



CasteWatchUK Conference Report

“Caste & Equality Act 2010 – Next Steps”

**Held on 2nd July, 2011 - 11.00 to 16.30 hrs at
Conference Theatre, Citibase
101, Lockhurst Lane
Coventry CV6 5SF**

Compiled by
Davinder Prasad JP
General Secretary
CasteWatchUK
July 2nd, 2011
<http://www.castewatchuk.org.uk>
E-mail: info@castewatchuk.org.uk
Registered Charity No. 1108009

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Conference Programme
3. Welcome by Davinder Prasad, General Secretary
4. Conference opening - Satpal Muman (Conference Chairman)
5. Conference Speeches
6. Release of the film "Segregation & Survival – The South Asian Caste System within UK"
7. Release of CasteWatchUK Audio produced by Amalise entitled "Divide"
8. Q&A Session
9. Conference Resolution by Satpal Muman, Chairman
10. Vote of Thanks by Davinder Prasad, General Secretary

Introduction:

CasteWatchUK is an independent, voluntary organisation registered with the Charity Commission. Our main aims are to raise awareness of Caste discrimination in the United Kingdom (UK) and to strive for appropriate legal, social and democratic remedies. Since its formal launch in July 2004, CasteWatchUK has worked on a broad front, to raise awareness of caste-based discrimination in the UK. We sought consultation with the Department for Education & Skills; provided input into consultations on the Home Office's White Paper *Strength in Diversity*; provided feedback to the government's Community & Faiths Unit and made submissions to the Discrimination Law Review. We have also networked with a number of community groups, faith groups, human rights groups, academic institutions, trade unions, voluntary & statutory organisations and continue to raise the profile of Caste based discrimination and its impact on British society. We continue to lobby the social and political classes in the United Kingdom & provide a public platform to victims of Caste discrimination through personal contacts, educational institutions and community groups. We organised a number of conferences in various cities in this respect giving effect to concerns raised, including a conference called "Caste Discrimination & British Law" held in November the UK Parliament. Our work has inspired many individuals, academics, community leaders, organisations and other lobby groups and so many of them are now working in solidarity to eliminate caste based discrimination from British society. Our work has also encouraged younger members of British Society to look at caste situation in UK and join us in finding solutions.

Caste Away Arts (www.casteawayarts.com) is the artistic wing of CasteWatchUK and has been an invaluable help in campaigning for equality, human rights and breaking down social barriers through theatre. They have successfully managed to shed light on issues that aren't normally talked about, particularly in the British-Asian community, by including true stories in their work. Caste discrimination in the UK can be seen in temples, schools, places of higher education, community centres, social clubs, places of employment and services in the UK where people from Indian and Pakistani Diaspora are working, resulting in caste based bullying, leading to inferiority complex and low self esteem in victims. This maltreatment prevents victims from achieving their full potential and making their due contribution to British society. Caste Away Arts has written a stage play called "The Fifth Cup" - based on true life experiences of caste discrimination collected from research conducted by CasteWatchUK and Caste Away Arts. The Fifth Cup has been successfully staged in London, Birmingham, Southall and Leicester. The performances with packed audiences were a clear signal of the power of the play in highlighting the devastating effect caste discrimination has on its victims and urgent need for finding solutions.

The purpose of the present Conference with its respective theme of "Caste & Equality Act 2010 – Next Steps" was to provide an opportunity to all the individuals, academics, community leaders, religious leaders, politicians, NGO's and eminent legal experts to come together & discuss Government's inaction and reluctance to activate section 9(5) of Equality Act 2010. More than fifty organisations supported the memorandum submitted by CasteWatchUK as a part of the lobbying, to House of Lords during their campaign to demand justice, equality in human dignity & protection of human rights of victims by making caste based discrimination unlawful in UK. We were subsequently helped by our supporting organisations at the time of NIESR research work. Victims of Caste based discrimination were encouraged to come forward to give their testimonies and they had to re-live their degrading and humiliating experiences which they never imagined they'll have to do in Great Britain. Caste was made unlawful by British Political System by inclusion of section 9(5) in the Equality Act 2010 demonstrating to rest of the world that every British Citizen is equally valued in the country and British Society takes its duty of care and social responsibilities seriously. We are waiting, with our hopes raised and our faith firm in British Justice System, for the Government to activate section 9(5) of Equality Act 2010 and Implement provisions of that act with respect to Caste.

It was just a coincidence that the timing of the conference, which was agreed a few months in advance, coincided well with Government's Red Tape Challenge on Equality legislation. CasteWatchUK and our supporting organisations are very concerned about Government's lack of transparency about the purpose of Red Tape Challenge and its implications on caste and its position in Equality Act 2010. The strategy to collect electronic responses from those who own a PC's, know how to surf the web looking for caste or equality issues and then have patience & ability to send a response - has been viewed as heavily flawed and suspicious by caste campaigners. All the hard work done and pain suffered by victims during a very expensive NIESR research would be brushed aside as a result of electronic internet survey. Our several supporting individuals and groups, who are also Hindus, have also brought to our attention that their names are being used by Hindu Forum of Britain & Hindu Council UK without their formal consent to lobby Government against inclusion of caste in equality legislation. We would urge the Government that caste is now a problem of British Society & must be addressed by British Government to help the British victims without any outside interference.

Conference Programme:

Conference Chairman: Mr Satpal Muman

10.30 to 11.00	Conference Registration, Tea & Coffee in Dione Suite
11.00 to 11.10	Welcome by Mr Davinder Prasad , General Secretary, CasteWatchUK
11.10 to 11.15	Conference opening by Councillor Ram Lakha OBE, Ex-Lord Mayor of Coventry
11.15 to 11.20	Mr Kevin Foster, Leader of Conservative Party, Coventry City Council
11.20 to 11.25	Conference Introduction - Mr Satpal Muman, Chairman, CasteWatchUK
11.25 to 11.40	Caste discrimination & Employment Law - Mr Akhlaq Choudhury
11.40 to 12.10	Caste Discrimination, Human Rights & Public Services – Mr Declan O’Dempsey
12.10 to 12.25	Short Film – “Segregation & Survival: Caste System Within the UK” - Produced By Saira Macleod & Speeches by Local Councillors
12.25 to 12.30	Release of CasteWatchUK Audio “Divide” produced by Amalise.
12.30 to 13.15	Buffet Lunch in Dione Suite & Caste Away Arts Slide Show “The Fifth Cup”
13.15 to 13.20	Short presentation by Caste Away Arts - Reena Jessiah & Rena Annobil
13.20 to 13.40	Caste & its Social Dimension by Mr Sinna Manni, President, BOPIO
13.40 to 14.45	Panel discussion on Next Steps : Mr Satpal Muman, Chairman, Mr Akhlaq Choudhury, Mr Declan O’Dempsey, Mr Sinna Manni, Dr Meena Dhanda
14.45 to 14.55	Adoption of the Conference Resolution - Mr Satpal Muman, Chairman
14.55 to 15.00	Vote of Thanks by Mr Davinder Prasad, General Secretary, CasteWatchUK
15.00 to 15.30	Networking

