions are undertaken on these cases.

The discrimination against Dalits in Tamil Nadu is in no way better than the other states. Given below are few of the major cases undertaken. But still there are many cases that go unreported for various reasons while a very few appear in some major media outlets, and that there is much to be done just to uncover and monitor all those cases that never make it.

1.	09.01.2004	Sun TV News	Alleged forced evacuation of a Dalit settlement by the Corporation and Salem police in Sevvaipettai, Santhai Pettai, Salem
2.	08.01.2004	Primary source	Alleged custodial torture of Kumar, a dalit by the Mayiladudurai police
3.	31.01.2004	Theekathir	Alleged untouchability practices still prevailing in Kodangipatti village, Karur District
4.	07.02.2004	Primary Source	Alleged custodial torture of M. Kannan, a Dalit man by the Krishnanan Kovil Police, Sundarapandiam Village, Sreevilliputhur Taluk
5.	09.02.2004	Primary Source	Harishankar a ten year old Dalit boy alleged to be beaten by the teacher and the boy died in Muthur Kalaiyar Kovil village , Sivagangai District
6.	18.02.2004	Primary Source	Alleged social boycott of a dalit woman panchayat President in Nannilam, Thiruvarur District
7.	05.01.2004	Malaimuruasu	Alleged custodial torture of a Dalit auto driver by the Adaiyar police because of which the victim is alleged to have attempted suicide in Saidapet, Chennai.
8.	03.04.2004	Primary Source	Alleged rape of a dalit women Banumathi in Kadalur Village, SeiyurTk, Kuvathur Via, Kancheepuram District – Raped by the 4 caste Hindus-case not registered under the Sc/St Act
9.	26.05.2003	NDTV	Dalits prevented from contesting Polls in Papapatti, Keeripatti and Nattarmangalam elections in Madurai
10.	09.07.2004	Dinathanthi	Alleged murder of a dalit Veeraiah by caste Hindus in Allinagaram, Theni Dt
11.	02.07.2004	Primary source	Dominant Caste Hindus refused to allow the Post office to function since a dalit was appointed in Velayuthapuram near Kalzugumalai, Tuticurin District. Even at the intervention of the National SC /ST commission, solution was not found out.
12.	05.07.2004	Primary source	Alleged rape of a Dalit girl Nirmala (17) who had gone in search of job in Coimbatore from Madurai by the Head constable of Kattoor Police station of Coimbatore Dt.
13.	26.06.2004	Primary source	Alleging a dalit boy Udaysankar of giving love letter to a dominant Caste Hindu girl the dominant caste Hindus tortured him brutally, poured the cow dung into his mouth and penalized him to pay Rs.50000. Following the parents apology they reduced the fine to Rs. 8500 but ostracized Udaysankar's family from the village in Katumanarkudi, Cuddalore Dt.
14.	15.08.2004	Primary source	Alleged torture and assault on a Dalit man by 4 policemen. The reason was that the Dalit man had looked at one of the policeman who resembled like his friend, so the police alleged that he was dare enough to stare a policeman and so tortured the Dalit in Sattankulam, Tuticorin District
15.	23.08.2004	Primary source	Alleged torture of a Dalit by the caste Hindus in Chengam Taluk, Tiruvannamalai Dt for not repaying the loan. Due to the torture and humiliation the Dalit man died with in 2 days on 24th August '04
16.	18.08.2004	Makkal Kural	Alleged human sacrifice of a dalit boy by the caste Hindus in Banrutti, Cuddalore District,
17.	27.08.2004	Dinamalar	In the Adidravidar Government Welfare School Govt Hostel, Uathukottai, Tiruvallur Dist, it was complained by the students to the District Collector that proper food was not provided to the students and the students are beaten and tortured by the persons who cook. This has resulted in many students dropping out of the school.
18.	24.08.2004	Dinamani	A Dalit 12th standard student of Ganapathipattu colony, Vikravandi is alleged to have been killed as a result of the humiliation meted out on him by the School Headmaster and the teachers. The reason being the headmaster had scolded him for not paying the school fees in front of all the students and humiliated by this, the student had talked back to the headmaster. Enraged by this, the teachers instigated other students to throw stones at Sivaraman. Sivaraman who got injured in this assault, later died in the hospital

