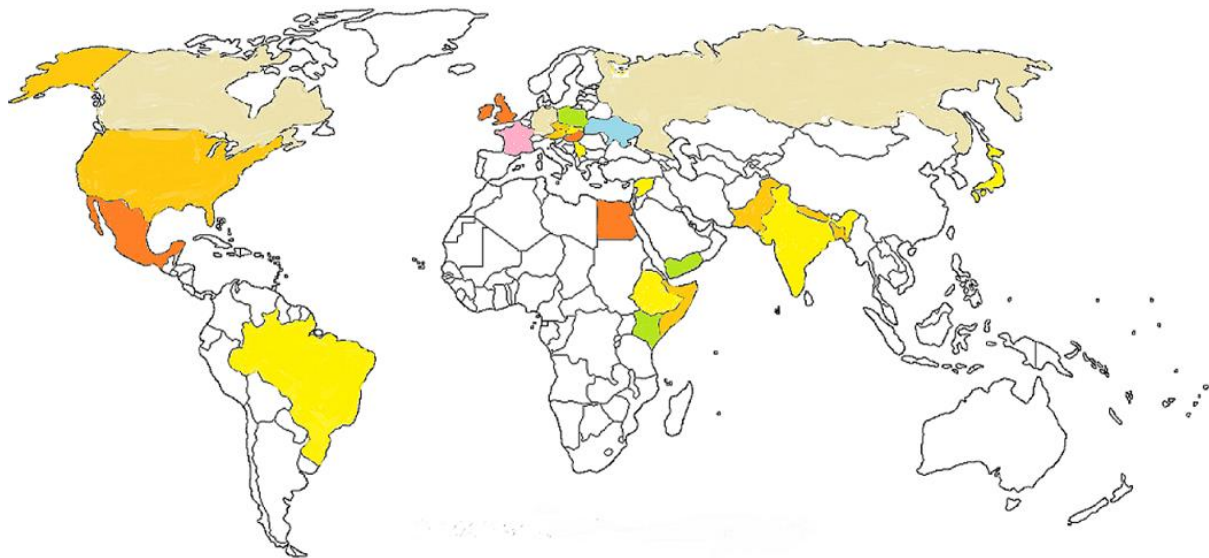


## Global Overview of the Caste Based Discrimination

Caste based discrimination is one of the major forms of discrimination in the world. Within the international discourse Caste-based discrimination is referred to as Discrimination based on Work and Descent. Often misunderstood to be South Asia centric it is a reality seen across the globe. 260 million people across the globe are estimated to face discrimination based on descent and work-- Dalits, Burakumin, Osu, Romani, Quilombo and other communities. They comprise a little less than 4% of the world's population. Off these 260 million, around 210 million or 80 percent live in South Asia: India (16.6 percent of the total population, or 201 million), Nepal (13.6 percent in the total population, or approx. 3.6 million), Bangladesh (3.5 to 5.5 million), Pakistan (approx. 330,000 to 2 million) and Sri Lanka (4 to 5 million).



These communities are at bottom of the caste hierarchy defining the social organisation in the region. There are distinguished based their occupation, which is seen to be of low status; live in segregated spaces; and are severely discriminated and restricted in accessing social-economic and political resources and opportunities. They continue to be subjected to traditional or/and modern forms of 'untouchability' practices, or the imposition of social disabilities by reason of their birth into 'low castes'. As a result of all these factors, they are at the bottom of the all development indicators in each country. There are both commonalities and differences in the way caste is manifested on the ground across the south Asian Region, the universal feature being inequality, discrimination and social exclusion.

We look at the communities and its represented countries in the world to give a comprehensive look at the discrimination based on work and descent (caste).



**Countries with Discrimination based on Work and Descent (DWD) or caste is been reported**

COUNTRY	STATUS OF DISCRIMINATION BASED ON DESCENT AND WORK
<b>INDIA</b>	<p>According to the 2011 census, 'scheduled castes' (the official term for Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist Dalits) constitute 201 million people. This figure does not include Dalits who have converted to or are born and raised within, a non-Hindu religious community such as Muslims and Christians. The total Dalit population, therefore, exceeds the official data. Despite the constitutional safeguards and special legislation for the protection of 'scheduled castes', violations of their fundamental human rights continue on a massive scale. Atrocities committed against Dalits continue with impunity as a result of poor implementation of relevant national legislations [e.g. the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities (POA) Act] remains weak, and conviction rates are shockingly low. India responds to international attention to caste discrimination by referring to it as an 'internal issue' and a 'family matter' that the UN and its member states are not entitled to deal with, especially since constitutional and legal protective mechanisms are already in place. Unfortunately, the point at issue here is that the relevant legislations are not implemented and are even flouted with gross impunity.</p>
<b>NEPAL</b>	<p>Almost half of <b>Nepal's</b> Dalits population lives below poverty line. They are mostly landless, have low life expectancy and literacy levels compared to the dominant caste population. Dalits are routinely subjected to untouchability and discrimination in many forms, although some progress is seen in recent years. The Dalit movements in the country have secured some constitutional provisions regarding non-discrimination, equality and protection in Nepal's interim Constitution. In 2011, Nepal enacted the Caste based Discrimination and Untouchability (Offence and Punishment) Act which metes out penalties for a range of discriminatory offences. In the international arena, the government has expressed support for the Draft UN Principles and Guidelines to Eliminate (Caste) Discrimination based on Work and Descent, thus showing willingness to involve the international community in addressing the issue of caste based discrimination and setting an example for other countries. According to the official 2011 census, Dalits constitute 13.6 per cent of the total population (or appr. 3.6 million people), but researchers and Dalit organisations assess that this number could be above 20 per cent - or as many as five million people.</p>
<b>PAKISTAN</b>	<p>Dalits in <b>Pakistan</b> mostly belong to the Hindu minority and face double discrimination due to their religious status - as non-Muslims in a Muslim-majority state - as well as due to their caste location. They are officially known as 'scheduled castes' and suffer numerous forms of abuse, from bonded labour to rape. Crimes against them are often committed with impunity. In the absence of more recent disaggregated data, the number</p>



