



DALIT FREEDOM
NETWORK

WE ARE

UNTOUCH

ABLE

DALIT FREEDOM NETWORK
FREE A CHILD. FREE A WOMAN. FREE A COMMUNITY.

INDIA

Vast and diverse. Full of color, natural beauty, exotic tastes and aromas, a country that enjoys a rich history and culture. It is a feast for the senses.

India is also complex. Religions, traditions, languages, and societal structures fuse in unexpected ways. Ancient yet modern. Fast yet slow. Relaxed yet bureaucratic. Slums alongside high rises. The illiterate alongside the educated. Poverty alongside wealth. Despair alongside hope.

India is the place where God has called Dalit Freedom Network to serve.

is the world's largest democracy

has the 7th largest land area in the world

has a population of 1.2 billion, and is expected to become the world's largest by 2028

has the world's largest youth population with 356 million aged 10-24

has over 1,600 local languages

is a rising world economic player

has surpassed Africa in the HIV/AIDS epidemic



I AM UN WORTHY

Maneesha* was afraid. And she was always hungry.

Abandoned by her father, she lived with her grandparents and her mother, who was only 14 when she was born. Unskilled, uneducated, and according to society, unworthy of any other life, Maneesha's mother tried to earn enough money to care for her parents and her daughter. But there was never enough. Desperate, the family decided they had to pull Maneesha out of school and send her to work as a day laborer so she could add to the family income. They just didn't see any other way. Maneesha loved school and was terrified she was going to have to quit.

One day, Maneesha's mother heard about a place that could help.

This place, a girls' home supported by Dalit Freedom Network, offered safety. Food. An education. Hope. And most important, the love of Christ. Saddened by the separation from her daughter but convinced this was best for her future, Maneesha's mother sent her there to live.

Today, Maneesha is thriving.

She is healthy and at the top of her class in school. She wants to become a doctor. She isn't afraid anymore. She isn't hungry either. Most of all, she knows that she matters. That she has opportunity. That she is loved by God.

She knows she is worthy of a better life.

MANEESHA



DALIT FREEDOM NETWORK SERVES THE POOREST OF THE POOR, THE OUTCASTS, THE FORGOTTEN.

Who are the outcasts in India?

Many of them are Dalits, also known as “untouchables.” And there are 300 million of them. That’s one quarter of India’s population, a staggering number.

Dalits have often felt marginalized, excluded, even oppressed. Some find their access to education, healthcare and justice restricted or denied. As a result many live in extreme poverty, making them very vulnerable to human trafficking, modern slavery and other kinds of exploitation.

Because of extreme poverty and illiteracy, Dalits are particularly vulnerable to exploitation.

Why the name Dalit?

Dalit is a name they gave themselves, and it comes from an ancient word meaning “broken,” “crushed” or “ground.” In some areas of India today, Dalits are still viewed as subhuman and are treated like dirt: some of them believe it would have been better if they had never been born. Dalits often have the most degrading, menial jobs. Some even work as manual scavengers – removing human excrement by hand – a particularly demeaning job. Others work in rock quarries, brick factories, agriculture, or as domestic servants.



The plight of the Dalits can be symbolized by a clay cup, the kind used in tea stands all over India. In 70% of India's villages, members of other castes will not eat or drink with a Dalit. Because of this, when a Dalit person finishes their drink, they are expected to crush the cup on the ground so no one risks being polluted by them.

How is this still happening? To understand, we have to look back.

Most western cultures believe that all people are created equal. Until recently, this has not been the case in India, in part due to the 3,000-year history of the caste system.

Because of the Hindu belief that caste is determined by actions from a previous life, each person is thought to deserve his or her status, whether

high or low. Historical Hinduism teaches that most Indian people are born from the Hindu creator god, Brahma. However, Dalits are *not* considered born from Brahma. They believe because of actions in a previous life, they are completely *outside* the caste system, considered “unborn,” or subhuman.

