

“The Rights of Religious Minority Groups and Dalit in Nepal”

Oral statement at the sixth session of the Forum on Minority Issues of United Nations
Human Rights Council

Geneva 27, 2013

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates and colleagues,

Though Nepal is a secular state and the interim constitution ensures equality for all, however, all Dalit and minority groups do not have a feeling of equality in the real sense. The Dalit community is still neglected and restricted from participating in social religious and cultural functions mostly in their local communities.

Similarly, religious minority groups still have an issue of identity and recognition in the society. Their right to have one's belief in any religion has not been fully recognized. Religious safeguarding for all religious groups is needs to be further strengthened. Currently, Christian minorities are facing complications to have graveyards which need to be address as soon as possible.

Another heinous practice in Nepalese society is Caste-Based Discrimination and Untouchability, a most severe form of discrimination. Despite constitutional and legislative safeguarding, violent attacks, murder, harassment, humiliation, expulsion, and denial and forceful separation of inter-caste married couples are the daily phenomenon.

Cases of caste discrimination are often not reported, investigated and prosecuted properly by law enforcement agencies [particularly by police]; rather they force to the victims of such acts for making compromise with perpetrators unlawfully which is promoting impunity, narrowing space for human rights, rule of law and justice to the victim.

In this present moment, Nepal is in the process of state restructuring and drafting new constitution so it is widely anticipated that the new constitution will address the issues and aspirations of all people who are discriminated and excluded based on caste, class, gender and religion.

On this occasion, I urge government of Nepal for undertaking adequate initiations to resolve such inequalities by fulfilling its commitments and would like to take an attention of international well-wishers, human rights community and friends including UN agencies for their continued support and solidarity for ensuring equal rights to Dalit and minority groups in Nepal.

Thank you!

Bhakta Bahadur Bishwakarma, National Chairperson, Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization (NNDSWO), Email: nndswow@wlink.com.np, gbkbhakta@yahoo.com, URL: nndswo.org.np