



Empowering Dalit Communities during Covid 19

National Dalit Movement for Justice (NDMJ) is one of the core units promoted by the NCDHR (National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights). NDMJ works with the Dalit Human Rights Defenders, Survivors, Civil Society Organizations, Professionals and academic who are committed to end the caste-based discrimination and “Untouchability” practices through monitoring, legal and advocacy interventions by educating the survivors and defenders. NDMJ has strived for the last 10 years to protect and promote the rights of Dalits by addressing the issues of Caste Based Discrimination and Violence and empowering communities to access justice.

Therefore, the main focus is to strengthen our Dalit community by capacitating them to address the issue through Dalit Human Right Monitoring, legal interventions and advocacy for policy reforms. For the last 10 years NDMJ has capacitated more than 5000 Human Rights defenders who are defending the rights of Dalit, Adivasi, Women and children in 12 states. In this process, strengthening of the SC/ST PoA Act and monitoring the cases of atrocity and untouchability on Dalit in various states becomes crucial to end atrocities subjected on Dalit and Adivasi communities’. NDMJ legally intervenes in the cases effectively to ensure justice to the victims and witnesses of caste based discrimination and violence.

The year 2020 brought one of the biggest challenges to the entire world in the form of COVID- 19 pandemic. The world came to a standstill. However, few who didn't stop even under these grave circumstances are the Doctors, Nurses, Police, and Sanitation workers. NDMJ through this platform, acknowledges the efforts of all these frontline workers and appreciates the hard work.

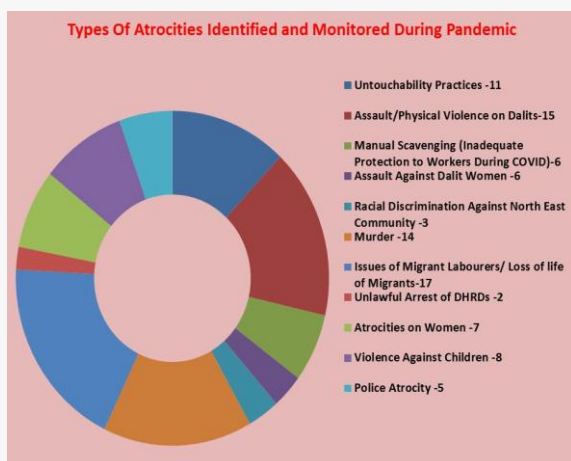
While the COVID-19 pandemic affects wider society in India, those who face real structural discrimination and social and economic exclusion are particularly vulnerable to its most devastating impacts in the short and longer- term. Amid the mayhem, we still find that those who are far too often unseen and unheard are once again in the crosshairs of this pandemic. The consequences of the lockdown have been felt sharply by Dalit's, Adivasis, urban daily wage earners like street vendors, rickshaw pullers, auto drivers, marginalized and stigmatized communities like transgender communities, nomadic communities, sanitation workers, farmers, and landless agricultural labourers etc. In specific, COVID-19, inordinately threatens Dalit and Adivasi communities and leaves them at heightened risk of poverty and ill health as they exist on the margins of society. This newsletter aims to share the engagement of NDMJ in terms of its Human Rights Monitoring, Intervention by NDMJ in regard to caste and gender based atrocities, and lastly Relief Work carried out by NDMJ to help the marginalised people during this global pandemic.

Dalit Human Rights Violation

It won't be wrong to state that the worst-hit community in this pandemic are the Dalits and Adivasis. They had to bear the double brunt of the society; one is the loss of livelihood and other is using ‘Social Distancing’, as a tool to strengthen the casteist ideology to ridicule the Dalits. Thus, NDMJ through this platform also want to denounce the term ‘Social Distancing’ and opt to choose the word ‘Physical Distancing’.

National and State coordinators of NDMJ through various media sources were continuously monitoring the cases of caste atrocities, and other forms of injustice towards the marginalised and vulnerable section of our society in this pandemic lockdown. According to the data collected by NDMJ- NCSPA-NCDHR and through various media sources approximate 100 cases of atrocities of different kinds have been reported in different parts of India during the lockdown period. This includes, the practice of untouchability in various forms, assault-which includes verbal and physical assault both, sexual assault, police brutality, murder which includes both honour killing, as well as murder, inadequate PPE Kit for sanitation workers, death due to hunger, death of migrant workers etc. It is a sad state of affairs that amongst the list of deaths in the pandemic, death of these voiceless, marginalised people will never be counted by the government.