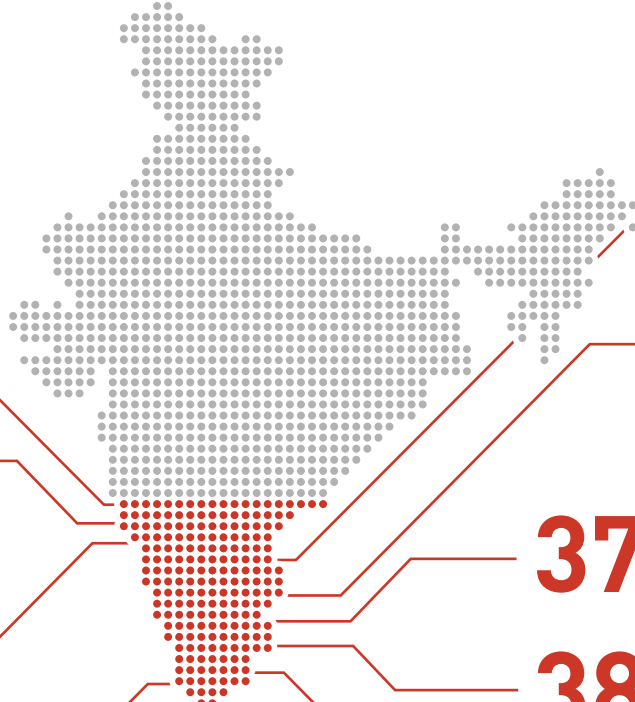


**They are
literally
out-castes.**

And there are 300 million of them.

DALITS BY THE NUMBERS

ATROCITIES BY THE NUMBERS



54%
of Dalit children are undernourished


70%
live below the poverty line

45%
of adults are illiterate



Women are twice oppressed: for being female and for being Dalit

AN INDIAN CHILD GOES MISSING EVERY 8 MINUTES MOST ARE NEVER FOUND


Every 18 minutes, a violent crime is committed against a Dalit

70% of non-Dalits will not eat with Dalits in India's villages

37% of Dalit workers are paid wages from a distance to avoid physical contact

38% of Dalit students are made to sit separately in village government schools

73% of Dalits are not permitted to enter non-Dalit homes in India's villages

90% of the victims of human trafficking in India are Dalits. Girls are particularly vulnerable.

I AM UN IMPORTANT

Deepthi's* eyes shine with the hope of a bright future.

After graduating from one of the schools Dalit Freedom Network supports, she is now on her way to becoming a medical doctor.

But it wasn't always this way.

The marks and scars on Deepthi's body tell the story of abuse and exploitation in her home. As a young child, her father tortured her, and her grandfather threatened to sell her into domestic service. Although Deepthi loved school, her family saw little point in education, and eventually she was forced to quit school to care for her younger brother. Her family became convinced she had an evil spirit and took her to a village where she sat outside for three days and nights without food while black magic was performed over her.

She felt alone, unloved, undeserving of anything good at all.

Eventually Deepthi left her father's family and rejoined her mother. The situation there was even worse. Her mother's new husband abused her sexually. She escaped this desperate situation and soon found herself living on the streets of a large slum, destitute and alone.

Deepthi was completely without hope, convinced she was doomed to a life of abuse, exploitation, and crushing poverty.

But a social worker from one of the shelters Dalit Freedom Network supports found her and took her in.

At the shelter, Deepthi found love, care, counseling, and the opportunity to return to school. She also discovered that God created her with a purpose. Now, Deepthi is studying medicine.

When she graduates, Deepthi wants to return to the slum to provide health care for the elderly. She has purpose. She has found fulfillment. She knows her life matters.

She knows she is important.

DEEPTHI



**We stand with the
Dalits, and we stand
for new hope.**



The caste system has survived more than 3,000 years, but today it is beginning to crumble, because Dalits all over India are rising up and calling for change in their society.

In 2001, a group of 100,000 Dalit people marched for freedom in India's capital city of New Delhi. They cried out for liberty and equality and asked others from around the world to stand with them in their struggle.

Dalit Freedom Network formed in 2002 in response to the Dalits' cry for help.