Welcome : Davinder Prasad, General Secretary, CasteWatchUK

Mr Davinder Prasad extended welcome to the guest speakers and the delegates. He invited Mr Satpal Muman, Chairman, CasteWatchUK to the stage and announced that Mr Muman would be the Chairman of the Conference for the day. He briefly described the history of caste campaigns in UK and reminded the delegates that the first caste campaign in this country was fought in Coventry. The first serious case of caste based discrimination occurred in 1995 in the offices of Coventry City Council. Councillor Ram Lakha OBE also took an active part in that campaign in which Coventry City Council extended an apology to the campaigning groups, demonstrated that it took its responsibilities & duty of care towards its local citizens seriously by taking suitable and satisfactory action. Davinder then gave a brief history of the lobbying for addressing caste in the Equality Act 2010 and how the campaign managed to achieve success in getting section 9(5) included in the act. He also highlighted following key memories from our lobbying in the House of Lords and highlighted comments made by key peers who championed the cause in the caste debate on 11th January, 2010 in the House of Lords – the day when we demonstrated outside in the Parliament Square in the worst below freezing conditions:

Lord Eric Avebury: Although caste-based discrimination is typically associated with South Asia, where it has been prevalent for centuries, the practice does not miraculously vanish when migrants from South Asia come to states in Europe, particularly the United Kingdom, where it has been manifestly exported into our society.

Baroness Warsi: It appears symptomatic of this Government's approach that they consult organisations that purport to represent groups, but invariably when you speak to the communities concerned they allege that the organisations do not represent them. That is possibly a lazy route to take in order to get to know the communities that make up the Multi-ethnic Britain we have today.

Lord Bishop Harries of Pentregarth: Racial Act 1976 - If we think back 20 or 30 years ago, we can recall the extent of racial abuse and how, if not eliminated, it has at least been damped down by the Race Relations Act. That legislation has had a huge educational effect.

Lord Lester of Herne Hill: Many years ago, I taught in a secondary school where a number of boys, according to other boys, came from lower castes and they were bullied and mistreated. I cannot believe that all of a sudden these things have gone away.

Baroness Flather: We keep coming back to the Hindu Forum and the Hindu Council, which are formed by caste Hindus—the three upper castes. Some of us here are Hindus and we know about this. I know perfectly well what kind of people they are. They feel that to consult them about caste discrimination is to cast aspersions on them, as if one is saying, "You are the lot who are discriminating on the basis of caste".

Davinder also briefly mentioned the hard work done by CasteWatchUK in encouraging the victims to come forward and give testimonies to NIESR researchers, highlighted NIESR key recommendations and invited Councillor Ram Lakha, OBE to formally open the conference.

Key Recommendations of NIESR:

Non-legislative approaches are less likely to be effective in the private sector and do not assist those where the authorities themselves are discriminating.

Relying on the Indian community to take action to reduce caste discrimination and harassment is problematic.

Conference opening: Councillor Ram Lakha OBE

Councillor Lakha was the Deputy Lord Mayor in 2004 when he was the Chief Guest and Launched CasteWatchUK in the inaugural conference in July 2004 at St Mary's Guild Hall in Coventry. Councillor Lakha served as Lord Mayor for City of Coventry in 2005-06 and he made peace and equality as the main theme for his Mayoral year. He worked hard to promote equality, peace and social harmony in the City of Coventry. He has personal experiences of caste discrimination in India and again in the UK and his speeches and his proposed solutions are based on his real life experiences. His work was formally recognised at the highest level in this country and he was awarded OBE in 2010.

Key points from his speech:

CasteWatchUK has taken a leading role to highlight the problems of discriminatory nature of Caste System which sadly still exists in UK within communities mainly from South Asian, particularly Indian origin. The agenda to eradicate discrimination on the basis of caste is also supported by many other organisations on philosophical terms such as temples of various denominations and some other supportive organisations. But when it comes to practice, many people who may be affiliated to those temples and religious communities behave as they always have done in inherited cultures.

This conference today in Coventry is not only to highlight the problem but also to think ahead how to tackle the problem. The problem of caste discrimination is socially damaging and economically undesirable in the modern society. But here in Britain, there is no legal structure to overcome this problem other than general approach of wider equality agenda. Although there is a window of Equality Act which gives the power to the Government to act upon to put further structure in place if there is a need. For us the issue is to persuade the Government that there is a need for such structure to be introduced. We cannot change the past although the scares of the past are still painful to many of us. We must consider making sure that the old system which still exists within our communities does not create new bleeding wounds. Hopefully today's conference will provide a good opportunity for that consideration.

For me as Coventry's ambassador, it is an honour to welcome you all here in Coventry, especially eminent barristers Akhlaq Choudhury and Declan O'Dempsey who are legal experts. It is also an honour to welcome Former Mayor of Lewsham and Labour Party colleague Mr Sinna Mani. We are also fortunate to listen to Dr Meena Dhanda who has done a lot of research on social issues such as caste system. While welcoming you all for this occasion, I wish you all the very best for a healthy debate and productive outcome. I thank CasteWatchUK for providing me an opportunity to welcome you all.

Councillor Kevin Foster, Leader, Conservative Party, Coventry City Council

In May 2008 Kevin became the Deputy Leader of Coventry City Council and took over responsibility for the Council's Finances. Kevin was nominated as Leader of Conservative Party on 10th May, 2011 after the local elections. He is looking to bring a fresh approach to the way the group works with local people and ensure its focus is firmly on the issues that count to local residents.

Key points from his speech:

I am supportive of the issues and the agenda looks fascinating. Looking at caste discrimination, it is a deeper issue, people moving locations do not move their attitudes. I hope and see no reason why the issue of caste discrimination, same as in India, can't be tackled in this country. I know Councillor Lakha has been involved in this issue for a long time & his role should be recognised in the progress made so far. I heard someone say earlier that caste is in the DNA of Asians. All I can say that people should be recognised by who they are as persons and not by their caste. I think it is important for all of us to look at the problem carefully, legislation would provide a framework and then society can be used to ensure that people are judged by the strength of their character and not their caste.

