DALIT BAHUJAN RESOURCE CENTRE

STRATEGY 2024+

Empowering Marginalised Communities

Cover: A DNT women weaving traditional basket

Published by:

Dalit Bahujan Resource Centre
Behind Next Gen International School,
Near Hosanna Ministries, Gorantla,
Amaravathi Road, Guntur-522 034.

Phone: +91-72860 45555, 0863-2254271

Email: apdbrc@gmail.com

Website: https://dbrcindia.org/

Follow us on:

Youtube:
https://www.youtube.com/@voiceofmarginalised

Whatsapp:
https://www.whatsapp.com/channel/0029Va9SuglIXnloP7jQTo3c

Facebook:
https://www.facebook.com/DBRCGNT

X (formerly twitter):
https://twitter.com/DbrcMedia/

Instagram:
https://www.instagram.com/voice_ofmarginalised?igshid=YTQwZjQ0NmI0OA==

Foreword

Towards a just society

Dear reader,

Greetings from Dalit Bahujan Resource Centre, Guntur!!

Historical and systemic untouchability and discrimination against Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Denotified Tribes (DNTs), and Nomadic Communities (NTs) in India have relegated them to the margins of society, hindering their access to social, economic, educational, and healthcare opportunities. As the world is growing very fast, DBRC firmly believes that 'no one should be left behind' without accessing the fruits of development. It is imperative that communities facing exclusion, and poverty receive their just share in social, economic, and natural resources to create an equal and inclusive society. We strive that everyone has access to quality education, healthcare, and dignified livelihoods. We envision a society free from violence and discrimination based on caste and gender. In addition to that, we believe that there is a need of having a long-term approach on preparedness, relief and rehabilitation to face disasters and pandemics like Covid-19.

DBRC lays special focus on empowerment of marginalised communities through six sectorial interventions: Dalit Adivasi Budget Watch, Education, Health, Livelihoods, Housing and Prevention of Violence and Discrimination. Gender equality and climate resilience serve as cross-cutting themes integrated into all our interventions.

DBRC prepared this strategic plan document in consultation with our stakeholders. Also, we are looking forward for their continuous support to successfully achieve the objectives of Strategic Plan for 2024+. At the outset, let me take an opportunity to thank our generous donors Bread For The World (BFTW), Christian Aid, Azim Premji Foundation (APF), Swedish Chamber of Commerce, India, AID, EdelGive (GROW Fund) and WEIGO for their continuous support in carrying out our work. I thank the our community, finance partners, board members, staff, networking partners and well-wishers for their unwavering support and hope this will continue in future for the cause of social change.

"The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members. Together, let us be architects of change, fostering a future where every individual, regardless of circumstance, can thrive."

- Nelson Mandela

Yours sincerely,

Alladi Deva Kumar
Chief Executive Officer
DBRC

ABOUT US

Dalit Bahujan Resource Centre was established in 1992 to advance the legacy of Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar by working for the Socio-Economic and Cultural transformation of the Dalit Bahujan Communities with special focus on women and children. DBRC focuses on transforming the lives of marginalised communities by providing information, knowledge and capacity building. DBRC works for promotion of livelihoods, dignity and self-respect among Dalits, Adivasis, Waste Pickers and other informal workers.

MISSION

To enable Assertive Interventions of Dalit Bahujan Communities towards their Socio-Economic Empowerment.

VISION

To achieve social justice and social democracy to reclaim human dignity of Dalit Bahujan Communities.

GOAL

To enable Dalit Bahujans to actualize their dreams, a new society where Dalit Bahujans will avail their rights and entitlements; develop strong social and financial resources; and become part of decision making bodies.