19.	19.09.2004	Hindu	Alleged untouchability practices of different forms including the double tumbler system prevailing in more man 60 villages in the Kolathur region in Mettur taluk, Salem Dist.
20.	12.09.2004	Dinamalar	Caste Hindus of Koothirapakkam Village near Kanjeepuram are alleged to have social boycotted the Dalits in the Muthumariammal temple festival and prevented them from participating in the festival.
21.	30.09.2004	Malai Malar	A Dalit student from Kombai, Theni District was allegedly abused and tortured by his teacher.
22.	27.09.2004	Thee Kathir	Alleged police torture of a Dalit of Pudhupatti village by Thirumangalam Police who has foisted false case against him.
23.	16.12.2004	Thinamani	Thanjavur Mr. Senthil Kumar Residing at Sempanar kovil in Nagapatinam Dist. He was murdered by police at the police station.
24.	05.01.2005	Primary Source	Mr. Pandivelu Residing at Melavellur village, Manamadurai T.K in Sivagangai Dt and his family members have been inhumanly Tortured by caste Hindus.
25.	22.12.2004	Primary Source	Mr. Mathappan resident of Kallipuram village in Dharmapuri Dt. his son killed in mysterious circumstance.
26.	03.12.2004	Primary Source	The people of Kadiyavayal village in Sivagangai Dist. have been tortured by caste Hindus.
27.		Junior Vigaden	Dalit youth was alleged to be murdered by the caste Hindus at Puthamampatti in Trichy Dist.
28.	01.02.2005	Theekathir	Alleged police torture of the dalit people in Pappampatti near Palani, Dindigul Dist.
29.		Primary source	Three Dalit bonded labour children from Sreevilliputhur, Tamil Nadu, were rescued from Rajasthan candy factory. Alleged torture and inhuman treatment meted out to the three children.

From our National Interns

According to me it is a major problem for a Dalit to live with dignity in India. In every sphere of our lives we are neglected, exploited. As an Intern in DHRM I was monitoring the atrocities on the Dalits in India and I could see that each and every day there was news of Dalit women being kidnapped, raped which shows that there is no security guaranteed to their life. Police and officials who have to be the protectors are also found to have become perpetrators at many times. Although many laws have been made for the protection of Dalits, only if it is implemented properly the condition of Dalits would improve. The intention of the dominant caste people who are as officials is not in favour or in the welfare of the affected people because there is a lack in the fullest implementation of the laws. I understand that this entire caste system is an attack on the social freedom and dignity of Dalits. That is why there is a need to monitor the various kinds of violations on the Dalits and intervene at different levels. During the internship program I was able to learn to do online monitoring, newspaper monitoring, many aspects like of writing a Fact Finding report, preparing complaints, etc. This internship also gave me an opportunity to work for Tsunami victims and attended a disaster counseling training program.

- ***Mr. Shailendra,*** *DHRM National Intern, Uttar Pradesh.*

International Interns

Our DHRM International Intern **Ms. Anna Elisabeth Juul Kiertzner** of Denmark who had joined us on June 24th 2004 has successfully completed her internship program with us on 17th February 2004. By her hard work and commitment she has worked out a database on international standards on Dalit issues including various conventions, general comments, concluding observations etc. This remarkable contribution is sure to help us at various levels of our monitoring and intervention processes. We thank and wish her all success for her future.

Ms. Siham Bode , from South Africa did a month of internship program in the DHRM. During her internship she worked on various Fact Finding reports and converted them into complaints to the National Human Rights Institutions. We thank and wish her all success for her future.

