

**National Seminar
On
“Women, Dalit and Human Rights in India”**

Organized by

All Indian Rights Organization (AIRO)
(A Chapter of Naina-Dayal Foundation)

**In association with
Department of Human Rights, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (Central University), Lucknow**

Venue

Conference Hall, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (Central University), Lucknow

Date: 8th & 9th March 2013

A Report

Disclaimer

The views expressed in the papers incorporated in the report are entirely of the authors or the organizations they represent. The mere incorporation of these papers in the report does not necessarily mean that All Indian Rights Organization (AIRO) and Department of Human Rights, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (Central University), Lucknow have accepted their views.

On the occasion of International Women Day on 8th March 2013 All Indian Rights Organization (AIRO, Community Development Programme of Naina Dayal Foundation) and Department of Human Rights, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (Central University), Lucknow organized a two days National Seminar on “WOMEN, DALIT AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN INDIA” on 8th and 9th March 2013 to discuss the status of women as a whole and as dalit in particular.

While women constitute half the population, they are significantly outnumbered in decision-making positions and are often missing from negotiating tables where conflicts are to be resolved. All too often, important decisions that affect women, their families, and their societies are made without their having a voice. Lots of efforts have been going on in the discourse of gender justice but society still face the problem of gender injustice even after passing of more than six decades of Indian constitution. Women are vulnerable to all sorts of abuses and violence due to hostile atmosphere around them. In this series the status of woman as dalit is also of serious concern. Women as dalit, encompasses different types of subordination during cultural practice in society. The incidences of violence against women are reflective of their dalit status in the society. It is a common feature of any society or nation that it discusses woman in the frame of development (Education, Health, Economy, etc.) only, but women may also be sketched as Dalit. The word “DALIT” has a cultural evolution with different notions like ardhnagn, asprashya, untouchable, Dalit, Harijan and finally they are defined as Dalit in 1935. The recent spurt of violence against women and Dalit woman have crushed their basic human right to live with dignity. Present seminar was organized with following objectives--

Objectives of the Seminar

1. To assess the awareness about human rights of women as dalit.
2. To analyse the nature of human rights violation against women and its causes.
3. To identify the areas where interventions are needed to rectify the human rights violations against women.

4. To put before the government agencies, academicians and policy makers the various issues of human right violation of women as dalit class need.
5. To suggest measures to be evolved and implemented by the policy makers and others concerned.

Participants

Near about 250 Academicians, Experts, Researchers, Scholars, College and University teachers working on the various dimensions of human rights and exclusion of women and also those NGOs actively involved and working towards the positive inclusion of women were invited to participate in the seminar. People from Media, Lawyers, Members of civil society and Individuals also actively participated and deliberated on the various sub-themes of the Seminar to discuss the problem of women as a whole and dalit women in particular. Papers were presented on various sub-themes addressing the public and private attitudes that perpetuate status of women as dalit in the society.

Papers were presented on following sub-themes--

1. Human rights of women
2. Constitutional and legal rights of women
3. Dalit women and human Right
4. Nature of human rights violation of women
5. Causes of human rights violation of women
6. Woman, education and human rights
7. Marriage, family and human rights of women
8. Woman and Empowerment
9. Health/Reproductive Health
10. Socio-Cultural Life of Woman and dalit women.
11. Political Participation of women
12. Women and media
13. Dalit Woman and Social System
14. Globalization and Future of Woman and on other related issues.

These sub-themes were broadly divided into Eight Technical Sessions. **Technical Sessions 1 & 2** deliberated upon the dalit and educational status of women in the society. **Technical Sessions 3 & 4** discussed cultural practice with respect to women and violation of their human rights. Women health and their empowerment were focused during deliberations in the **Technical Session 5 & 6**. The human rights, law and policy issues were highlighted in the **Technical Session 7 & 8**.

Inaugural Session

Hon'ble State Minister, Women Welfare & Culture Department Mrs. Arun Kumari Kori and Hon'ble Justice J.S.Verma, Allahabad High Court inaugurated the seminar by lightening the lamp followed by Saraswati Vandana. Prof. R.C.Sobti, Vice Chancellor, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (Central University), Lucknow was also present on the occasion. Prof. Poonam Saxena from Delhi University was the key-note speaker of the seminar. Dr. Alok Chantia, Organizing Secretary of the Seminar welcomed the guests and emphasised on the vulnerability of dalit women to violence in comparison to other women in India. He also said that the concept of human right is a way to understand the philosophy of verstehan of Max Bebar. Director of the Seminar, Dr. Preeti Misra presented the theme of the Seminar. She expressly emphasised on the constant degradation and subjugation of women in socio-economic, cultural and religious principles from Vedic times to present day. She wished the seminar a grand success. Hon'ble State Minister in her address expressed about the seriousness of the issues related to dalit women in India. She further contended that many intellectuals and academicians have previously attempted for the beneficial position of women in the society, Hon'ble Minister gave her best wishes for the success of the seminar. Hon'ble Justice J.S.Verma pointed out the comparative situations of women in ancient and modern society. During his address, he lamented on the insecurity of women in modern society by referring to Delhi Gang Rape Case. Prof. R.C.Sobti, Vice Chancellor, BBAU, in his address emphasised on the subordination of women in Indian society taking into

consideration patriarchal arrangements at home. Prof. Poonam Saxena, the key note speaker of seminar, expressed her strong contention against the violation of the rights of women in the society. She recommended some urgent changes in the social as well as legal system of the governance so that the position of women may be changed. The inaugural session started at 9.30 a.m. and concluded at 11.30 a.m.

