

**UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
SUB COMMISSION ON PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND
PROTECTION OF MINORITIES**

**WORKING GROUP ON INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS.
ELEVENTH SESSION, GENEVA, 19-30 JULY 1993**

**STATEMENT OF V. PAUL PANNEER SELVAM,
DELEGATE FROM INDIA ON BEHALF OF DALITS- THE INDIGENOUS
PEOPLE OF INDIA.**

Madame Chairperson, Members of the Working Group,
Fellow Indigenous Peoples and Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much for giving me the floor to highlight some of the urgent issues which are being faced by the Indigenous people of India. We do not want to be known as untouchables. That is why we chose a name for ourselves that is DALIT. We Dalit Youth Movement and Human Rights Education Movement of India jointly working together to lift the Social, Economic, Educational, Political and Religious oppression of the Indigenous people of India.

There are 250 Million Dalits in India, the largest single most Indigenous population of the world. Approximately 20% in total population of India. The Dalits who live on hills called Scheduled Tribes and Adi-Vasis are the affected people of the development projects like Narmada Dam project. The Dalits who live on plains called the Scheduled casts are the most affected Indigenous people of the existing caste system and by the other developmental work of the governments. These Indigenous, so called the dalits perform the tasks that other casts refuse, including the transportation of human wastes. They are deprived of their basic needs like drinking water, food, education and land. They were not given their fundamental freedom like freedom of speech, and freedom of faith.

It has been officially admitted that atrocities against Dalits are constantly increasing. According to government documents every hour two Dalits are assaulted, Three Dalit women are raped, Two Dalit houses are burnt in India. Which is a great crime against Humanity. The women are the worst victim in these types of atrocities.

Therefore it is our duty to bring this to the attention of the United Nation and world Indigenous communities, and the delegates to this working group to get your solidarity and support to stop these kinds of injustices to the Dalits of India.

We would like to leave this thought with you while fighting to stop our sufferings, it is the challenge for us all to choose our highest right and option of using our tragic sufferings which could become our distinctive contribution.

Thank you Madame Chairperson

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