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Advocacy Brief

Dalit Women and Girls with Disabilities and Feminism



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“Nothing About Us, Without Caste Justice: Reclaiming Dalits with Disabilities Feminist Futures”

Dalit communities in South Asia, historically marginalized due to caste-based discrimination, face layered exclusions when disability, gender, labor, and environmental injustice intersect. **Dalit persons with disabilities—especially women and girls—experience systemic and structural discrimination** across every sphere of life, rendering them among the most invisibilized and underserved populations.



Key Issues of Dalits Women and Girls with Disabilities and Feminism in the Intersections of Care Work and Climate Change

1. Multiple Marginalization

- Dalits with disabilities face multiple discriminations on the basis of caste, disability, gender, poverty, remoteness/grassroots, etc.
- Excluded from both mainstream disability rights and Dalit rights movements.

2. Invisible Care Work

- Dalit women and girls with disabilities or those caring for family members with disabilities engage in **unpaid and undervalued care work**.
- They are often employed in informal and caste-assigned labor such as domestic work or manual scavenging, with no social protection.

3. Gendered and Ableist Violence

- Dalit women and girls with disabilities are at **heightened risk of violence**, including sexual violence, medical neglect, forced institutionalization, and sterilization.
- Lack of access to justice, due to stigma, inaccessible reporting mechanisms, and caste/gender bias in institutions.

4. Climate Injustice

- Dalit communities often reside in **climate-vulnerable areas** (e.g., riverbanks, slums, floodplains).
- Climate change disproportionately impacts Dalits with disabilities, who face barriers to evacuation, relief, and rehabilitation.
- Climate policies rarely consider disability inclusion or caste-based vulnerabilities.

Call to Action



To achieve **inclusive, equitable, and just society**, policy makers, development partners, UN agencies, OPDs, feminist networks, and climate actors must:

- 1. Center Intersectionality:** Dalit women and girls with disabilities experience unique and layered forms of discrimination. So, design design programs, campaigns, and policies that are intersectional at the core—not additive afterthoughts.
- 2. Make Feminism Accountable:** Mainstream feminism often overlooks caste and disability. Therefore, feminism must challenge Brahmanical patriarchy and ableism together. To do this, ensure representation of Dalit women and girls with disabilities in feminist spaces, from agenda-setting to leadership roles.
- 3. Amplify Voices from the Margins:** Dalit women and girls with disabilities are too often excluded from both disability and Dalit rights movements. So, adopt 'Nothing About Us Without Us' with a caste- and disability-aware lens.
- 4. Recognize Gendered and Caste-Based Violence:** Violence against Dalit women with disabilities is systemic, intersectional, and often invisible. So, create accessible, caste-sensitive, and trauma-informed reporting and support mechanisms. To do this, map barriers to justice—including physical, attitudinal, and institutional—and advocate for structural change.
- 5. Build climate resilience:** Design disability-inclusive and caste-aware climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies.
- 6. Value and Redefine Care Work:** Care work is undervalued, feminized, and casteed. Dalit women and girls with disabilities often do unpaid labor or are themselves excluded from care systems. Therefore, advocate for recognition and redistribution of care work in all policies—including disability, gender, and social protection frameworks.
- 7. Challenge Structural Injustice, Not Just Attitudes:** Inclusion is not enough. We need to transform the systems that marginalize Dalit women and girls with disabilities. Therefore, push for human rights-based approach, not charity-based approaches to disability and gender justice.
- 8. Representation is Resistance:** Dalit women with disabilities must be in decision-making spaces—not just as participants, but as leaders. Therefore, promote leadership development, political participation, and economic empowerment of Dalit women and girls with disabilities.
- 9. Intersectionality Is a Political Commitment:** This is not just about inclusion—it's about power, equity, and justice. So, frame advocacy around rights, reparations, and recognition—not tokenism or symbolic gestures.

Dalit with Disabilities Association Nepal – An Overview

Dalit with Disabilities Association Nepal (DDAN) is a human rights-based, not-for-profit making, formally registered organization founded, governed, and led entirely by Dalits with disabilities. DDAN is rooted in the lived experiences of historically marginalized communities and works at the intersection of caste, disability, and gender justice. DDAN embodies Dalit feminist disability values by shifting power to those traditionally excluded from decision-making spaces.

DDAN envisions a just, inclusive, and equitable society where Dalits with disabilities—particularly women and girls—can live with dignity, autonomy, and full realization of their rights, free from systemic oppression based on caste, gender, and disability. Anchored in the principles of dignity, equality, and empowerment, DDAN strives not only for inclusion but for structural transformation. Through grassroots activism, policy advocacy, and alliance-building, DDAN amplifies the voices and leadership of Dalits with disabilities to reimagine a society where no one is left behind—especially those pushed furthest to the margins. 🌐 Learn more: <http://www.ddan.org.np>

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