Strategies 2024+

Our strategic priorities and sectors in focus

Dalit Adivasi Budget Watch

- Fostering Socio-Economic justice
- Ensuring Effective implementation of SC/ST Sub-plan Act
- Engaging with government agencies
- Networking with civil society organisations

Education

- Promoting inclusive education
- Providing access to quality education
- Facilitating existing higher educational opportunities
- Negotiating cultural norms

Health

- Referral services and linkages
- Promoting healthy hygiene practices
- Reducing nutritional deficiencies
- Minimising sanitation related diseases

Housing

- Providing access to safe and secure housing
- Facilitating electricity, water, toilets and drainage

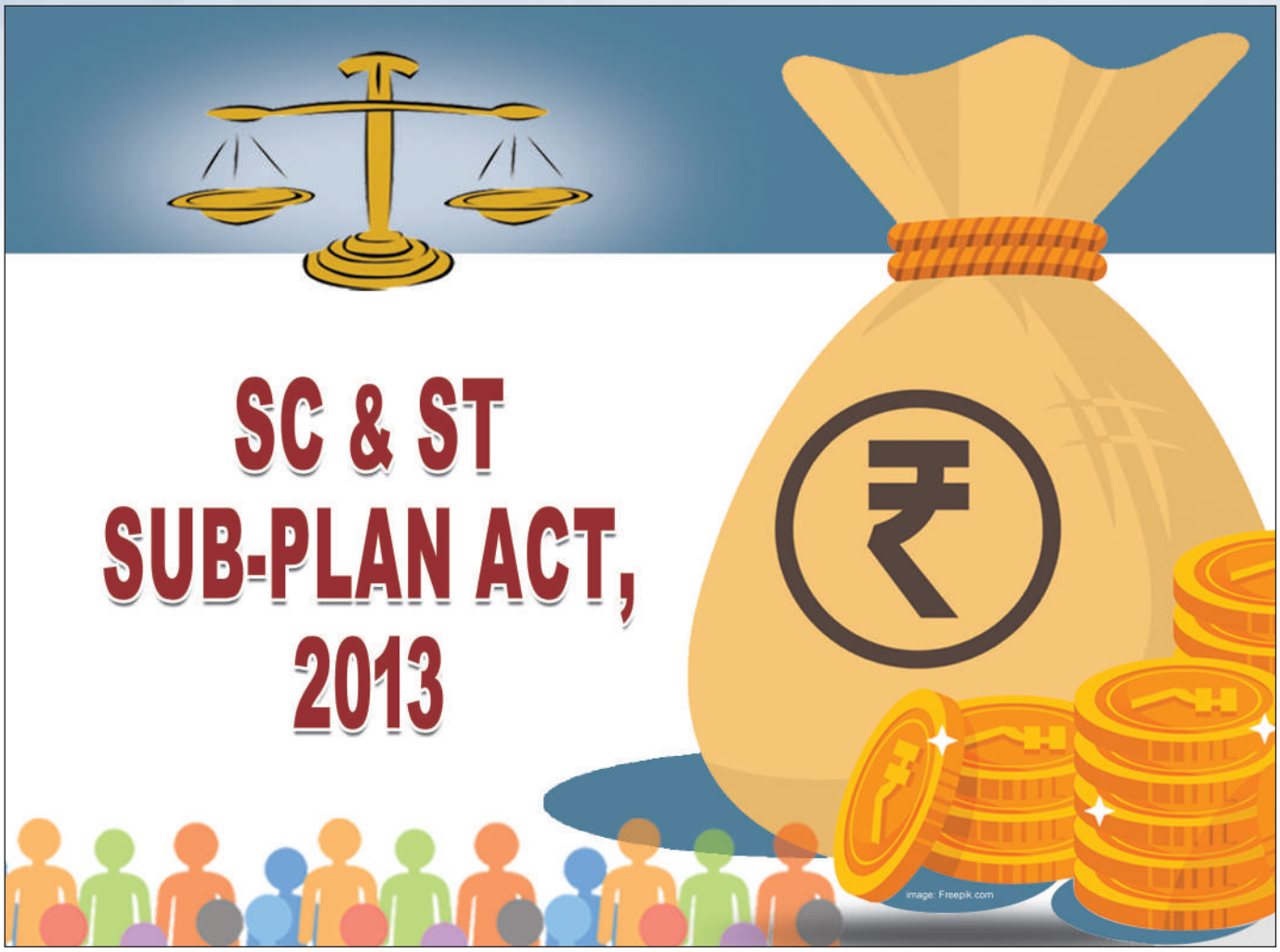
Livelihoods

- Financial Literacy
- Emphasising economic diversity and sustainable livelihoods
- Enhancing market-oriented skills
- Promoting organic/natural farming
- Digital Literacy

Prevention of Violence and Discrimination

- Strengthening women's social status
- Eradicating violence and discrimination
- Reducing vulnerability factors
- Engaging with law enforcing agencies

Note: Gender Equality and Climate Justice will be cross cutting through all the programmes.



