

World Nutrition Cape Town 2016

Land distribution to Dalits: a vital necessity to ensure better Nutrition

Purpose of workshop:

The majority of 250 million socially ostracized Indian Dalits, living primarily in rural areas, suffers from acute malnutrition. The main reason for this is poverty resulting from landlessness. Inadequate implementation of (i) land reform measures, (ii) India's nutrition policy of 1993 and (iii) various poverty alleviation programs all contribute to this alarming status. India needs to change its current policy of 'food security' to one of 'food sovereignty', which includes distribution of lands to Dalits and the promotion of organic farming methods and related agricultural inputs. These measures could ensure adequate and healthier food for Dalits, their children, adolescent girls and expecting/nursing mothers and prevent malnutrition, including anemia.

Motivation:

(i) Technical merit:

- Discrimination and violence against Dalits based on the Caste system in South Asia and other analogous forms of discrimination against specific communities in other parts of the region (e.g., Buraku in Japan), Sinti and Roma in Europe, different groups in Africa like the Ozu, is rampant and hinders their access to land, water, education, health and sources of livelihood. The crucial fact is that the majority of Dalits and the other groups mentioned live in rural areas as landless, homeless and subjected to health risks. Their access to land, water and other common resources is denied. As a result, Dalits mainly depend for their livelihood on sweeping, garbage removal, manual scavenging, gutter cleaning and swage maintaining. This situation forces them to live in utter poverty, exposed to malnutrition and health hazards. Dalit women and children are particularly affected from undernutrition and susceptible to all forms of diseases and vulnerabilities.

(ii) Relevance to the topics listed above

This status perpetuates itself owing to inadequate implementation of various constitutional safeguards, special legislations, affirmative action, and economic advancement programs, despite the existence of judicial activism and human rights institutions. Advocacy and lobby work besides public demonstrations are carried out to hold the State accountable for the continuance of this alarming status.

(iii) Engagement of diverse contributors (i.e. chair and those with planned roles);
A wide range of Dalit organisations including Dalits from South Asia and similar other organisations from across the region would participate and share the situation of Dalits, other discriminated communities and the existing governmental measures. They would mainly share and discuss the strategies that they adopt to address this crucial issue. This would be helpful for all actors to carry back home the outcome to intensify their engagement with the respective Governments to address this issue.

(iv) How active involvement of the audience will be facilitated;
There will be quick and brief presentation from each country with a stipulated norm and time schedule. Adequate time will be provided to all participants to respond, share their views, suggestions and recommendations.

(v) Tangible outcome of the event:
-Broader strategies would be evolved and shared to demand land and livelihood measures for these people
-Would help understanding the available legislations, programs and enforcement mechanisms in respective countries
- Would help participants to demand such measures in their respective countries
-Helpful to build alliances both within the countries and regions.
-To build close engagement with local Governments and Regional Co-operations of States.

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4. Title of Abstract/s - **Land distribution to Dalits: a vital necessity to ensure better Nutrition**
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