	of Dalits is approximately 330,000 (as of 1998), but according to researchers the real figure may be as high as two million. However, this data does not include 'lower castes' within the Muslim community, living under similarly depressed conditions and facing similar forms of discrimination.
<b>BANGLADESH</b>	In <b>Bangladesh</b> caste discrimination affects both the Hindu and the Muslim population and perpetuates the poverty trap that these communities are caught in. Majority of Dalit community lives below the poverty line with extremely limited access to health services, education and employment. They live in colonies with very poor housing and work opportunities, almost exclusively employed in menial jobs. A large number of child labourers in Bangladesh are Dalits. Members of minorities, most of whom are Dalits, hold almost no official positions. 'Untouchability' is rampant. The estimates of the number of Dalits in Bangladesh vary from 3.5 to 5.5 million. They have been overlooked in the development and rights discourse and have only recently been able to raise their voices. Having started to engage with government and international donors, Dalit organizations working for Dalit rights and entitlements have now managed to place the issue of caste discrimination on the state agenda.
<b>SRI LANKA</b>	<b>Sri Lanka</b> has three parallel caste systems for each of the country's main population groups: the Sinhalese majority; the Sri Lankan Tamils to the north and east; and the Indian Tamils who are mainly found in the tea plantations and at the bottom of the urban social hierarchy. Though caste is recognized and caste discrimination is firmly entrenched in the society, the issue is rarely discussed in public. The estimated number of Dalits experiencing caste discrimination in Sri Lanka is 4 to 5 million, or 20 to 30 percent of the total population. In Sri Lanka, there is no common identity as 'Dalits' among the 'lower' castes and it has been difficult for them to organise themselves, in contrast to the situation of Dalits of India and Nepal.
<b>JAPAN</b>	There are an estimated 6 million Buraku people living in Japan. The Buraku people are a Japanese social minority group, ethnically and linguistically indistinguishable from other Japanese people. They face discrimination in Japan because of an association with work once considered impure, such as butchering animals or tanning leather and their place in the Japanese caste system. In particular, they often have trouble finding marriage partners or employment. (IDSN)
<b>YEMEN</b>	The Al-Akhdam community is a minority group, which is regarded as an "untouchable" outcaste group in Yemen. For centuries the Al-Akhdam has suffered perpetual discrimination, persecution, and social exclusion from mainstream society. They are at the bottom of the social and



	<p>economic hierarchy when it comes to access to employment and conditions of work, and they are forced to live isolated from the society at large. The term “Al-Akhdam” literally translates to “the servants” and is figuratively suggestive of “people held in contempt and servitude” in Yemen. (IDSN)</p>
<p><b>SOMALIA, ETHIOPIA AND KENYA:</b></p>	<p>Caste systems exist in pockets in some of the African countries. It is found in parts of Sahelian Africa, particularly in certain West African communities, and among populations in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya. Although significantly different in nature and scope, there are some common features between the caste systems of Africa and South Asia. Stigma is often attached to these communities, and as a consequence “low caste” communities in Africa suffer various forms of social exclusion and discrimination, particularly with regard to employment, political representation and inter-caste marriages.</p>
<p><b>UNITED KINGDOM</b></p>	<p>Evidence has been found that South Asians who have relocated to the United Kingdom, tend to bring the caste system, and inherent discrimination, with them when they move. Caste discrimination is therefore reproduced within South Asian communities in the UK. It has been estimated that there are at least 250.000 Dalits living in the UK. The exact figure, however, is unknown due to issues concerning identification as a ‘Dalit’, lack of detailed research and the absence of caste data in the census. (IDSN)</p>
<p><b>EUROPE AND AMERICAS</b></p>	<p>Romani or Roma are a traditionally itinerant ethnic group living mostly in Europe and the Americas, who are constituted to be around 14 million. They are argued to have originated in North West part of Indian subcontinent mainly from Rajasthan and Punjab. The Europeans call them gypsies because of their mobile lifestyle, which academicians and scholars on the community believe contains a racial slur.</p>
<p><b>BRAZIL</b></p>	<p>Quilombo population are the runaway African slaves whom have settled down with Portuguese, Brazilian aboriginals, Arabs and Jews in Brazil. Even after decades of settling down, they are often discriminated verbally as slaves. They are often discriminated and attacked because of the skin colour and their descent in public services including jobs. The Brazilian government has given them rights that are similar to Brazilian aboriginals.</p>