Mr Akhlaq Choudhury, Barrister

He has wide experience of all aspects of employment law and regularly acts for and advises individuals, city institutions, law firms, local and health authorities, government departments, corporations, trade unions and police authorities. He has particular experience in lengthy, multi-party litigation and is currently involved in some of the major equal value disputes making their way through Tribunals. Akhlaq has particular experience of vigorously contested, high value discrimination cases and is frequently instructed on behalf of employers and employees in high-profile multi-million pound claims. Recent claims include disability, race, sex and religious belief discrimination claims against Solicitors' firms, banks, religious institutions, foreign embassies and local authorities.

Key points from his speech:

I am not an expert on caste and an earlier speaker has already highlighted that caste is a complex issue. Victims of caste discrimination can be an oppressed minority in a larger group and it can be possible for a tribunal to consider caste discrimination as an aspect of race discrimination. But it is counter intuitive because caste discrimination is likely to be perpetrated by a person of the same racial or national origin as the victim. In these circumstances, a tribunal may find it very difficult to establish that caste discrimination has taken place in the absence of an express legislation to that effect. On the question of caste discrimination getting addressed under religion and belief legislation, if a caste discrimination can be identified as a discrimination against a religious group which is associated with a particular caste, then caste discrimination against the person can be attributed to religious belief. That is clearly not going to work in all the cases. NIESR report makes it very clear that there were many instances, where caste discrimination was found between different caste levels in the same religious groups. One can't say that discrimination in these cases is on the basis of religion or belief. The conclusion has to be that there is a gap and the existing law may work in a few case cases, it has not been put to test yet, but in most of the cases it simply would not work. Even if the law is found to work in a few cases, why a claimant has to depend on cleverly constructed lawyer's arguments where an amendment to include caste as a protective characteristic would make things far simpler and clearer. As identified by NIESR report, it seems to be the case that the protection for victims of caste from law as it stands, is simply not adequate.

On the question of will the change in caste legislation be workable, all I can say that if a political will is there, it will not be all that difficult. There would be difficulties but I cannot see that they would be insurmountable. On the question of will it work at practical level? There is past experience e.g. in disability, religion and belief discriminations, the Tribunals managed to solve the difficulties.

In the conclusion, is the caste discrimination legislation necessary, the answer is yes because the law as it stands can cater for few cases but not in majority of caste discrimination cases, as we can see in NIESR report. Secondly, will the caste legislation work on a practical level? The only answer has to be probably yes, though initially there would be more challenges for the tribunals in comparison to other forms of discriminations. Tribunals would have or develop expertise to deal with the new challenges in cases of caste discrimination.

Mr Declan O.Dempsey, Barrister:

Declan specialises in sensitive and difficult employment, discrimination, public and regulatory law. His discrimination practice includes advising and representing in goods and services cases, especially the newer areas such as religion and belief. He acts in administrative law cases for individuals and councils, advising on matters affecting councillors, politicians, businesses and public bodies. He has particular expertise in relation to the application of the Equality Duties and is one of a team of 4 drafting the new Public Sector Equality Duty Statutory Code for the EHRC under the Equality Act 2010.

Key points from his speech:

Equality Act covers religion, belief and race and there are two aspects of how discrimination works. There is the treatment I am given because of my personal status and the treatment I am given because of something I want to do and someone won't let me do it. There are two limbs to the law about discrimination - a) Protection of Religion & b) Protection of belief.

I may feel and have a belief that I want to marry whoever I want and this is my fundamental right protected by European Human Rights Legislation. Someone stops me from doing this by saying “actually because of your personal status, here caste, you can’t marry. This would be a discrimination against me on the grounds of my belief. If I did not believe that I could marry whoever I want because I am bound by the caste system myself, I won’t ask to marry the person. So a lot of the “Action type of discrimination” can be protected under the discrimination of belief, a really important right that need to be protected. We can’t deal with the point that Akhlaq has made about nastiness towards someone because of their personal status that has nothing to do with belief, the harassment & bullying from discriminator’s belief that they have got right to treat a person less favourably because of that person’s caste. So there is a gap which is not currently covered by Equality Act.

However, in terms of Human Rights, the committees, which have to deal with the interpretation of the international conventions surrounding this, are quite clear that the convention that covers race discrimination internationally also mention the concept of decent and that is what is part of the concept of race discrimination internationally and laws in this country have to be interpreted consistently with that. In other words, there is international pressure to say that race includes decent which includes caste discrimination. Most recently there was a report by the UN General Assembly on 24th May this year by UN Special Rapporteur, covering the issue of caste. They have repeated that decent covers caste & therefore caste discrimination is contradictory to the international convention on racial discrimination. The equality legislation has to ensure that caste is covered in order for it to be consistent with international convention. The two points to be referred to in a political as well in the legal debate, in fact both should work hand in hand. There is a very clear argument that human rights need to be protected in line with international conventions e.g. right to human dignity, protection from degrading treatment, right to private life, right to marry, right to freedom of expression. It may be possible that some local authorities or public bodies may have influence in providing protection of these human rights. However, Private sector is not included and there is a gap. Law says that public authority, in exercising its function and in the process of its decision making in all its activities, must show regard to elimination of discrimination & victimisation including caste based discrimination in people getting goods and services. Public authority has a duty of care to eliminate any misconduct and must show due regard to advancement of equality of opportunity between persons who share same relevant protective characteristics e.g. race or belief and those who do not. Persons from different caste groups, where one group has an attitude towards the other, we have two different beliefs. The public body has a duty to advance equal opportunities between group of people who share a belief that people from other belief can do something or can’t do something. Public authority should also pay due regard to fostering good relations between persons who share a protective characteristic and persons who do not share it. In a simplistic situation, if areas can be identified where caste problems do exist, it may justify investing money in working out what the problem is and what can be done to advance equality of opportunity and promote good relations. It requires that those who are making decisions in public bodies are aware of their duties and pay due regards to the implications their decisions will have on the people who share protective characteristic like race & decent. It cannot be a tick box exercise controlled by officers of a public authority. The decisions of a public authority that fail to fulfil their duty to ensure due regard to law can be challenged by lobbying. Organisations through lobbying can that there a risk in their decision making process - an integrity risk. To advance the equality of opportunity between persons who share a protective characteristic and persons who don’t, that may include an equality of opportunity to lead an unimpaired life e.g. if I walk down the street and get insulted because of my caste. There is a real gap in the current legislation and no one should have to depend on cleverly designed legal arguments when inclusion of caste can simplify things for everyone. The law allows and encourages people to share protective characteristics and to share public life. The concept of need to foster good relations means that public authority will have a due regard in particular:

- 1) To tackle prejudice - a mandate is already there in the Equality Act to tackle the issue of caste prejudice
- 2) To promote understanding.

