



## **DALIT SOLIDARITY NETWORK UK**

### **Background to the Organisation**

Formed in 1998, Dalit Solidarity Network UK brings together individuals and organisations concerned about the continued violation of human rights as a result of caste-based discrimination, mainly found in South Asian communities. Registering as an official charity in 2003, Dalit Solidarity Network UK continues to grow as an effective campaigning and advocacy organisation, working on the issue of caste discrimination in Great Britain and being an active player in the global movement.

Our members include individuals, development agencies, trade unions, journalists and academics, and we are fortunate to have the support of other human rights organisations, with whom we work closely.

With a worldwide rise in the movement to stamp out caste-based discrimination, DSN-UK is one of the founding members of the International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN), which focuses on highlighting the issues on the global stage.

### **What We Do**

DSN-UK works towards equality and social justice for Dalits both in the UK and worldwide in other caste-affected countries. We raise awareness and support Dalit demands for justice – through an effective advocacy programme.

### **Activities**

#### **Providing technical advice and analysis to the UK Parliament, Government departments and others on discrimination on the grounds of caste**

DSN-UK actively works with members of both the House of Commons and the House of Lords, including a close relationship with the APPG for Dalits, to campaign for legislative protection and ensure that the issue of caste-based discrimination is kept on the agenda both within the UK and in international dialogues.

#### **Providing technical advice and analysis to the corporate sector in the UK and internationally on addressing caste-based discrimination and other labour rights abuses**

In order to reduce the effects of caste-based discrimination in global supply chains, we encourage businesses to introduce best practice, collaborating closely with both BOND and the Ethical Trading Initiative to produce reports and advice.

#### **Promoting international advocacy with the International Dalit Solidarity Network**

DSN-UK aims to support international advocacy efforts at the UN and EU, as well as other international institutions, through IDSN by facilitating the submission of shadow reports and joint NGO statements, along with other Dalit Solidarity Networks from around the world.

## **Raising awareness of all aspects of discrimination, exclusion and abuse of human rights on the grounds of caste-based discrimination**

A crucial part of our work is to keep the media interested in the issue of caste, and we are frequently asked to provide information and interviews on the subject; we also provide guidance to international development organisations and institutions, businesses, government officials and individuals, including academics and students, through presentations and discourse.

## **Strengthening the Network**

We organise meetings on caste at the former Department for International Development, in Parliament, with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, at Party Conferences, with Trade Unions and Diversity and Inclusion departments, as well as taking the lead in organising the UK Stakeholders' Group which focuses on legislative change.

## **Who We Are**

Based within the offices of Anti-Slavery International in London, our team consists of the Director and two part-time members of staff: the Co-ordinator, who currently works three days a week; and our Office Administrator, who currently works two mornings a week.

Our Honorary Chair, Jeremy Corbyn MP leads a dedicated group of seven Patrons.

Our Board has 8 members and is led by Chair Corinne Lennox, from the School of Advanced Studies at the University of London, Vice Chair, Tom Palakudiyil, formerly of Head of Asia at WaterAid and Treasurer Kate Solemeyina, Finance Manager at the Ethical Trading Initiative.

## **Finances**

Our finances are currently in a healthy position as per the annual accounts for the year 2019-20. We have received an income of £84.5k, of which £17k is restricted, while expenditure was £87.5k. There is a reserves policy of 4-6 months' core expenditure. We have set aside £40,000 – equivalent to 6 months' core expenditure as reserves for the year ending March 2020. Our funding consists of grants, memberships, donations and consultancy.

## **Some recent achievements**

- ⇒ Launch of the '*Everyday Casteism*' campaign
- ⇒ Following on from pressure by DSN-UK and other stakeholders, the government finally published the Analysis and Response on the Public Consultation on Caste Discrimination in the UK.
- ⇒ Although the outcome of the Consultation did not go in our favour, DSN-UK successfully convened a number of stakeholder meetings.
- ⇒ DSN-UK made significant contributions to BOND's *Caste and Development: Tackling work and descent-based discrimination* report
- ⇒ DSN-UK along with IDSN drafted the ETI Guidance on *Caste in Global Supply Chains*
- ⇒ DSN-UK Facebook page reached over 2,600 followers.
- ⇒ @DSNUK Twitter has more than @20,000 followers