Type of Atrocities



Reaching out to the victim in this pandemic is challenging at times because of the lockdown. Providing legal advocacy at the community level has been severely marred by the spread of Coronavirus. NDMJ always believes in addressing the issues of access to justice for those affected by atrocities and violence. In the grave situation too, NDMJ and its team of Human Right defenders work day and night to provide justice to the victims/ survivors through the means of telephonic communication, filing an online FIR on behalf of the victims, and also reaching out to the authorities concerned for further legal action.

Dalit Human Rights Monitoring and Intervention

NDMJ amidst this lockdown intervened in 24 cases of caste and gender-based violence and 10 cases of domestic violence. In Maharashtra, NDMJ intervened in three murder cases, and in two cases as the victim's family didn't have caste certificate, compensation is pending. Social Welfare department though ordered for disbursement of ration worth Rs. 75000/-. Accused are in jail. In another case, 10 Dalits were attacked; NDMJ intervened and the accused were sent to jail. NDMJ also made an intervention on the false charges made on a boy from the Dalit community, accusing him of breaking the lockdown rule. Post intervention, bail was granted. In another heinous crime, a minor Dalit girl was murdered, complaints made to SHO, SP, DSP, sessions court and accused arrested and 164 statements been recorded. In Haryana in a case of physical abuse by upper caste people, the accused was arrested after the intervention was made. In a horrifying case in Uttar Pradesh a Dalit women was burnt alive on 14th May 2020, the accused has been arrested after FIR lodged by our state coordinators. In Bihar Saheb Ganj gang rape case, a complaint was filed; however CM of Bihar transferred the case to DGP but no action taken yet, similarly in another caste atrocity case even after 42 days of the incident on (12-05-2020), no FIR been lodged. In this case too CM transferred the case to DG, and no action was taken yet. In Muzzarfarpur Bihar, where a Dalit woman was branded witch, tonsured and made to drink urine, after the FIR filed by the state coordinator, accused been arrested. In Himachal Pradesh in 7 cases of domestic violence reported, after intervention victims compromised after counselling. However, in one of the case of domestic violence with brutal torture, FIR lodged and, the accused been arrested.

Interventions made by NDMJ in the COVID 19 Pandemic (March- June)

State	Human Rights Violation	Intervention
Mah Total: 9 cases	Caste Based Atrocity, Sexual Assault, Murder of Dalit Minor Girl, Rape, Honour Killing	Complaint Filed in all the cases to SP, SDM Asst .Commissioner of Social Welfare and in some cases, email sent to Collectors
H.P Total: 16 case	Police brutality, Physical assault, cheating, domestic violence	• Bail Application before Magistrate,SHO, Complaint filed to Asst SP, Dy. SP
Haryana Total : 4 cases	Caste Atrocity	• Complaint mailed to SP, Complaint file to different authorities like SHO/DSP,SP/IG/National Commission for C, SHO/DY.SP, SHO/DSP/SP/DGP
Uttar Pradesh Total: 2 cases	Police brutality, Murder	• Application to SSP, SHO, FIR Filed
Bihar Total:4 cases	Caste atrocity, Police brutality, Witch Branding	• CM/DGP/IG/Weaker Section Secretary Home Patna and NCSC,Delhi. • DM/SP/Motihari/DGP , IG / Secretary Home dpt./ CM Bihar and NCSC Delhi • National Commission for Women, Delhi • CM/DM ,Gopalganj /SP Gopalganj / DGP/Secretary Home/IG weaker Section/ National Commission for Schedule Caste Delhi