Government must work in these two areas to break down the problem and tackle the issue of caste based discrimination in UK.

Mr Sinna Mani, President, BOPIO

He served for a period on Lewisham council, chairing major committees and serving as Mayor of Lewisham 1993-94. Professionally, he is a journalist who has worked on human rights issues for many years. He was actively involved in the Obama Campaign. Recently, he has been on lecture tour in Middle East and USA raising human right concerns. He is the Founder of British Organisation of People of Indian Origin (BOPIO) and its current president.

Key points from his speech:

I have heavy responsibilities within United Nations acting as an advisor on the Sri Lankan situation which is one of the most horrible things happening in the world. I am also fighting racism in America to make sure that my friend and most talented man, President Obama is re-elected. I am also an advisor to the student-organisations in Egypt and it is also a very demanding job. They are coming into light after dark ages of dictatorship and they are learning to fight for themselves. They need all the help from people like us who have experience of fighting oppression and I am in the process of helping them. I'll be going there very soon.

I got involved in the caste campaign from the age of twelve. There was one boy, it is etched in my mind that he was from Pariah caste, they are among the lowest of the low. Some of them prospered under British Rule and this boy was allowed to go to school. He could not sit with all other children and he could not drink water from the well because he would pollute the well. He had to run home during the break – one mile up and down to drink a glass of water. I was horrified at the tender age of twelve and I used to try my best to protect that boy. I used to carry my own bottle of water and used to give it to him privately when no one was looking. Then one day I stood up for him in the school council and spoke against the system. I was not talking about the caste system but I was talking about this particular boy who was my class mate. Suddenly forty or so kids were after my blood and I had to fight single handed. So that was my introduction to social dimension of caste. Unfortunately, I had to leave school due to family circumstances but later I had an opportunity to go to Jaffna in Sri Lanka. I saw the Dalits extremely marginalised by higher castes. I had an opportunity to meet Prabhakaran, the Leader of Tamil Tigers and when I tried to advise them and suggest solutions, they did not want to know and I was mistrusted by them. I found it very painful but before I could tell them how right I was about what I was saying, they were dead and gone. I always say that in struggle, we have to be very careful. We should not resort to violence for the sake of violence, even if you are successful for a moment, it would come back to haunt us. We cannot resort to the methods of the enemy. The oppressed must find a voice through enlightenment, through understanding their own plight, that is why under my advice, the Palestinian people are resorting to non-violent means. For all his faults, Gandhi discovered that a moral purpose required a moral method. There must be a link between means and ends. Ends should never justify the means because you can never be sure what the means are going to be. There are always unintended consequences. Always think of consequences and we cannot always predict what consequences are going to be. That is one of the lessons we have learnt and that is why we pay tribute to Dr Ambedkar. He used the constitution to provide some alleviation for Dalits. To this day we worship him because he did that through dedication. There were communist parties and revolutionaries in India but he said no we should use concentrate on legal means.

As for caste situation in India, it is almost 3000 years old. Some sister talked about Indus Valley civilisation earlier which goes back to 5000 years. In 326BC before Christ, Alexander the Great went and conquered India. The Brahmins there took a delegation to plead to him. They said, Sir, you can have our women, you can have our land and you can have our cattle to feed your army. We are here to plead to you that one thing we request you should not do in India is alter the Caste System. This was not today or yesterday. This was 3000 years ago. This was the caste system then and this is the caste system today. It is embedded in the DNA of every single Indian. Now there have been measures to overcome this and it can be overcome in two ways. One way is individuals like me achieving distinction in the world or wherever you are and become recognised. British like that. British like personalities. I have been in the labour party for 50 years and no one knows me because I am not a personality. What makes life tolerable in this country is that we have institutional arrangements for stopping discrimination. If someone discriminates against you, you can go to court, get compensation and in extreme cases they can be sent to jail. That is a major advancement for humanity and these legislations have not been brought about by our Lords or ladies, but by the kids in Southall, in Bristol, in Eastham – taking to the

streets and fighting for their rights. And as a result we have certain laws in this country and we must use them. That is the main reason why I support CasteWatchUK's efforts to get caste into legislation 100 %. It is important that Government also shows transparency in its handling of caste issues in this country.

I started an organisation called BOPIO, non-religious non-political, to represent the interests of Indians Diaspora living in UK. It was a very good organisation. We won most of the campaigns we launched. We campaigned for Black & Asian teachers to be promoted, we organised campaigns against racism. The Brahmins tried to destroy BOPIO. We got into trouble when we organised a big festival and lost half a million pounds. Apparently, the Brahmins like our name BOPIO and they want to buy it as long as I get out of the way. But that is not on offer and they are not going to have BOPIO. Before I went to America last week, I was hoodwinked into attending a rally against corruption. Who can refuse to go to a rally against corruption? When I went there, I was surrounded by RSS, BJP, VHP, HCUK, HFB – there were so many of Hindu Right Wing organisations most of them waving those flags. I had to take a decision whether to participate or not. The event showed the stupidity of the Brahmin Caste. I participated and spoke about corruption in America. I said Indians can solve their own problems. We have bigger problem of corruption in Britain. Let us deal with it here and not the problems in India. India is a land of 1.2 billion people and there must be sufficient number of them to take up this cause. We do not have to follow the bogus gurus. Most of the Hindu Gurus are bogus charlatans and they have no spirituality. Hinduism cannot provide the kind of spirituality required by equality of opportunities. Hinduism is a religion of inequality. Everything you do is Dharma or Karma, it is all bullshit. This is no disrespect to my Hindu friends sitting here. I am a Hindu myself & I read Bhagwad Gita. Hindu literature is full of wisdom and it is the oldest religion in the world. But our brothers and sisters who departed from Hinduism, be they Sikhs, Muslims, Christians or Buddhists, they did for a good reason. That is why I am proud to associate myself with Buddhists movement without being committed to it and I'll tell you why. Once you introduce priests into any religion you are doomed. The mass murderers of Sri Lanka were all Buddhists but Buddha would have never advocated that. Buddha's religion was compassion and he would never have allowed anyone to even kill an animal. How dare these mass murderers in Sri Lanka call themselves Buddhists?