Budget watch

Dalit Adivasi Budget Watch

Strategic focus

Fostering Socio-Economic justice

Ensuring Effective implementation of SC/ST Sub-plan Act

Engaging with government agencies

Networking with civil society organisations

Towards Socio–Economic Justice

The context

In the late 1970s, the then Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi realised that poverty alleviation programmes initiated by the government were not reaching the SC/STs. The Government of India introduced a special component plan by allocating a budget in proportion with the population of SC/STs and recommended state governments to enact a special component plan. Even after four decades, the state governments did not act accordingly. Dalits

in Andhra Pradesh led a social movement which resulted in Andhra Pradesh being the first state to enact SC/ST sub-plan Act in 2013. Even after enactment of the act, the fruits of the act are not reaching the target communities. Therefore, DBRC in collaboration with other civil society organisations, initiated Dalit Adivasi Budget Watch to monitor the implementation of the Act.

Our vision

We envision a society where SC/ST communities thrive and achieve socio-economic equality, enjoying opportunities and well-being on par with other communities.

Our way

- We create awareness on schemes and services available under SC/ST Sub-Plan Act and connect to the last mile delivery.
- We organise inter-face meetings between the community and concerned government departments for optimal utilisation of SC/ST component budget.
- We conduct research studies to assess the impact of SC/ST Sub Plan Act and represent the study findings and recommendations to the concerned departments for policy changes.
- We conduct capacity building programs to the communities, community leaders and budget watch teams.
- We network with civil society organisations, intellectuals, academicians, retired bureaucrats and community leaders to monitor the status of implementation of sub-plan Act.

Ajay Babu
Member, Dalit Adivasi Budget Watch, Eluru

DBRC played a crucial role in advocating for the extension of the Sub-Plan Act by raising the issue with Dalit leaders and People's representatives. Dalit Adivasi Budget Watch identifies the type of budget needed for the development of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) and identifies the problems faced by these communities at the grassroots level. The committee documents these findings and engages in constructive dialogue with the government to ensure the proper utilization of the SC/ST sub-plan budget.

Image: Mohammad Shahnawaz/Shutterstock.com

Towards Inclusive Education

Education

Strategic focus

Promoting inclusive education

Providing access to quality education

Facilitating existing higher educational opportunities

Negotiating cultural norms

The context

A significant portion from the marginalized communities face challenges in accessing education and many of them either do not attend school, struggle academically, or are at risk of dropping out. Additionally, SC/ST youth lack awareness of available higher educational opportunities which leads them to enrol in subpar institutions or resort to daily wage labour. Digital education tools introduced in the educational sector are

widening the digital gap between SC, ST, DNT & NTs and the other privileged communities. Historical injustices and systemic discrimination have contributed to the exclusion of these groups from accessing quality education. Culturally, these communities do not give importance to girl child education. These issues highlight the urgent need to take up targeted interventions to address educational disparities and empower marginalized communities.

Our vision

We envision a society where education empowers everyone, regardless of background, to reach their full potential and contribute to a just and equitable world.

Our way

- We set up Outdoor Learning Centres (OLCs) for children from marginalised communities who are either never enrolled or dropped out or slow-learners to enhance educational standards on par with other communities through joyful learning techniques.
- We facilitate children from marginalised communities to enrol into schools, residential institutions and other reputed educational institutions with the support of government agencies.
- We conduct awareness campaigns with parents, teachers and gross-root functionaries on the importance of education for SC/ST/DNT/NT and other marginalised communities with special emphasis on girl-child.
- We provide online and offline career counselling to the students from marginalised communities through a toll-free number and by facilitating interaction meetings with domain experts.
- We conduct life-skill programs to instil confidence and self-esteem.