Reaching out to the Marginalised – Relief Distribution

The economy of the entire world is devastated by the COVID 19 pandemic. So is the case in India, which is witnessing unprecedented devastation of its economy. Huge population of India is also affected, however this time too the government failed to meet the expectation of the masses. In the past instances of natural disaster, it's been observed that relief material always reaches last to the Dalits and Adivasi community. This time too government relief was not reaching out to the deprived and **NDMJ in this hour of need decided to take up its first- ever relief assignment and identified six states to provide the relief kit to the most marginalised families.** Identification of vulnerable communities were made like Dalit's/Adivasis, transgender people, nomadic communities; single women, lactating women, children; urban daily wage earners, migrant workers; sanitation workers, farmers, landless agricultural labourers etc. **The kit comprises of the essential daily items like, Rice -10 Kg, Toor Daal 2Kg, Urad Daal 2Kg, Wheat Atta- 10 Kg, Cooking Oil 2 Kg, Salt- 1 Kg, Sugar 2Kg, Biscuits 10 packets, Antiseptic Soap 2, 2 Sanitary Napkins packs. The beneficiaries were primarily - survivors of caste and gender based violence, single women, widows, differently abled and migrants.** NDMJ, with its teams of state coordinators and volunteers, who chose other's lives over their own, reached out to the extreme terrains of Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. Approximately 1400 families benefited through the relief material distributed by NDMJ. Given below the brief details of the immediate relief provided to the six identified states. We hope that these contributions would make a difference in their life.

Relief Distribution

Maharashtra- 230 relief kits have been distributed. Though the number of COVID 19 cases increased every other day, but nothing stopped the volunteers of NDMJ from reaching out to the most deprived families. Amidst the pandemic, and rain, volunteers still managed to cover five districts of the state which includes Thane, Washim, Buldana, Solapur and Sangli.

Uttar Pradesh- 385 kits have been distributed. In Saharanpur district 100 kits were distributed, 200 in Sonbhadra, and 85 in Varanasi.

Haryana- 360 kits were distributed in total. 120 were distributed in the village of Mirchpur in Hissar district. Our volunteers made the effort to reach out to the victims of various past mass atrocity cases. 50 Kits were distributed to Bawana Victims, in Hissar district. Lastly, 190 kits were distributed in Panipat to the other marginalised families in the district.

Himachal- 30 families benefited from the relief kits distributed. Kits were distributed in Baijinath village of Kangra district.

Bihar- 200 kits distributed by NDMJ. In West Champaran district 72 kits were distributed, and in the East Champaran villages, 128 kits were distributed.

Orissa- In the Puri district of Orissa, 145 kits were distributed. NDMJ reached out to the poorest and didn't restrict its relief to Dalits.

Glimpse of Relief Work carried out by NDMJ in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Orissa and Maharashtra

State	Districts/Villages	Beneficiaries
Maharashtra	Thane : Ambarnath, Jambhivli, Kalyan, Goregaon Washim: Shirputi, Wagholi Buldana: Leh Budruk Solapur: Dharamपुरi, Khandari, Mahali, Sirtey Shivपुरi, Babulgaon Sangali: Sindur Hingoli: Dudhala Pune	230
Uttar Pradesh	Saharanपुर: Sabbir Pur Sonbhadra: Ubbha Varanasi: Kallipur, Parmandapur, Akhari, Amara Kadipur, Lahartara, Amini, Paterawa, Bhaisaudi, Umaraha, Singhpur	385
Haryana	Hissar : Mirchपुर, Samar Farmhouse Panipat :Mehrana, Kabadi, Indira Colony, Arjun Nagar, Vidyanand colony, Bichpadi	360
Himachal Pradesh	Kangra : Baijinath	30
Bihar	West Champaran: Ambedkar Nagar Pokhariya East Champaran: Phulsar Gauraiya, Sapaha, Madhubani, Dhaka Ramchandra, Pipra Bazid	200
Orissa	Puri : Bhili Deuli, Nimapara	145



Pandemic resulted in new complexities of the socio-economic and political environment, which have further increased the vulnerabilities of Dalits and Adivasi. NDMJ in this tough time, working on new strategies that would enable Dalits and Adivasis to fight against injustice in this hard-hitting situation and also and help them in getting their livelihood back.

NDMJ is working on both short-term and long term plans by identification of vulnerable communities, listing out state wise partners, monitoring through WeClaim App, advocacy with Humanitarian Stakeholders and district authorities, restoration of livelihood, monitoring Central and State governments public schemes, building campaigns etc. NDMJ is in solidarity with all the marginalised people of India, looking forward for a better future.

National Dalit Movement for Justice – NDMJ (NCDHR)

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