Councillor Dave Nellist (Ex-MP):

Socialist Party, Member – Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Board, Coventry City Council. A British Trotskyite activist and former Labour Member of Parliament (MP) for the now abolished constituency of Coventry South East. He is a member of the Socialist Party of England and Wales and a sitting Councillor in Coventry as well as formerly being an active member of the Amicus trade union and is now active in Unite the Union since Amicus merged with the Transport and General Workers' Union. As an MP from Coventry South East, he was the only MP who used to take the wage of an average worker home, unlike other MP's.

Key points from his speech:

It is the first time I have had the opportunity to attend CasteWatchUK conference. I can see a significant presence and support from local elected councillors from all the political parties and there may be officers from Local Council that I may not recognise in the conference theatre. I have picked up two key points from the earlier presentations done by our learned friends - duties and responsibilities. I think it can be useful for our local authority and other public bodies to have these presentations to raise awareness. I suggest that the remedies that would be discussed in the latter half of the day should be documented and publicised. Declan mentioned about judicial review. The first stage is relatively inexpensive but the second stage of the judicial review can be very expensive I testing the point of law. I am looking at old contractors days, perhaps barristers can help out and mitigate the expenses a little bit. Also there is another area, Governments ombudsmen which have the same power in establishing precedence which judicial review has but is open to scrutiny of the local authority or the public body functions where they are deficient. I am sure myself and my colleagues can make a contribution to this campaign of CasteWatchUK. I can also arrange liaison with trade unions where we arrange sessions to raise awareness so that appropriate action can be taken to represent the victims at places of work if there is any caste discrimination taking place.

Mr David Webb : Ex-President of Rotary Club – Handsworth (Birmingham)

Ex Police Superintendent (West Midlands Police), Ex-Chairman, Community Relations Council, Birmingham; Member of Liberal Democrats, Author of a book "Policing the Rainbow". With an enthusiastic programme of Police-led activities, from sport to youth groups to promoter of one of the largest ethnic community festivals in Europe, David Webb's command quickly assumed the leadership role in Handsworth so desperately needed after the riots in 1981.. His officers were embedded in the very heart of this culturally diverse suburb. Webb's achievements over the five years he was in command of the area were quickly acknowledged and lauded by the press. Walking in Handsworth's streets with David Webb can still be a memorable experience, he is still held in considerable respect in the town.

Key points from his speech:

I have worked with Asian Community for more than 40 years and it is fantastic to see you all from all over the country to come and support CasteWatchUK in this conference. It is a fantastic organisation and they have worked very hard in their effort to eliminate caste discrimination in this country. Someone just mentioned about the race riots in Handsworth some thirty years ago and some of you look old enough to remember those riots. I still remember on July 10th thirty years ago, I had the responsibility to police the riot situation in Birmingham. We worked so hard since then to bring the community together. It is sad to see after all these years, we seem to be going back to square one. Thirty years ago, we wanted all the communities to come together and work together. We knew that they all had their different ways, we were trying to educate everyone that now we lived in Midlands, we needed to live together and work together. It did not matter whether you were a Sikh, Hindu, Muslim, Black, Nirankari, Ravidassi or Valmiki, we asked everyone to work together and do something for our community, let our children work together so that our grand children and their children could live in peace and harmony. Even today, it does not matter which religion or nationality or background you may be from, do something for the community together. Every member of the community must be respected. It makes me happy to see members of so many communities, religious groups and organisations in this room. They are all here to set an example that regardless of religion, race, political views or caste, we are of the same community and we can work together. We do not want problems or riots in this country again. We want to set an example that we are together, we are British subjects, we are working for our children, we are working for our community and we are proud of our country. That is what we have to do and that is what CasteWatchUK is about. We do not want any discrimination from any group whatsoever and if they do, then that that is why we have always said from day one that there must be a law otherwise people do not take any notice. I am probably the oldest person in this room and I can say from my experience that people do not change, they'll carry on regardless. If you have a law, it'll give us a chance to at least say that there is a law here and if you discriminate or misbehave because of caste, you'll be prosecuted and set an example that we in this country will not go along with this situation. We have to show that we are together, we are united and we will not allow any form of discrimination to take place in this country. I have children and grandchildren in the Police force and they all realise the importance of respect for everyone in the community and need for peace, harmony and community cohesion. I know you all agree with me otherwise you would not be in this conference today.

Councillor Abdul Sallam Khan JP

Councillor Abdul Salam Khan has lived in Foleshill for over 30 years and knows it well. A Coventry University graduate in Law he is a Solicitor by profession and works from his offices based on the Foleshill Road. He is also a Magistrate (J.P) sitting on the Warwickshire bench as well as Chair of Governors at Broad Heath Primary School. Councillor Khan is the Cabinet Member (Culture, Leisure, Sport and Libraries). He is also Chair of the Foleshill Ward Forum. Foleshill celebrates a wide and diverse ethnic community. Having lived for so long in the ward, which he represents, Councillor Khan feels he is very much part of the local community. He is committed to Foleshill and enjoys his daily involvement and interaction with the local community. Sharing community concerns, he strongly believes that Foleshill deserves better and feels that his work with locals and resident groups can make a difference. Councillor Khan has campaigned on behalf of local residents and will continue to campaign on local issues, large or small, and would like to hear from you if you feel he can help in any way.

Key points from his speech:

I have been attending CasteWatchUK conferences in the past and I am against any form of discrimination against their fellow citizens including caste discrimination. No one can be allowed to discriminate against anyone on any grounds in this country. I know caste system is a problem and I am here to support the campaign against caste based discrimination and the work CasteWatchUK is doing to draw public attention and eliminate it from this country. On behalf of Labour Party, I can assure you that we'll do everything possible to support this initiative in every way to make caste discrimination unlawful in this country.

Councillor Malkiat Singh Auluck:

Member, Children, Young people, Learning & Culture Scrutiny Board. Coventry City Council. He was elected as a Councillor to Coventry City Council in 2002 and having worked in West Midlands Buses for many years, there is no better person who knows local community so well. He has always taken keen interest in the local issues and is fully aware that caste can be a serious problem in Asian community groups. He is a tireless campaigner of mutual respect, harmony and community cohesion in Coventry.

Key points from his speech:

I am thankful to CasteWatchUK, all the religious and community leaders present here for giving me an opportunity to take part in this discussion. When we talk about caste based discrimination, I have to stress that British establishment is leading the whole world on issues related to human rights. Any violation of human rights is not tolerated in any society, association, organisation or department in this country. We do not allow any form of discrimination to take place in any part of the globe, the question of allowing discrimination including caste based discrimination or harassment in this country cannot arise. I along with my other colleagues from Labour Party who are present here, can tell you very clearly and loudly that a severe campaign against any discrimination is our priority. We give top priority to community cohesion. I am here to tell you on behalf of Labour Party that we are with you in challenging any form of discrimination, especially caste based discrimination, which we all know is a big problem.