We partner with churches, schools, and other organizations across the United States to support education, healthcare, and economic empowerment programs with a Christ-centered worldview. At our very core, we believe that the greatest way to serve Jesus is by being His hands and feet to the most marginalized people. We are also committed to total community transformation that happens as people gain skills they can take into their local economies. A key part of our mission is also to plant churches in the communities we serve, because we know that true transformation happens when people come to know the saving love of Jesus Christ.

From DFN's very beginning, Dalits themselves have invited us into their villages, asking us to stand alongside them as they work to change their communities and their nation

We are honored to stand with them in the name of Christ.

Dalit Freedom Network

Community Transformation Model

We desire to serve the entire person, no matter the age, in a process we call the Community Transformation Model. Since many Dalits actually believe they are less than human, changing this belief demands a reconstruction of society. No easy task, *but as communities are transformed, India will be transformed.*

In recent years the Indian government has sought to address discrimination against Dalits by passing new laws and initiatives. These efforts are making a difference; however, Dalits still need others to come alongside them, to stand with them in their quest for dignity and freedom.



Free A Child
(education)



Free A Woman
(empowerment)



Free A Community
(transformation)

I AM UN EDUCATED

Saroja's* father left her family when she was still a child.

With no quiet place to study and suffering from malnutrition, she lacked the stamina to study for extended periods of time. She persevered, however, and graduated from a Good Shepherd school that Dalit Freedom Network supports.

But just when she thought things were looking up, the bottom fell out.

She was unable to afford the tuition for higher education. Her goal was to become a teacher, but it seemed unlikely she would get the education she needed to realize her dream. So she went to work as a clerk to help support her family.

Then, a miracle happened.

At a Good Shepherd School alumni event in 2012, Christian leaders saw her potential and decided to sponsor her college education. She immediately enrolled at a Teacher Training Institute and graduated with honors.

Now, Saroja is a teacher at the same Good Shepherd School where she received her high school education. One of her greatest joys is looking for students just like she was.

Saroja knows the value of hope. The power of education. And she's passing it on.

SAROJA



A - Apple



B - Ball



C - Cat



D - Dog



E - Egg



F - Fish



G - Grass



H - Hand



N - Nine

Nine

O - Orange

Orange

P - Pineapple

Pineapple

Q - Queen

Queen

R - Rose

Rose

S - Snake

Snake

T - Tree

Tree

U - Umbrella

Umbrella



EDUCATION IS THE CATALYST FOR COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION.



Because India has the world's largest youth population (age 10-24), investing in children is vital.

In each Good Shepherd School, children learn English, the language of higher education and business. In India, English is truly the language of opportunity.

Children also learn the values of freedom, equality, and human dignity for *all* people, and every child who attends a Good Shepherd School hears the message of the gospel.

For many, this is the first time they have known their worth as a human being.

Our schools provide a government-approved curriculum with passionate, qualified teachers, many who consider teaching their God-called ministry. Students are learning to become a generation of thinkers and change agents who will carry forward the principles of liberty and justice.

IMPACT:

107 schools

26,000 children

By age seven, many students are bi- or tri-lingual

Many students win awards in math, science, social science, and other subjects.

Our 1,251 graduates are now physicians, pharmacists, composers, teachers, and many other occupations. Many students want to return to their village once they finish their education, so they can serve their own communities with their new skills and training.

I AM UN HEALTHY



Jyoti* was hidden away in the depths of a slum, starving.

Blind and born with a severe cleft palate, she was unable to eat properly. At age 3, she weighed only 15 pounds. In desperation her mother appealed to a public hospital for help. She was turned away.

Jyoti was sent home to die.

But her mother heard about a DFN-supported clinic in her slum and brought Jyoti there. The staff taught Jyoti's mother how to feed and care for her.

Now, Jyoti is thriving and just needs to gain a few more ounces before she will be healthy enough for the surgery that can repair her cleft palate.

Jyoti and her mother they understand the power of hope, the value of life, the gift of health.

**Identity Changed*



HEALTHCARE HEALS MORE THAN DISEASE.