Akhira (Waste picker), mother of an OLC Student, Eluru

Before our children enrolled in the Outdoor Learning Centre (OLC), they were reserved and felt isolated. However, after joining OLC, they have undergone a transformation. Now, they confidently interact with peers, form friendships, and even communicate in English. Most importantly, they have developed a new-found enthusiasm for learning, actively engaging in studies both at school and back home. This transformation fills me with immense joy and gratitude. OLC is giving my child the chance to dream big and pursue a path they choose, not one defined by circumstance. It is an investment in their future, and honestly, it fills me with immense pride.

Health

Strategic focus

- Referral services and linkages
- Promoting healthy hygiene practices
- Reducing nutritional deficiencies
- Minimising sanitation related diseases

Hygiene, Nutrition, Sanitation and Institutional Linkages for Healthier Communities

The context

Today, health and hygiene have become increasingly expensive in India. Accessing quality healthcare poses one of the biggest challenges to marginalized communities in India, determined by their socio-economic conditions. Lack of awareness, poor access, and affordability to quality healthcare is a major challenge to most of the SC, ST, DNT & NT communities. They are often forced to live in disease-prone localities without

sanitation facilities. Their nutritional intake is limited due to their socio-economic conditions, resulting in poor health indicators. Additionally, people from these marginalized communities accessing institutional healthcare is very meagre, exacerbating their health disparities. Furthermore, most women from these communities lack awareness on menstrual health and good hygiene practices. All these factors compound and worsen the health conditions of marginalized communities.

Our vision

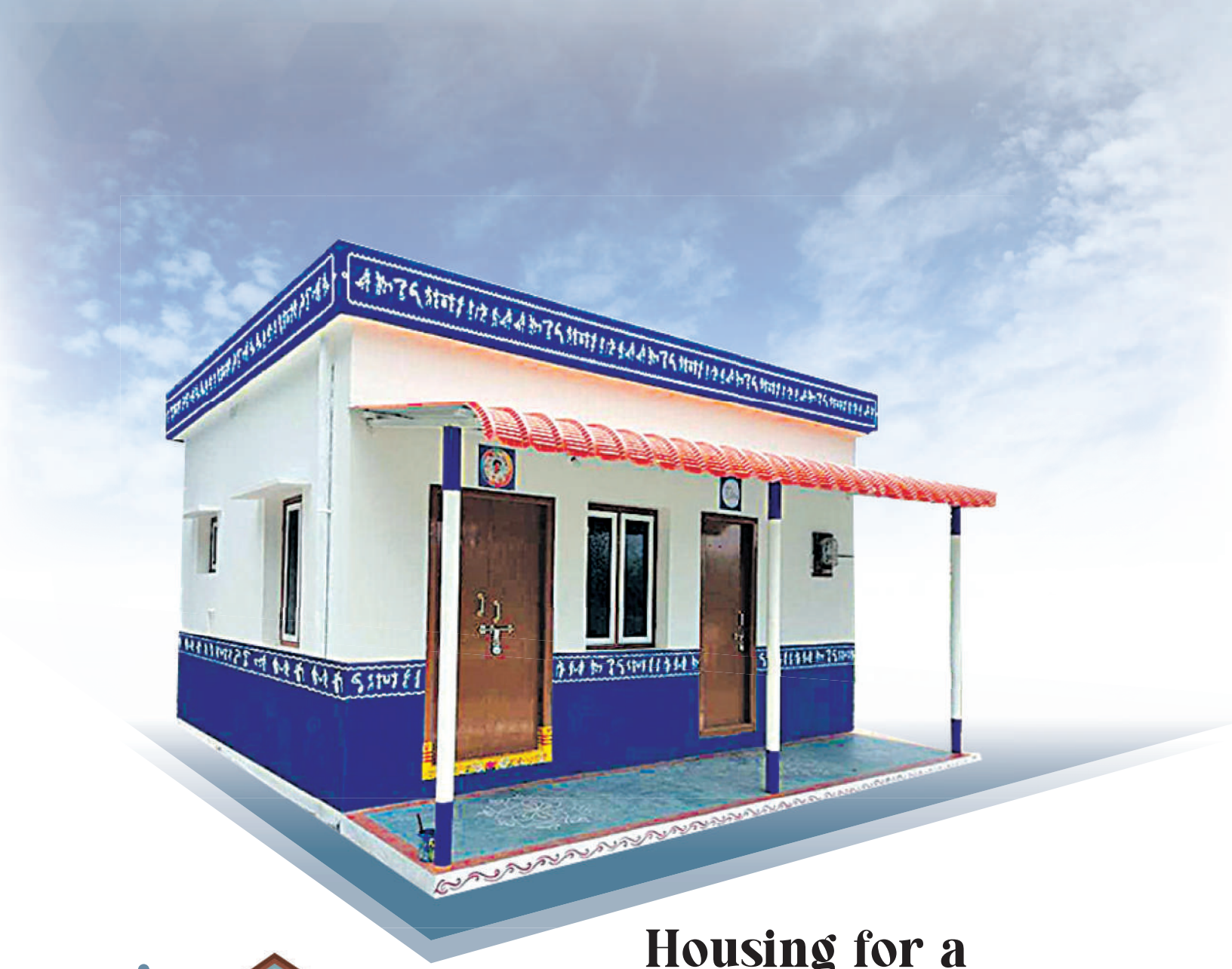
We envision SC/ST/DNT/NT communities have equal access to affordable and quality healthcare, regardless of their socio-economic status.

