

NEPAL

# GOVERNANCE

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## Discrimination against Dalits Persists Despite Legal Protections in Nepal

WEEKLY

Photo by Bharat Nepal, Ukaalo.com

Despite the country's multiculturalism, minority groups known as Dalits or untouchables face various forms of discrimination, ranging from hate speech to rape and murder.

Nepal declared itself an untouchability and discrimination-free country in 2006. The Caste-Based Discrimination and Untouchability [Offense and Punishment] Act was enacted in 2011 to criminalize caste-based discrimination. The 2015 Constitution of Nepal also prohibits discrimination based on caste.

However, reports of violence against Dalits are on the rise. A recent incident made headlines when an upper caste man set fire to a Dalit family's home, alleging that the Dalit member had married his sister. Other cases, such as the [death of Nawaraj B.K](#) in 2020 and difficulties faced by Dalits in [finding housing](#) in urban areas, highlight ongoing challenges. Discriminatory practices persist, even in urban centers, and instances of hate speech and discrimination against Dalit youth often go unreported. The caste system plays a significant role in Nepal's social, economic, and political landscape. Higher caste individuals hold positions of leadership, while Dalits face economic, social, cultural, and political marginalization. In certain regions, Dalits are still denied access to public facilities.

The caste system continues to play a significant role in Nepal's social, economic, and political landscape. Higher caste individuals often hold positions of leadership, while Dalits face economic, social, cultural, and political marginalization. In certain regions, Dalits are still denied access to public taps, temples, and shops. While such incidents, ranging from social exclusion to murder, are prevalent nationwide, they are particularly prominent in conservative areas like Western Nepal.

Despite having progressive laws in place, the enforcement mechanism and social awareness remain crucial challenges. The question remains whether there is a lack of effective enforcement or insufficient societal understanding of the issue.

Read more: [Ukaalo](#)

### Governance Issues of the Week

1. Aastha Dahal, a PhD graduate from the University of Cambridge, faced challenges obtaining an equivalence certificate from Tribhuvan University (TU) in Nepal. She criticized the lengthy and expensive process and encountered rude behavior from TU staff. Despite fulfilling all requirements and spending over Rs 15,000, her file remained unopened. Others also shared similar experiences, emphasizing the tediousness of obtaining equivalence from TU.

Read more: [The Himalayan Times](#)

2. The government's efforts to combat loan sharking have been delayed. The loan sharking ordinance introduced by President Ram Chandra Paudel expired after 60 days without a replacement bill. The bill to amend Nepal Acts, submitted on May 9, is still pending approval.

Read more: [My Republica](#)

3. Dhangadi and Kailali, the temporary capital and commercial center of the Far-Western region, are experiencing a rise in drug dealing. Kailali reports two drug cases daily, with an annual drug business worth NRs 360 million. Drug addiction has resulted in increased illegal trafficking and violence, particularly among young people, with 30% below 20 years old. The porous border between Kailali, Kanchanpur, and India facilitates drug smuggling.

Read more: [eKantipur](#)

4. Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal's remarks about Sardar Pritam Singh's attempts to make him the prime minister have sparked criticism and calls for his resignation. This has caused disruptions in the National Assembly and House meetings. Imprudent remarks from Nepalese leaders have a history of causing controversies. Media experts clarified that formal events have prepared speeches, while informal gatherings rely on the prime minister's expertise.

Read more: [The Kathmandu Post](#)

5. The Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport plans to eliminate overcrowding and middlemen in transport offices by introducing online services for driver's license renewal and category addition. Within a month, online services will be available nationwide, reducing the need for in-person visits. This initiative aims to streamline processes for the 3.36 million individuals holding driving licenses in Nepal. License renewal extended to occur every ten years.

Read more: [My Republica](#)

6. Recent floods in Nepal, which took place in June/July, caused significant losses of NPR 8.84 billion in the hydropower sector. Damages occurred to 13 operational and 17 under-construction projects, putting billions of rupees of investments at risk. Around 133 megawatts of electricity generation has been halted, impacting 2 million investors in 30 hydropower projects.

Read more: [Naya Patrika](#)

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