Mr Jaswant Singh Virdee:

He is Vice Chairman of Local Conservative Party in Coventry and an Ex-Councillor of Coventry City Council. He is a prominent and respected leader of Sikh community in Coventry.

Thanks for this opportunity to take part in this discussion today. We have a duty & responsibility to ensure that our public services are free from any discriminatory problems including caste based discrimination. I am fully aware that caste based discrimination is no longer a problem of only Indian Sub-continent but it has now become a major global problem and also a big problem in this country. I would like to express support for this campaign and your conference and would like to thank Mr Prasad & Chairman for giving me a chance to take part in this discussion. I have no doubt that caste would be made unlawful in this country.

Release of Short Film :

“Segregation and Survival: The South Asian Caste System Within The UK” produced by Saira Macleod

Release of CasteWatchUK Video:

Audio Video entitled - “Divide” produced by Amalise in collaboration with CasteWatchUK

Lunch & Slide Show of the “The Fifth Cup” produced by Caste Away Arts

Second Session - After Lunch:

Reena Jessiah:

Director, Caste Away Arts, Reena’s inquisitiveness lead her to study Sociology. Reena was thrown in at the deep end of her University placement in the arts but this cultured an array of skills and she discovered her ability to connect with young people. Reena is one of few that confront her own experience of caste discrimination. Her relentlessness to challenge stigma compelled her to undertake pioneering research as part of an MA at the University of Birmingham in 2003. Rather than publish reports, Reena reverted to her creative talents when she met Rena Dipti Annobil in 2004. The duo built a dynamic work ethos which birthed Caste Away Arts. Through the arts, Reena unearths her voice and a voice for those oppressed. Since the success of running Caste Away Arts, Reena has trained at Theatre School but prefers behind the scenes though acting is another wall she’s broken! Caste Away Arts’ endeavours were recognised in the Pride of Coventry and Warwickshire Community Projects awards in 2008 after the national tour success of The Fifth Cup play which Reena co-wrote and directed. The Royal Society of Arts recognised Reena’s efforts and nominated her for a fellowship for her “contribution to the Arts in recognition of co-founding of Caste Away Arts and her endeavours through this to encourage positive social relations and eliminate racial discrimination, and following your participation in Prison Link and her work to support individuals with autism.”

Key points from his speech:

We have used Art form and creativity as a mechanism for coping with injustices in our society. As a child, I fell victim to caste based discrimination in this country. I was a silent sufferer and did not what to do. I became desperate for someone to speak out for me and that did not happen. So my silence broke. I did not believe for one moment that my speaking out and our speaking out will make such a difference. A law will be passed this year and it'll be a historical moment for us. We'll no longer be victims because speaking out would make us successful in making caste based discrimination unlawful in this country. It would be great for those who have been suffering in silence as they are very reluctant to talk about this issue. I would like to share this piece that I wrote:

“First they came for the Jews, I did not speak out because I was not a Jew

Then they came for communists, I did not speak out because I was not a communist

Then they came for Tamils, I did not speak out because I was not a Tamil

And then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak for me”

Rena Annobil:

Rena Dipti Annobil is one of Caste Away Arts’ Co-Founders and Artistic Directors. She co-wrote, co-directed The Fifth Cup with Reena Jaisiah, and also took on an acting role in the play. Whilst at university Rena trained in Indian Classical and Contemporary Dance, focusing on the ancient dance form Bharata Natyam, and performed at various theatres around the Midlands as part of the Coventry based Mrittika Arts Dance Company. Rena has worked in broadcasting for six years; her experience includes producing live radio programmes and features at the BBC, producing and presenting her own TV show, and narrating BBC Radio 7’s Sony Award winning interactive story, The Chain Gang, in 2007. Passionate about poetry,

music, dance and drama, Rena has carried out several performance workshops for children and teenagers over the last few years. These days Rena juggles motherhood with her career at the BBC, carrying out workshops, and writing ground breaking new material for Caste Away Arts.

Key points from her speech:

I feel the same way about speaking out as Reena Jessiah and that is why we both work together well. We aim to spread the messages that you have seen here today in a creative way and pull as many people as we can to listen to what we have to say and to get on board with our campaign. Reena also mentioned about the play “The Fifth Cup”, that was a great success and they managed to get people on board and opening their eyes to the problem of caste discrimination in this country. People who like to go to theatre for entertainment ended up having a good time and also changing their viewpoint on caste based discrimination. One of the way I find effective to express myself is through writing - that is plays, stories, poetry and I have a poem here which I want to read to you. This poem is called “A New Dawn” and featured as a big part of the play “The Fifth Cup”. I know some of you have heard this before but I want to remind everyone present here of the pains that our ancestors went through because of this evil caste system – for centuries and we don’t want our children and future generations to have the same experiences in this country:

POEM - A NEW DAWN

Waking up in a new dawn

I see the faces of my ancestors

I feel their pain and hear the scorn

In the voices of their oppressors

I’m stunned by the evil trick played by fate

The trick that branded my people subhuman

And left them at the mercy of manmade hate

Heads bowed in duty to an evil race

Angry tears claw at my eyes

Fuming fingers scratch at my heart

Because my forefathers were distinguished men

Peaceful dwellers of the Indus Valley

They were writing philosophy

When Arayans were plotting barbarities

I come from proud people

India was our country

And truth lay in the scriptures of our Gurus

And knowing this I wipe away my tears

Knowing this I hold my head high

Without hate, without fear

And even though Eklavya's blood flows through my veins

It's time to break free from history's evil chains

I don't have to cut off my thumb

I will not be branded as backward and dumb

This is our time to reclaim

Truth and beauty that belongs to us

So come stand up with me

Celebrate our heritage and history

Let's move forward and rise

Restore our identity

Wahe Guru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

Panel Discussion - Next Step Chaired by Mr Satpal Muman, Chair, CasteWatchUK

Members : Mr Akhlaq Choudhury, Mr Declan O'Dempsey, Mr Sinna Mani, Dr Meena Dhanda

Key points:

Mr Satpal Muman opened the panel discussion by inviting Dr Meena Dhanda who briefly described the work she is doing on research on caste problems in UK and abroad.

