

**STATEMENT AT THE ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT
FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES (UNPFII) 2012**

Joint Statement of 3 Organisations on extent of violence against indigenous women and girls in terms of article 22 (2) of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Eastern India:

Presented by Dr. Joseph Marianus Kujur on behalf of (1) Adivasi Vijaya Samajic Sanstha (Tribal Welfare Society), (2) Indian Social Institute, and (3) Chotanagpur Rising Association

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Agenda Item 3: Study on the extent of violence against indigenous women and girls in terms of Article 22 (2) of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Thank you Mr. Chair!

I would like to bring to the kind attention of the Permanent Forum the most denigrating, humiliating and dehumanizing life that the women domestic workers belonging to Indigenous communities are subject to, when they out-migrate from their villages to the mega cities of India like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, and so on.

The absence of any legislation to protect these women workers is in gross violation of Article 22(2) of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Domestic work in India is the most unrecognized and disorganized. According to an estimate, in Delhi alone there are more than a hundred thousand such women from tribal communities, primarily from the states of Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, and Assam. These domestic workers do the most menial and arduous tasks, have impossible long hours with no benefits of social security, security of employment, wage raises, paid leave or medical facilities.

Every day more than 90 million domestic workers oil the wheels of contemporary India and domestic work is still undervalued. It is often looked upon as unskilled because most women have traditionally been considered incapable of doing the work. When paid, therefore, the work remains undervalued and poorly regulated. There is no dignity to their work, and as such, it warrants recognition and respect and calls for regulation.

They are excluded from labour laws. They are abused in various ways—long hours of work, bad or no pay, inhuman treatment, physical and sexual harassment and even murder. According to a study 90% of households prefer to hire young tribal women domestic workers because they are submissive, simple and hardworking.

However, they are denied right to liberty, right to security, right to privacy, access to health services, right to self determination, right to return to own community, right to representation and right to be heard before decision making is openly made.

Thus, domestic work looks like a contemporary form of slavery and India a transit country for trafficked human being, mostly for forced labour and commercial sexual exploitation. These women from tribal communities are exploited in brick kilns, embroidery factories and agricultural sector and largely in domestic labour.

Recommendation

Collective representation is essential for the promotion and protection of workers' rights. We urge the Permanent Forum to initiate a study to ascertain the plight of the tribal women domestic workers in view of facilitating a legislation in conformity with ILO 169 and other Human Rights and Indigenous Rights mechanisms to address the above-mentioned issues of these women workers from the Indigenous communities.

Thank you Mr. Chair!

Dr Joseph Marianus Kujur