Technical Sessions

Approximately, 250 abstracts of papers were received for the seminar from different parts of the country, out of which more than 200 papers were read during the eight technical sessions of the seminar. Prof. D.P. Tiwari, University of Lucknow, Lucknow and Azra Bano, Nari Shiksha Niketan PG College, Lucknow chaired first technical session. Technical session-2 was chaired by Prof. A.K. Awasthi, University of Lucknow and Dr. S.D. Sharma, JNPG College, Lucknow. These sessions were pre-lunch sessions and during these some important and relevant discussions were held by the participants of the seminar. The highlights of some papers which were presented in **Technical Session 1** are- Sangeeta Krishna, Assistant Professor-cum-Assistant Director CSSEIP, BBAU, Lucknow and Jayant Kumar, UGC-Project Fellow in their paper discussed about the issues of human rights and dignity of dalit women in reference of Uttar Pradesh. Sapna Bajpai, Sr. Lecturer, Amity School of Fine Arts, Amity University, Lucknow in her paper talked about the serious injustice faced by dalit women engaged in the manual scavenging in Uttar Pradesh. Reena, Assistant Professor & HOD, Dept. of Political Science in Mahila Mahavidhyala, Jhojhu Kalan, Bhiwani, presented her paper on the issue of political participation of women in India. Rudra Prasad Sahoo, Assistant Professor, CSSEIP, BBAU, Lucknow in his paper provided insight on the reality of human rights of dalit women. The issue of tribal women exclusion and social transformation was discussed by Bibekananda Nayak, Assistant Professor-cum-Assistant Director, CSSEIP, BBAU, Lucknow. Dr. Chaitali Chaudhary from Kolkata emphasised in her paper about the dignity of women in the context of human rights.

In **Technical Session 2** papers were presented on the theme -Women, Education and Human Rights. In this session Mohd. Zia-Ul-Haq from Department of Education, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, discussed about the dalit education and the government policies in India. Rudra Nath Tripathi & Dr. A.K.Bhartiya, from department of Social Work Lucknow University elaborated on the issues of women education and its importance for the society.

Technical Session 3 began after lunch and was chaired by Sri R.P.Sahoo, Assistant Professor, CSSEIP, BBAU, Lucknow and Dr. Manish Verma, Associate professor, BBAU, Lucknow. The theme of this Session was women in culture, media & literature and some very substantive papers were presented in this session. Neha Nigam, Research Scholar, Dept. of Mass Communication, BBAU, Lucknow presented a paper with co-author Dr. Gopal Singh, Associate Professor, Dept. of Mass Communication, BBAU, Lucknow and discussed about the role of women in media and their rights. Dr. S.S. Das, Assistant Professor, Centre for Juridical Studies, Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh, Assam, presented a paper on women under Vedic society of India and talked about the rights of women in ancient period. Bhanu Pratap, Lecturer, Amity Law School, Amity University, Lucknow emphasised on the Marxism and Critical Theory and its relationship with Feminism. Some other papers were of utmost importance on the issues of position of women in media, culture and literature.

Technical Session 4 was chaired by Prof. S.K. Bhatnagar, Dept. Of Human Rights and Dr. Sudarshan Verma, Head, Dept. of Law, BBAU, Lucknow and the theme was women, violence and protection of human rights. Some very important papers were read in this session. Dr. Karabi Mitra, Associate Professor, Dept. of History, B.K. Girls' College, Howrah, Kolkata, West Bengal presented her paper on the 'Living Sati'-A View from Literature and made a relation between ancient and modern status of women. Shaik Mahaboob Basha, Assistant Professor, Dept. of History, BBAU Lucknow provided a critical view of status of women in early twentieth century with a specific topic 'Sport to the Cat, Death to the Rat'. Dr. Rashida Ather, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Human Rights, BBAU, Lucknow emphasised on the very important issue of female foeticide and infanticide. Some other papers focused on the sexual harassment, human rights violations, educational status and political participation of women in India.

The next **Technical Session 5** was chaired by Prof. Kameshwar Chaudhary, Dept. of Sociology, BBAU, Lucknow and Shri D.K. Awasthi, Dept. of Chemistry, Sri J.N.P.G. College, Lucknow and very relevant

papers were presented on the theme woman, health and human right concerns were- Dr. Prinkal Joshi, Assistant Professor, National Law University, Jodhpur presented a paper on women health and emphasised the need of health care and challenges before law. Avishek Raj, Lecturer, School of Law, Institute of Management Studies, Dehradun dealt with the birth rights of women in a broad manner. Abhay Singh, Research Scholar, Dept. of Political Science, BBAU, Lucknow discussed about the problem of malnutrition among the women and the food security. Some other quality papers were also presented on the theme of the session.