Dr Meena Dhanda : Reader in Philosophy and Cultural Politics, University of Wolverhampton, briefly described her work on caste system in UK. Dr Dhanda **has received a prestigious fellowship to carry out research into caste prejudice**. Of the 90 Research Fellowships awarded by The Leverhulme Trust across all subjects, Dr Meena Dhanda is one of only four philosophers to have achieved this distinction in 2010. The research focuses on the experience of caste prejudice in personal relations, and Dr Dhanda will study the extent of separation between caste groups in the UK, looking into the conditions for greater mixing. Her comparative research will be conducted within the UK in Wolverhampton, Birmingham, Coventry and Oxford. Dr Dhanda pointed out that South Asian Diaspora, wherever they have gone in the world, have taken caste problems with them. Caste discrimination is not limited to Hindu groups, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians from South Asia also suffer from this problem. Dr Dhanda emphasised that one of the ways the caste based discrimination is maintained and perpetuated is through the system of arranged marriages amongst South Asian Groups. Dr Dhanda also highlighted that she has interviewed numerous young persons and she finds that younger people are defining their religious beliefs in more stringent ways than their parents e.g. Sikhs are looking at the religion and taking fundamental views about their religion. Not only Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus have the same issues and caste discrimination is fully operational in Muslim community as well.

Mr Eugene Culas: Director Voice of Dalit International

CasteWatchUK has been very successful in engaging people from younger generation. Younger people are considered to be a bigger dynamic force in any society. Caste Based discrimination is the worst violation of human rights in the world today. More than 1.25 billion people are practicing caste discrimination in nearly 110 countries where South Asians have migrated and where it has become a part of social life. Our younger people can play a crucial role in places of higher education to address the problems today. I can see many NGO's here today and they can also play an important role in influencing the Government about need for providing protection to victims of caste discrimination. Oxfam, Christian Aid, International Humanists and others can persuade the Government to implement the provision that already exists in the law

Ms Gurvinder Kaur: OXFAM (West Midlands)

There is an urgent need to educate younger people. We should take our campaign to places of higher education through student unions. We should set up campaign groups in universities to get people interested and to educate them about need for a social change. We cannot expect other people to do it for us. We have to do it ourselves. If younger people feel passionate about this issue, they should take the campaign and messages about change to the universities, get people together making sure that young people from all background are present. That is the only way you can bring the change amongst the younger generations. We do have Sikh societies, Muslim Societies, Hindu Societies - we can ask these organisations to help us and it would make it easier for us to engage them. We need to engage these societies if we want to bring about change. We know legislation is required but change in attitudes is equally important and that can be done only by engaging with people directly.

Ms Sonara Begum, Member of Socialist Party & Union Leader:

As a member of the Socialist Party and the Trade Unions, I'll be taking messages to our members. As a socialist, I find it ironic that in this country, the victims of caste who are most deprived who need sympathy and help from society, are getting the worst treatment. I think this needs to change in this country. People who do the most difficult work in society are not treated as equals by people from higher castes & rich people, discriminated and abused the most. We as socialists are sympathetic to the low caste hard working people and we think trade unions need to be involved in the caste issues in this country as well. I commend CasteWatchUK for its aim to create a casteless society in UK and we as socialists can play an important role in that. Organisations that campaigned for racial equality can also play a key role in ensuring that the work of organisations like CasteWatchUK can be supported. Many victims of caste discrimination at the moment are being denied any legal aid and particularly due to funding cuts, the legal aid has been cut back and that kind of help can be crucial for victims to get justice. I think if we all get together and work together, I have no doubt caste based discrimination, especially in UK, can be tackled.

Sinna Mani, President, BOPIO : We had a major problem when we were lobbying for racial laws in early sixties. We were told that you people are also racist. We had to say that we cannot be racist because we had no power to discriminate. Similarly the relationship of higher castes to Dalits is a power relationship. I would like to make you aware that Hindus would try everything to scare the white people by exaggeration of what can go wrong, how whole Hindu social structure could suffer. I would advice you that the law should provide protection only to victims – known as Dalits or former untouchables. Problems of inter-caste rivalry can be resolved through other means by Hindus. Law should only protect the victims from those who have power in the caste system to discriminate against Dalits.

Davinder Prasad, General Secretary, CWUK : I would like to point out that Government Equality Office is aware of this conference being held today and we have tried our best to keep the event within the "Red Tape Challenge" deadline. We have received feedback that numerous Hindu organisations, who are also members of Hindu Forum of Britain & Hindu Council UK, are not supportive of their opposition to our campaign for a legal protection of victims of caste based discrimination UK. These organisations have alerted us that Hindu Lobby, which include many right wing Hindu extremists groups, are working hard to influence Government not to meddle with caste as it is an infringement on their religious belief. The red tape challenge feedback through responses on the internet has been regarded as seriously flawed for the purpose of caste in Equality Act & is being viewed as a tick box exercise by civil servants, as mentioned by Mr O'Dempsey earlier. This conference represents all the concerned community groups and reflects interests of Asian Diaspora. The discussion and resolution from this conference should indicate the important feedback and should persuade Government to speed up the enforcement of Section 9(5). Conference resolution would be sent to Government Equality Office tonight followed by a full conference report as and when it is ready. We also today have engagement with Tamil community as well as Muslim community and their delegates are present here and they are fully supportive of our main objective of caste to be made unlawful. Both these community groups, like Meena has said earlier, have serious caste problems and these groups were not covered by NIESR research. Also, we had a long list of victims who wanted to be interviewed by NIESR but we were told that they ran out of funding. Therefore NIESR report only shows the tip of the iceberg. Caste problem is more complex and much wider than what NIESR report has indicated.

Savio Lourdu - General Secretary, Alliance for Community Cohesion

We have been lobbying for caste legislation for several years and all the hard work has enabled to secure section 9(5) in equality which addresses caste issues. The power now lies with the minister of the crown to enforce this piece of legislation. It took us so many years to get this legislation and we now see "Red Tape Challenge" conducting internet consultation about the Equality Act. Our fear is that just on the basis of people sending responses through internet, this clause 9(5) can be abandoned by the current Government. It would be tragic for us if caste clause in Equality Act is thrown out and civil servants are allowed to alter the legislation passed by the Parliament. What we can do ensure that this does not happen.

Satpal Muman: Chairman, CasteWatchUK

Last Labour Government went through so many years of work for harmonising the Equality Act and so much work was done in Parliament to bring about this major legislation into being. Now all of a sudden, because the Government is short of money or whatever be the reasons, they have launched the "Red Tape Challenge" which may affect the Equality act. We would like to know does this not undermine the parliamentary democracy

where Parliament has made a commitment by enacting the law. There are people who do not have access to the internet and how many people who do have access would bother to go on the web-page to leave a comment. Is the entire exercise of "Red Tape Challenge" not undemocratic, does it not undermine parliamentary democracy?