Voice of Victim

My name is Kannan (12 years old) and I come from a village called Raittunetty, Sreevilliputhur in Tamilnadu. I belong to the Scheduled caste Chakliya community. My father is a cobbler and mother does labour work. In the year 2003, I was taken to Kota district in Rajasthan to work in the Candy Manufacturing unit that beonged to Mr.Vellaiswamy who is also from our village but now settled at Rajasthan. When I was taken the agent paid Rs.2000/- to my parents as an advance for a decent job. Two other boys who are my relatives, were also sent with me. We were taken to Rajasthan by the agent to a house where different kinds of candies were prepared, packed and marketed to various shops. After going there only we realised that for the whole unit work only we three boys were employed. Normally, our day starts early in the morning at 4.a.m where we are asked to do all kinds of work, like carrying water, mixing atta with different essence, packing candy, preparing different varieties of candies etc. All these activities we had to do simultaneously without any gap and there was no break or breakfast for the three of us. We were forced to work restlessly without any break. At about 10.a.m we just get a cup of tea and then continue to work. At about 4.p.m. we get our lunch, some old rice with a fowl smell, the only food for the whole day. Whenever we ask for more or disagree to eat the rotten food we were bet mercilessly with lathis, vessels, kicked with boots, etc. Our work continues till midnight 12 pm. At 12 we are asked to carry water and clean the entire place and make the ingredients ready for the next day's work. It's only at that time at about 1.a.m.or 2.a.m. we are allowed even to go to the toilet for our nature calls. We go to sleep at about 3.a.m and it is just for an hour. Before we go to sleep Vellaichami would come and chain us onto an iron rod. We sleep in the same place where we work It is of extreme cold weather in the nights and we only have the sugar or atta sacks to cover ourselves and lie down in the floor. At 4.a.m. we are woken up and our day continues.

I was the youngest among the three and more beaten and tortured because they felt I was giving more trouble and lazy. Once during the working hours, when I asked Vellachami for water, he brought urine and forced me to drink it. When I refused he poured it on my face. For ordinary and small mistakes or reasons Vellaichami and his family members beat us almost for an hour. They beat us indiscriminately with their hands and with what ever things available at that time like firewood, spanner, iron rod, knife etc. Once when I asked for more food he pulled me down on the floor and hit me on my abdomen and stamped with his boot clad leg. I was crying with pain but no one had come for my help. Vellaichamy always used all kinds of filthy words and abuses towards us by referring the caste name like "you Chakliya bastards! useless fellows". Once I asked him "why are you always calling us by our caste name and abusing us." On hearing this, he became so angry and shouted at me by using the most dirty words, which I cannot even spell out. With all his anger he hit on my head with an iron spanner and I fell down bleeding heavily. Blood was flowing and he did not even bother to do anything. He only kicked on my chest with his legs. I am still having pain in my chest. After that incident, I had problem with my eyesight. I could sense that my left eyesight had become a little dim.

Some days back about 11.a.m. I asked permission to go to toilet. Vellaichami shouted "don't go any where with out finishing your work, you Chakilya bastard" and chained me with an iron rod. After few hours, since it was unbearable I excreted on the floor! Everybody started yelling at me. Vellaichami and his son Nikil, of my age, hit me brutally with their hands and asked me to eat the excreta. They asked me to sit on my knee in front of the excreta and forced me to eat shit. They made me eat shit three more times. Lack of food, proper rest and beatings made me tired and slag behind in work which made him angry and his hatred towards me grew more and more resulting in more forms of torture. Vellaichami even hit me under my left elbow with a knife and I am still suffering from that deep wound

One day he threw me in to a deep garbage bin and shouted at me "Do your work properly other wise I will pour petrol on you and burn you alive along with the essence .No body can identify even the smell. I have given Rs 2000/- for one year for you." I was shocked and by then the other two boys pleaded with him to leave me. They even threatened him that they would also die if anything happened to me. He spared me on that day. Finally one day he started beating me with a wooden log and I somehow managed to run out of the house and he was chasing me. It was for the first time I saw the street in day time and really did not know the way how to run and where to. He caught hold of me in front of a shop and beat me mercilessly there itself. I was lying on the road and later the two other boys were sent to carry me back. I was terribly hurt and not able to move or even stand on foot. The neighbours who were a witness to the entire scene had called up the police and informed about this incident. So Vellaichami packed us up hurriedly and sent us to a nearby video shop for the fear of police. Later in the same day night his daughter took us by train to Chennai. In Chennai we were handed over to the broker who had taken us initially to Rajasthan. I was in a very bad condition when I reached home. I was not even able to talk, just tears rolled down my eyes and I was crying. Only after two days I was able to talk and explain my plight to my parents. They were shocked and worried. I was admitted to a hospital and now undergoing treatment.

Layout and designed by ***Jyothi*** *and* ***Anand***