Our way

- We collaborate with concerned government departments and healthcare providers to promote knowledge on low-cost nutrition for marginalized communities, with a special focus on children, pregnant, and lactating mothers.
- We strengthen linkages with government institutions such as Anganwadi Centers and Primary Health Centers
- We partner with public and private healthcare providers to organize regular health camps in community residential areas, facilitating early detection of health issues.
- We involve staff from women and child welfare departments, medical and healthcare departments, to raise awareness among communities about WASH activities, menstrual health and hygiene, and the importance of maintaining clean surroundings.
- We engage with government departments to facilitate families from marginalized communities in obtaining Health Cards and with public sector banks to access life insurance, thereby providing health and financial security

R. Eeramma,
Yanadi community women,
Vaddershwaram

Previously, babies were often delivered at home, putting both mothers and newborns at high risk of complications. Additionally, vaccine hesitancy was widespread, leaving children vulnerable to preventable diseases. Thankfully, things have changed dramatically. Through DBRC's tireless awareness campaigns, our community has undergone a significant shift. We now understand the importance of safe hospital deliveries for mothers and newborns. DBRC's work has also fostered a deep appreciation for the critical role vaccinations play in protecting our children's health. Thanks to DBRC's advocacy efforts, we also now have health camps right here in our colonies! This has made it much easier for people to get the medical care they need, close to home. We are grateful to DBRC for their dedication to improving our community's well-being.



Housing for a Respectable Living

Housing

Strategic focus

Providing access to safe and secure housing.

Facilitating electricity, water, toilets and drainage.

The context

For any individual or family, a house is more than just a place to live. It is a place that protects people from all varying climatic conditions. A house provides essential safety and security through various means, offering not only physical shelter but also a sense of belonging and stability. Additionally, house ownership often symbolises status, respect, and dignity within society. However, today, a significant population of the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) residing in villages and urban slums are facing challenges in getting their own house. In rural areas, overcrowding is common, with on an average two

families residing in a single small house, often partitioned with temporary walls. The situation is even worse in urban slums, where cramped and matchbox-sized houses are constructed in narrow alleys, leading to unclean, unhygienic, and unhealthy living conditions exacerbating health issues.

Denotified and Nomadic Communities often dwell in isolated locations or in the outskirts of towns, where basic facilities are scarce. Their makeshift dwellings, made up of tarpaulins, flex banners, clothes, and palm leaves, offer little protection and lack essential amenities such as potable water, electricity, toilets, and proper drainage systems. Access to adequate housing and essential amenities is a fundamental human right, yet these marginalized communities are deprived of it. DBRC recognizes the importance of fulfilling this basic need for SCs, STs, DNTs, and NTs.

Our vision

We envision a world where everyone has access to safe and secure housing, fostering dignity and empowering individuals to build fulfilling lives.