Most Dalit people cannot afford visits to a doctor or a hospital and often suffer—sometimes even die—from diseases that are preventable or curable. Polio, tuberculosis, malaria, leprosy, dysentery, and HIV/AIDS regularly impact Dalits and their families. DFN, in cooperation with our partners in India, provide

basic public healthcare in villages and administer vaccines to children in our schools through a network of trained community health workers.

As Dalits gain access to hygiene training and healthcare for the first time, they are able to live healthier, more dignified lives.

IMPACT:

First comprehensive healthcare program for Dalit people

72 fully trained Community Health Care workers, most operating out of Good Shepherd Schools, to serve the students' families and surrounding community.

Serving 2,160 communities

100% of children in Good Shepherd Schools receive all immunizations

14,740 students received supplementary nutrition in 26 Good Shepherd Schools in 2015

3 mobile health clinics

2 HIV/AIDS clinics

I AM UN DESERVING



ASHA

As a jogini (temple prostitute), Asha* was abused by countless men in her village.

With no education and no marketable skills, she was trapped in a cycle of shame and defeat. She considered ending her life, even though she has two daughters who depend on her.

But in her village one day, she met someone from one of the economic development programs DFN supports.

For the first time, she discovered someone cared about her. That they wanted to offer her tools and resources for a life without shame. She learned she could even open her own business with a grant for a spice-pounding machine.

With gratitude, she accepted. When the first packets of spices sold, she was overwhelmed and cried tears of joy.

She is now able to support her little family with dignity, earning a living that brings satisfaction as well as income.

What's more, she knows she deserves this brand new life.

**Identity Changed*

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT MEANS FAMILIES DON'T JUST SURVIVE, THEY CAN THRIVE.



Our Indian partners help families become self-sustaining through vocational training, short-term grants, and self-help groups. As Dalit women and men learn valuable skills like tailoring, computers, and cosmetology/barbering, they are able to start small businesses and support their families with dignity. They have the pride of knowing they own a business. Often this is

the first thing they have ever owned. They know they can provide food and proper homes for their families. They aren't bound to someone else but are responsible for themselves.

Entire families can be freed from bonded labor, domestic service, daily wages, and dishonest lenders and become able to create their own financial destiny.

IMPACT:

851 women trained in 2015, with 5,800 women trained since 2008

25 vocational training centers

87 self help groups started in 2015, for a total of 1,114 total self help groups

1,146 self help group members added in 2015, for a total of 17,404 self help group members

127 grants to start small businesses distributed in 2015.

8,727 total grants distributed to date

STAND WITH THE DALIT PEOPLE AND STAND FOR NEW HOPE.

PRAY: for India
for the Dalit people

GIVE: to education
to healthcare
to economic development

TELL: the Dalit story
share their plight

GO: take a vision trip
see what God is doing


TO LEARN HOW YOU CAN HELP, VISIT DALITNETWORK.ORG OR TALK TO A DFN REPRESENTATIVE.

Dear Friends,

It is with heavy, yet joyful hearts that we have shared the story of India's Dalits with you. Our hearts are heavy because there is such great need; yet we are joyful because amazing strides are being made towards freedom!

In a sense, there are two Indias today. News reports often feature prosperous India, especially in the technology sector. That is true, but only for a small, educated percentage of Indians. The gap between rich and poor is only widening, leaving most of India behind. We have shown you the India that is still a reality to most of its population, an India that is incredibly beautiful but plagued with extreme poverty and lack of opportunity.

The Dalit Freedom movement and its global network of partners are incredibly encouraged by the transformations we have seen over the past ten years. We are committed to ending poverty, improving lives, and transforming communities, and we invite you to join us.



Joseph D'souza
International President



Matthew Cork
Executive Director, DFN USA

DFN partners with the Good Shepherd Church of India and its associated ministries, an organization with a proven track record in community development and transformation for 15 years. We are guided and directed by our Indian partners, and the programs we support are led and staffed by Indian nationals. Although most of them are Indian Christians, our programs serve the poor and marginalized regardless of their religion. Additionally, there are no preconditions on those who benefit from these programs, and those we serve do not have to be or become a Christian in order to benefit.

