[Your address]

[Date]

[Your MP’s address]

Dear [….]

I am writing to express my ongoing concern about the lack of legal protection against caste-based discrimination in the UK and ask for your help to prevent the government from repealing the duty to include ‘caste’ as an aspect of race in the Equality Act 2010. Without explicit recognition of caste-based discrimination as a form of discrimination in the UK, there is no protection or recourse to justice for Dalit communities and their right to equality and dignity is denied.

The situation in brief

1. There is clear evidence of people in this country being discriminated against on the grounds of caste (as per the independent government commissioned research in 2010 ‘Caste discrimination and harassment in Great Britain’) not just in family life but in the public sphere- education and the provision of public goods and services. This type of discrimination predominantly affects Dalits (formerly known as ‘untouchables’), of whom there are between 150,000 and 500,000 in the UK.
2. In 2013 the Coalition Government passed an amendment which put a duty on the Government to include discrimination based on the grounds of caste in the Equality Act 2010, and therefore, illegal.
3. After a long delay the Government eventually held a public consultation in 2017. The consultation document was deeply flawed both in the questions it asked and, as shown by an academic study, in the conclusions it drew from the responses.
4. In the light of this the Government has decided to reverse the decision made in 2013 and rely on case law as expressed in the *Tirkey v. Chandhok* case. However, this provides only limited protection, lacks clarity and any redress would involve long drawn out legal procedures.
5. Both the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the United Nations International Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination support the original amendment, which would make discrimination on the grounds of caste part of the Equality Act 2010.
6. Those opposing any legislation in the UK, covering caste-based discrimination, have obviously lobbied to get the Government’s attention by arguing either that: a) Caste has died out so there is no need for it, or b) it is an attack on their religion. Some Hindu temples at the 2015 election urged followers not to vote Labour or Liberal Democrats for this reason.
7. In 2017 DSN-UK requested a legal opinion from the lawyers of the Blackstone Chambers, on the need of legislation to explicitly prohibit caste-based discrimination. It very clearly states that ‘In my view, it is clear from an analysis of the current case law, including the decision in *Tirkey*, that it does not provide anything approaching comprehensive or effective protection against caste discrimination’.

**This is clearly a very serious situation. The government will seek to reverse a decision made by both Houses of Parliament. No time has yet been given but this letter is to alert you in advance**.

Yours sincerely,