Our way

- We motivate the communities on the importance of permanent housing and its impact on their lives.
- We engage with concerned government departments and facilitate the SC/ST/DNT and NTs in accessing housing.
- We facilitate the target communities in accessing basic amenities such as water, electricity and toilets.

Namburi Ayyappa and Namburi Jyothi,
RR Peta, Vijayawada

We used to live in Krishna Lanka Varadhi, Vijayawada, an area prone to severe flooding. Whenever floodwaters rose, the local police would forcibly evacuate us. During those tough times, DBRC staff played a crucial role in helping us in sanctioning of a safe and secure house we live in today. Without their guidance and support, navigating the complexities of securing permanent housing would have been overwhelming. Their dedication ensured our family's safety and provided a foundation for a brighter future. Now we are proud to say that we have our own house, where we can feel secure knowing no one can evacuate us. We are forever grateful to DBRC for their timely help.

Photo Courtesy: Srujan Punna

Livelihoods

Strategic focus

- Financial Literacy
- Emphasising economic diversity and sustainable livelihoods
- Enhancing market-oriented skills
- Promoting organic / natural farming
- Digital Literacy

Nurturing Resilience through Sustainable Livelihoods

The context

In rural Andhra Pradesh, though majority of the SC/STs depend on agriculture and its allied sectors to make a living, land owned by these communities is minimal. Most of them are agriculture daily wage labourers, some are tenant, small and marginal farmers. Rapid mechanisation, urbanisation and industrialization has led to the reduction in number of work days for the agricultural workers which forced them to migrate

in search of livelihoods. The NREGS initiated to address this issue could not yield the desired results.

Government of Andhra Pradesh enacted A. P. Crop Cultivators Act-2019 to provide crop loans, subsidies, financial assistance, crop insurance, etc. for tenant farmers. To access these services, a written agreement between the tenant farmer and the land owner is mandatory. However, not more than 10 percent are getting the consent from the land owners. Hence, majority of the tenant farmers from marginalized communities are not accessing the available government schemes and services.

Majority of the SC/STs living in urban areas are primarily engaged in daily wage works like construction work, helpers in hotels, watchmen, sanitation work and other menial jobs. Even educated youth (who completed their 10+2 & above) from SC/STs both in rural and urban areas are engaged in menial jobs.

Today, majority of the DNT and NTs depend on their caste professions such as begging by performing their tradition art forms, waste picking, fishing, hair picking, selling balloons, rat catching, and selling plastic and silver household utensils. The income levels of these communities are not even enough to meet their families' daily needs. Rampant growth of online shopping, super markets and other shopping malls have adversely affected their livelihoods. Therefore, DBRC recognized the need to strengthen and sustain the livelihoods of the SC, ST, Other De-notified and Nomadic Communities.

Our vision

We envision a society where empowered communities thrive through decent work, sustainable livelihoods, and economic security.

Our way

- We collaborate with Agriculture and its allied departments to empower the small and tenant farmers from SC/STs to foster their economic dignity and social inclusion by facilitating access to government schemes and services.
- We promote organic/natural farming practices and kitchen gardens with the support of Krushi Vignana Kendras and other govern and non-government institutions to strengthen the sustainable livelihoods and encourage pesticide free crops to combat climate change.
- We collaborate with public and private skill training institutions and facilitate educated unemployed youth to enrol in skill training programmes as per their interests.
- We promote small and medium entrepreneurs with the support of public sector banks and government financial institutions to strengthen the livelihoods of SC, ST, other De-notified and Nomadic communities.

Vankayalapati Yakobi,
Boddikurapadu village,
Prakasham district.

Through Krishi Vignana Kendram (KVK), DBRC helped me acquire a flour machine, which has significantly increased my income. They helped me secure a Rs. 50,000 bank loan to purchase a buffalo and 20 hens for poultry farming. This has diversified my income stream and created a more sustainable livelihood for my family. No longer do I have to rely on borrowing money from the local landlord at exorbitant interest rates. Now, I can manage my own finances and plan for the future. Most importantly, this financial security allows me to better support my daughter's education. I am confident that with a good education, my daughter will break the chains of the caste system.