Technical Session 6 was chaired by Dr. BB Malik, Head Dept. of Sociology, BBAU, Lucknow and the theme was-women, modernisation, globalisation and empowerment. Highlights of some important papers are- Dr. Chhavi Nigam, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Political Science, Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan Degree College, Lucknow discussed on the empowerment of daughters of a Lesser God. Dr. Soni Kewalramani, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Psychology, Amity University, Lucknow analysed the impact of globalisation on the status of women. Shalu Desai provided some insights on the empowerment of Indian women and the need of improvement in it.

The next **Technical Session 7** was chaired by Dr. DNNS Yadav, Faculty and Director Legal Cell, University of Lucknow, Lucknow and Dr. Shashi Kumar, Faculty, Dept. of Human Rights, BBAU, Lucknow and Dr. R.P.Singh , Lecturer(Hindi) J.N.P.G College, Lucknow. The theme of this session was –women and human rights in India. In this session Dr. Shura Darapuri, Associate Professor, Dept. of History, BBAU, Lucknow deliberated on the position of women and their human rights along with the nature of violence faced by them. Dr. Jaya Srivastava, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Sociology, BBAU, Lucknow presented a sociological analysis of gender, ageing and human rights of women. Raj Kumar, Research Scholar, Dept. of Human Rights, BBAU, Lucknow discussed the impact of tuberculosis on women and their human rights. Mukesh Bharti and Jageshwar Nath Singh, Research Scholars, Dept. of Human Rights, BBAU, Lucknow emphasised on the status of women in heterosexual relationship in ancient and modern Indian society. Some other papers presented related to important issues like human rights of displaced Kashmiri women, Political participation of women in 21st century, family, marriage and dowry and women’s reproductive rights. The final session before the valedictory session was **Technical Session 8** and was chaired by Dr. Salil Chandra, SJNPG College, Lucknow and Dr. S.K.Pandey, BBAU, Lucknow. The theme of this session was woman, law and public policies. In this session participants from the legal system talked about laws both present and future for addressing violence against women. Speakers discussed the cases of violence against women, rape crisis intervention, and suggested legal and extra legal measures against perpetrators. A common thought which was felt throughout the session was the idea that laws are tools for anti-violence, but not the most important tool. Paper presenters felt that for laws to be effective, they must be accompanied by a change in societal attitude towards women by both men and women together. In this particular session Dr. Sartik Bagh, Associate Professor, Dept. of Political Science, BBAU, Lucknow presented a paper and discussed about the gender justice. Utsav Gaurav Raj & Shweta Gupta, Research Scholar, Dept. of Law, University of Lucknow, Lucknow discussed about the fundamental rights of women under the Indian Constitution and suggested some review.

Valedictory Session

Two Days National Seminar ended with overwhelmingly heard valedictory address by Prof. Roop Rekha Verma, Former Vice Chancellor, Lucknow University, Lucknow and Secretary at present of ‘Sanjhi Duniya’ on 9th March 2013. She had a focus on gender discrimination and gender equality. She provided a vast framework of gender discrimination by including family, social and governmental institutions. The unique deliberation of Prof. Roop Rekha Verma made the environment of seminar worthy and precious. She shared her academic experiences to understand the nature of problem of women. She also emphasised about the ability of women and their increasing participation in different fields. She appreciated the organiser for organising the seminar and expressed her hope for organising such types of seminar in future also.

Outcome of the Seminar

Deliberations and discussions during the seminar fruitfully concluded that gender discrimination still lurks in even the most tolerant society like India and manifests itself in variety of ways. Women are not only important

but also a necessity for the survival of any society. Sincere efforts for the protection of women are required to be implemented without any political or other kind of interventions. A woman is a human being first. She is also the citizen of an independent country, where the tools of citizenship can be used to establish her identity, her rights, and her social and political position.

Empowerment of women, in the social, economic, political and religious context, can become a reality not by the passing of laws but when women come out of their homes and actively participate in reshaping the society. It is only when women are empowered in all spheres of life with an equal opportunity and when she has the choice and opportunity to lead a publicly active life that we can talk about a foundation being created for a collective change in her dalit status in the society. An empowered woman free from her dalit status will be in a position to confidently articulate her thoughts and will become more productive in her actions. Women's empowerment in all walks of life will bring the necessary balance that is required in nature. It will help in promoting structures which are more inclusive, progressive, creative, constructive and generative in nature and which are in sync with nature.

The outcome of this seminar seeks to extend discussions on the protection and promotion of rights of women in comprehensive manner. The august gathering of the seminar came to a conclusion that such seminars should be a regular event to eliminate the unequal status of women and ensure the equal participation of them in every spheres of life. Hence, with commonly accepted vision of achieving the objective of equal participation of women in every sphere of life through combined efforts of academicians, civil society members and various other statutory and constitutional bodies, the seminar was concluded with a vow to meet again on some relevant and burning issue relating to women in society. It is expected that the suggestions and outcomes of the seminar will be helpful in seeking the ways that leads to positive and inclusive development of the women as a whole and of dalit women in particular.