Declan O'Dempsey, Barrister: The answer to Sat pal's question is that it is not undemocratic and you have to bear in mind that we have had a change in the Government and it may mean a real change in the philosophy. People who work in the Equality Area were very surprised and shocked when "Red Tape Challenge" included Equality Act, particularly caste legislation as it is a minor piece of legislation. It has nothing to do with money; it has to do with philosophy. The Government has put a major piece of legislation suggesting that it might be repealed on the basis of a straw poll and it is worrying. It has disadvantaged people who do not have access to the internet and Government has to clarify the situation properly. It is not undemocratic but then you have to have a closer look at what democracy is. It is not undemocratic for a new Government to repeal previous Government's piece of legislation. Is it going to happen, I'll say very unlikely. There is a wide division within the Government about the extent of changes that can be brought about. You need to ask Government to be clear about its transparency and integrity. You should bring out stories of discrimination. Civil servants like evidence - real stories, many stories of low level of caste based discrimination or few stories of serious caste discrimination, particularly in Private sector. If you can bring one story which involves a massive human rights breach and if it is in Private sector where you cannot do anything, one case can make such a huge difference. Section 9(5) is in the statute books already and all the Government has to do now is to trigger it. Anything else would indicate a deviation from the core British Democratic Values and that cannot happen.

Colin Divens : International Humanist & Ethical Union

International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) is the sole world umbrella organisation embracing Humanist, atheist, rationalist, secularist, sceptic, ethical cultural, free thought and similar organisations world-wide. Our vision is a Humanist world; a world in which human rights are respected and everyone is able to live a life of dignity. The mission of IHEU is to build and represent the global Humanist movement that defends human rights and promotes Humanist values world-wide. IHEU sponsors the triennial World Humanist Congress. I am here on behalf of our organisation and we do a lot work in India and Nepal. We are fully aware of the plight of the victims of caste and there are a lot of atrocities in India and Nepal in the name of caste. We support the work that CasteWatchUK is doing and there should be no place for caste in this country. We know how caste discrimination works and what it means for victims. Please let us know what help that you want from us and we'll be happy to work with CasteWatchUK.

Mrs Nelam Khamba: A delegate from Hindu community

Everyone deny that caste discrimination is taking place in this country and we all know that it goes on. Hindus are now organising social events which are caste based. If white people organised functions where only whites were allowed to take part it would be seen as racial discrimination but if Hindus organise same things for their own caste people, it is acceptable and OK. It is hypocrisy. What are community leaders doing about it?

Mr Baldev Singh & Mr Arvinder Singh Khalsa : Sikhs in England, Sikh Study Forum(UK) & Guru Gobind Singh Khalsa College (Chigwell) London.

Caste prejudice and caste based discrimination is against the teachings of Sikh Gurus and we condemn all those who believe in or practice caste based discrimination. Caste prejudice and caste discrimination has become a big problem within Sikh community in UK. We have started various initiatives to rid the Sikh community in UK of this social plague. We are teaching younger members of the Sikh community to denounce the caste identities and ignore caste requirements for finding marriage partners. We have also started many initiatives in Guru Gobind Singh Khalsa College (Chigwell) where we ask younger members of the community about the social problems they see in the community they live in and what kind solutions they'll propose. Almost in every survey, caste based discrimination comes out as one the most serious problem and that need to be addressed. Inter caste marriages, education and breaking the caste barriers are the commonly suggested solutions to rid Sikhs in UK of the caste problems. We have come here to support the conference and we believe that it is important that caste discrimination must be made unlawful, that is the only way community would understand the seriousness of the problem and like race, caste will also slowly be removed from the society.

Mr Jasdev Rai: *Director, Sikh Human Rights, Member of Faith Communities Consultative Council, Member of British Sikh Consultative Forum. He took part in the Caste Conference organised by Coventry University and attended by CasteWatchUK, Hindu Forum of Britain and Ms Hilary Metcalf, Director, NIESR in July 2010.*

I am against caste based discrimination and I have come to support this conference. I am in favour of finding solutions to rid British Society from the evil of caste based discrimination. On the issue of Caste & its inclusion in the Equality Act, although I personally agree with it but I do not have a mandate from my organisation to vote in this conference on behalf of Sikh Human Rights.

Adoption of Resolution:

Mr Satpal Muman closed the panel discussion and proposed a resolution. It was put to vote by show of hands and it was adopted by a unanimous show of hands;

CasteWatchUK: Conference Resolution

Today's conference considered the Equality Act 2010 and the next steps to be taken in achieving the objective of a legal prohibition on caste discrimination in the UK.

WHEREAS the Conference acknowledged that:

(a) Caste based discrimination in the United Kingdom would have a detrimental effect on community cohesion and individual rights;

(b) The UK Government has obligations under the International Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to include in domestic legislation provision for the prohibition of Caste discrimination and analogous systems of discrimination based on descent or inherited status;

(c) There is credible and cogent evidence of the existence of caste discrimination in the UK in the form of the report, 'Caste Discrimination and Harassment in Great Britain' (Hilary Metcalfe and Heather Rolfe, December 2010), published by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research;

(d) The current provisions of the Equality Act 2010 do not adequately address the problems of caste based discrimination;

(e) There was a need to continue the campaign of CasteWatchUK and other organisations with similar objectives to persuade the Government to use the power under s.9(5) of the Equality Act to make caste an aspect of race for the purposes of that Act;

AND the Conference **HEREBY RESOLVED** as follows:

(1) To continue the campaign for legislation prohibiting caste-based discrimination in the UK;

(2) To approve and endorse the NIESR Report on 'Caste Discrimination and Harassment in Great Britain';

(3) To urge the UK Government to take immediate steps pursuant to s.9(5) of the Equality Act to make caste an aspect of race for the purposes of that Act and/or to make caste a prohibited characteristic for the purposes of that Act.

Vote of Thanks: by Davinder Prasad, General Secretary, CasteWatchUK

Davinder Prasad thanked all the delegates and particularly the guest speakers for their kind support of the conference. He also conveyed thanks to the management and staff of Citibase for their support with the facilities and catering arrangements. He also conveyed gratitude and appreciation to all the members of CasteWatchUK team who worked so hard and for their commitment and continued support in organising this conference. Special thanks were also conveyed to all the fifty organisations who supported CasteWatchUK memorandum that was submitted to the House of Lords during the final stages of our lobbying.