Prevention of Violence and Discrimination

Strategic focus

Strengthening women's social status

Eradicating violence and discrimination

Reducing vulnerability factors

Engaging with law enforcing agencies

Creating a Future Free from Violence and Discrimination

The Constitution of India explicitly abolished the practice of 'untouchability' and treats everyone equal without discrimination based on caste, gender, religion, region, language, culture, race and other status. In India, violence against women and caste-based atrocities against SC, STs are increasing exponentially. The dominant communities are practicing untouchability and discrimination using new forms despite having legal institutions to curb these inhuman practices.

Data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) indicates an increase in reported cases of atrocities against Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) in Andhra

Pradesh in 2022 compared to 2021. In 2022, Andhra Pradesh recorded 2,315 cases of atrocities against Scheduled Castes (SCs), a significant increase compared to 2014 cases reported in 2021. In 2022, the overall crime rate against Scheduled Tribes (STs) in Andhra Pradesh stood at 15.1%, with a charge-sheeting rate of 75.3%. In 2022 alone, Andhra Pradesh recorded 642 cases of assault against women from the Scheduled Caste (SC) community, involving 650 victims. Similarly, 125 cases were registered for assaults on women from the Scheduled Tribe (ST) community, with 144 victims.

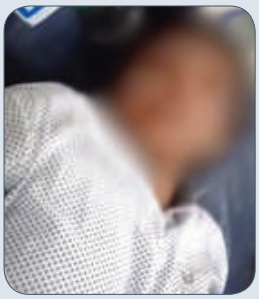
Often majority of the victims of gender and caste violence, untouchability and discrimination do not approach legal institutions. Even if they approach, the majority of the cases are either dismissed or silenced. Today, incidence of caste-based violence and also violence against women has been increasing. Hence, addressing the issues of violence and atrocities has gained prominence in recent times.

Our vision

We envision a society where every individual can live in peace and harmony without violence and discrimination of all forms.

