

Dalit Solidarity

Our Next Mission Project commencing 4th March on Missions Weekend

Walking alongside our Christian sisters and Brothers, and indeed alongside all Dalits in their struggle for justice, is a key way in which we can show support and Solidarity with them.

- Dalits make up 85-90% of the membership of the Church of North India (CNI)
- Dalit Christians (and Muslims) face double discrimination as schemes to reserve a quota of places for Dalits in higher education and in employment, recognising their disadvantaged position in society, are only available to Dalits of the Hindu, Buddhist and Sikh Faiths. Campaigning to change this law is a key part of CNI's work for social justice for its members, and one on which they are putting increasing emphasis.
- The vast majority of Dalits still live in extreme poverty and experience discrimination in all aspects of life, despite recent development of cities, the growth of the Indian economy, the emergence of a metropolitan middle-class, all of which only benefits up to 20% of India's 1.2 billion people.
- For Dalit women and girls, with lower participation in society and with lower literacy rates than their male counterparts, the position is even bleaker, without targeted intervention and support.
- Girls are not valued equally with boys in many parts of Indian society, with abortion of female foetuses and the killing of baby girls not uncommon
- Parts of Indian society too are not respectful of girls and women, with sexual harassment and assaults being commonly found.

***Dalit** is the name adopted by those who are traditionally seen to be untouchable. They are considered to be below the caste system altogether, and are often assigned to menial jobs like cleaning latrines and collecting waste. They are/were therefore considered to be polluted or untouchable.

Caste discrimination in the UK

Estimates of the number of Dalits currently living in the UK vary from around 50,000 to up to 1 million. A survey published by the Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance suggests that 58% of UK Dalits believe they face discrimination because of their caste. Such discrimination occurs in places of employment, education or in the provision of goods and services. There is currently no legislation in place in the UK to protect them. This injustice has been debated by the UK government extensively in recent years and provision exists in law for protection. However there have been repeated delays in the implementation of this.

What can we do at Marshside

Pray for justice, work to raise awareness of caste discrimination, express solidarity with victims of discrimination in whatever way you can, Write to MP(Template www.mwib.org.uk)Support our fundraising efforts-brunches, saving 5ps and donations for Dalit Solidarity.