

State of Dalit Youth and Young People under SDG Goal 10

Presented by

Kailash Chandro Rabidas, Joint Organizing Secretary,
Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM)

And

Monjurul Islam, Policy and Advocacy Coordinator, Nagorik Uddog.

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নাগরিক উদ্যোগ
NAGORIK UDDYOG
CITIZEN'S INITIATIVE



Statement of the Problematic

- According to BBS one-third of Bangladeshis are youth between 15 and 35 years
- The share of working-age population (15-59) is larger than non-working age population (>15 and 60+)
- The information on Dalit youth is not available either by the government and private level.
- According to the information of the ministry of social welfare there are about 6.3 millions Dalit in Bangladesh who are identified by their work and descent.
- Dalit comprises of 3%-4% of the total population of Bangladesh.
- Descent and caste based data were not included in the last census held in 2011.

Trends and Analysis

Target-1.3: Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable

- Bangladesh government emphasizes on inclusiveness in its development strategy and thus sets its 7FYP (7th Five Year Plan 2016-2020) in coordination with the targets of SDGs.
- Government also set indicators of increasing of social protection to reach 30% (by 2020)
- However, no specific mention made in favor of Dalit community though the previous planning including National Strategic Paper for Social Safety net recognized the pattern of discrimination against occupational groups related to caste systems
- Since 2012-13 financial year, government has been allotting special budget for the development of Dalit, Bede and Harijan community.
- The allocation has been increased from 64074 crore to 74367 crore during the fiscal year of 2019-20. But very unfortunately in the last and current financial year (2016-2017, 2017-2018) this allocation made generic and also termed the Dalit community as 'Underprivileged'.

Trends and Analysis

Target 4.1: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

- Government planned to achieving proportion of proficiency of children and young people at different layers from 57% (by 2020) to 63% (by 2025) as mentioned in the SDG tracker.
- However, the education status among Dalit children and youth is very contrary to the progress shared by the government. Education is particularly expensive for Dalit families.
- Dalit youth are lagging behind in education facing discrimination based on their caste and families professional identity.
- Though enrollment among Dalit children increased but drop out rate is alarming. A study shows 63% dropped out for caste based discrimination and other reasons.
- According to multiple sources, traditional practice of untouchability is one of the reasons liable for Dalits' poor access to education. Dalit students still face unusual behavior by their class mates and school teachers primary and secondary level.
- Some public universities have adopted quota for Dalit students since 2013-14 academic year. Unfortunately due to poor participation at secondary and higher secondary level, majority of them can't take advantage of the quota system. Admission process through quota system is also challenging for them.
- Government's flagship programme for achieving the goals of primary and elementary education is supposed to focus on marginalized people's education in principle, but it does not have any specific programmes for Dalit children.
- The Prime Minister's office circulated an order on 29th May, 2012 to reserve quotas for Dalit students in educational institutions. However, the quota has not yet been implemented excepting some public universities and the Ministry of Education has not yet issued an official circular regarding it.

Trends and Analysis

Target 5.3: Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation

- Dalit young girl in Bangladesh face discrimination, exclusion and violence as a result of both their caste and gender. High rates of illiteracy, child marriage, and early motherhood is very common with Dalit girl.
- Historically, Dalit communities are patriarchal, women and girls aren't allowed to enjoy freedom of choice and taking any decision.
- Male children frequently go out of the colony and lives in relatively broader realm while girls live within the colony being largely ignorant of the world out.
- This obstacle is imposed by the male in the name of protecting the girls' dignity.
- Education for girl child is largely denied in Dalit community. A study has shown that Dalit community faces deprivation and inequality in education institutions.
- Elders are in opinion that women's education is useless and they better learn household jobs.
- Most of the Dalit girls are dropped before completing primary level. Guardians are reluctant to send girls to school because of frequent incidence of sexual harassment in the way to school.
- In the study (ibid), 76% of FGD respondents said that child marriage is prevailing in the community and in 76% of the cases the girl got married before reaching their eighteen.

Trends and Analysis

Target-10.3: Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard

- Dalit professional sweepers', in fact, trapped by the mainstream society to do this traditional job of sweeping and cleaning. As a result young educated Dalit often face humiliating situation while seeking decent job.
- Educated Dalit often considered for the sweeping and cleaning job even they have the education and skill for the decent post.
- Discrimination in the workplace like lower wages, abusive word for their caste, not allowing touching common things like cups, glasses etc also impediment to their access to decent employment.
- They face discrimination in doing business as the non-Dalits use to avoid buying or selling goods for their caste identity.
- Dream of being an entrepreneur never happened with Dalit youth as they do not have financial ability; neither have they had collateral against loan.
- Anti-discrimination act can be an important tool for Dalit youth having discrimination free access to rights in all sphere in lives. However, a drafted act (first draft in 2014 and 2nd draft in 2019) is still await for finalization with the concerned ministry.

Youth policy and Dalit Youth

- National youth policy 2017 does not consider the issue of Dalit in any means.
- The policy defines 16 categories of youth but did not mention about Dalit and socially excluded community.
- However, there is still opportunity to address the issue of Dalit youth through its different clause. Such as:
 - a) section 8.1.4 says to ensure youth opportunities for education in accordance with their aptitude and need;
 - b) Section 8.1.17 expresses to extend special support to those youth who are disadvantaged, backward, distressed, subjected to other types of adversity and to the youth with special needs;
 - c) Section 9.1.2 says about to provide special health care for the backward youth and those with special needs;
 - d) Section 9.2.8 includes to ensure provision of sport facilities to 'hijra' (transgender) youth and youth with special needs and
 - e) Section 12.1.1 proclaims to provide all youth irrespective of race, faith, colour and sect with equitable opportunities for fulfilling the basic needs of education, health, shelter and other necessities.

Specific Policy Recommendations

- Recognize Dalit 'Special' community; produce disaggregated data on Dalit people especially on young people, identify inequality and take intervention to bring this population under development process
- Revive special budgetary allocation for Dalits, increase coverage of social safety net program for Dalit youth on education stipend and skill development training
- Ensure constitutional measures and specific legislation are enacted and effectively enforced to protect Dalits from discrimination in educational institutions. Produce guidelines on non-discrimination in education should be issued to all schools, and teachers and school management trained on it.
- Ensure both the enrolment and regular attendance of Dalit children in primary education with all facilities provided by the government. Take administrative steps for ensuring quotas in the educational institutions along with public universities for Dalit students.
- Enact the draft 'Anti-discrimination Act' as soon as possible to address discriminatory customs on Dalit professional sweepers.
- Ensure loan and skill development facilities to promote small entrepreneurs from Dalit youth

Thanks for your patience