Our approach

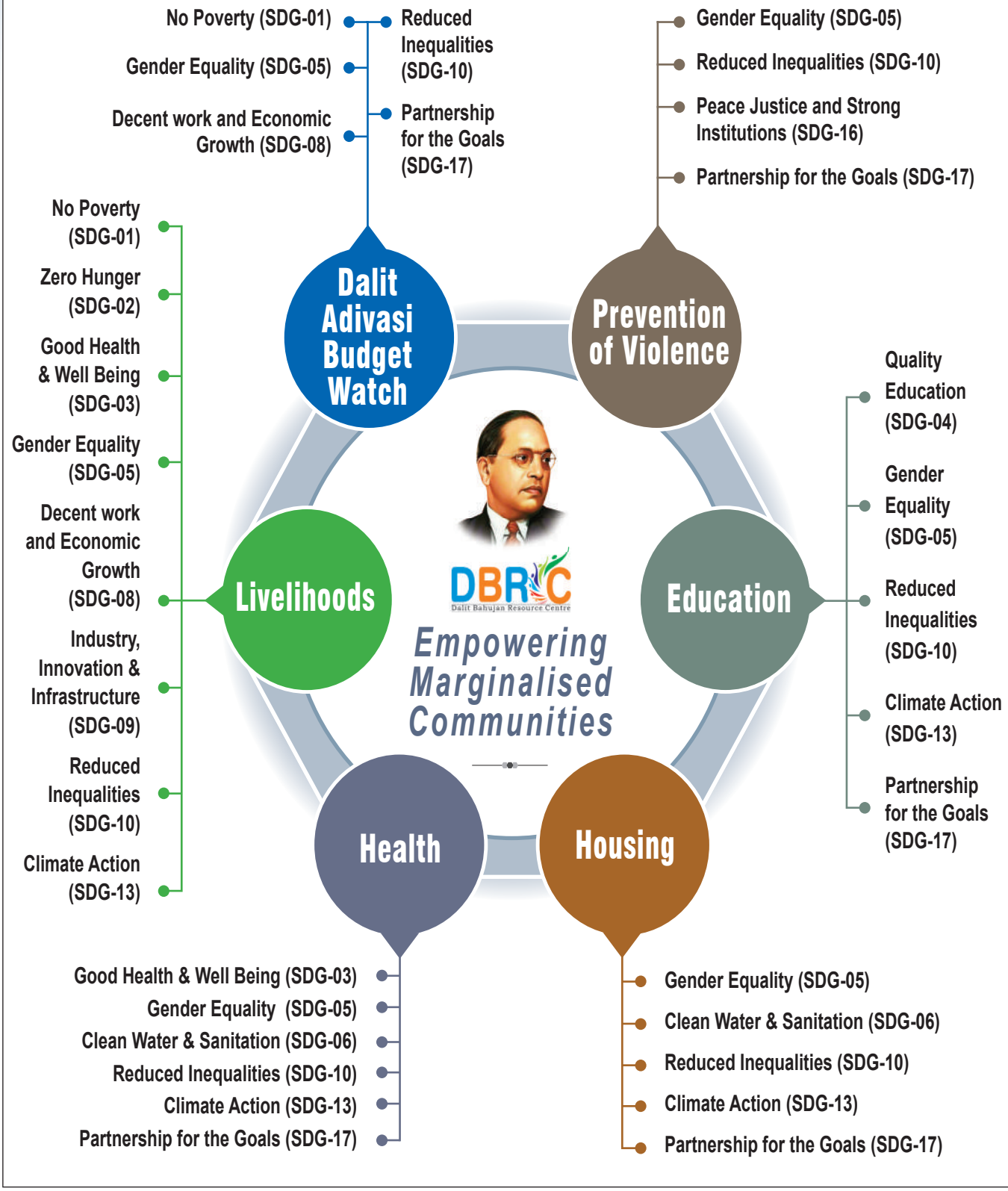
- We promote and protect the Constitutional Rights and Acts through awareness camps, capacity building to the marginalized communities and empower them to stand up for themselves.
- We collaborate with law enforcing agencies to improve sensitivity and responsiveness to atrocities to ensure stringent action against perpetrators.
- We pool resources and expertise to offer holistic support, including financial, legal and psychological assistance to victims.
- We conduct educational programs aimed to break stereotypes, fostering understanding and inclusivity. By empowering the community through skill-building initiatives, we work towards transforming societal attitudes, creating a future free from discrimination and violence.



A victim of caste-based violence in Andhra Pradesh

My name is Saroja (pseudonym), and I am from the SC Mala community in Ramanadhapuram village (name of the village has been changed), Andhra Pradesh. In August 2023, an individual from the Reddy community physically attacked me and my daughter, alleging that my son had married his daughter without his consent. The person from the Reddy community was outraged at how a boy from the SC 'untouchable' caste could marry a girl from the Reddy caste, and he sought revenge on us.The love between my son and his daughter deeply angered him. Despite my attempts to explain our innocence, he forcibly dragged my daughter and me out and subjected us to ruthless beatings. Initially, I was afraid to approach the police station to file a case, but the DBRC staff supported me and assisted in filing an SC/ST atrocity case against the individual involved.

DBRC towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



Jai Bheem! Jai Bharat!!

THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

PREAMBLE

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA,
having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a
SOVEREIGN, SOCIALIST,
SECULAR, DEMOCRATIC, REPUBLIC
and to secure to all its citizens:
JUSTICE, social, economic and political;
LIBERTY of thought, expression,
belief, faith and worship;
EQUALITY of status and of opportunity;
and to promote among them all
FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the
individual and the unity and
integrity of the Nation;
IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY
this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do
HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO
OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.

DBRC
Dalit Bahujan Resource Centre

Beliefs and Values

Dignity

Dignity involves upholding self-respect, self-worth, physical and psychological integrity, and empowerment.

Social Justice

Social justice entails equal access to wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society.

Social Democracy

To follow the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity.

DALIT BAHUJAN RESOURCE CENTRE

Behind Next Gen International School, Near Hosanna Ministries,
Gorantla, Amaravathi Road, Guntur-522 034.

Ph: **0863-2254271, 72860 45555** | E-mail: apdbrc@gmail.com | www.dbrcindia.org