

WORKING GROUP ON MINORITIES

Geneva

12TH SESSION

8 August 2006

Intervention under item (3a) of the Agenda

Suicides By the Farmers In Maharashtra State of India:

Thank you Mr Chairman,

I am from Maharashtra State In Western part of India and I hail from a city called Poona. As a President of Holistic Turnaround Management Foundation, I am making this submission about suicides committed by more than 3000 farmers in the State majority of who are from marginalised group, Dalits and belonging to minority castes and the indigenous people.

Theses farmers are suffering on account of the neglect of the administration both the Central and the State Governments. These farmers are dependent on the monsoon rains. Unfortunately since the last three years the rains have failed. Thus they have become the victim of the financial banks who have charged interest charges and penal interests. Most have to go to the money - lenders who charge exorbitant rate of interest and this puts them into a debt trap the principle amount they have to repay doubles in less than three years. This financial burden triggers suicides.

Apart from non-effective control over moneylenders in spite of existing act the administration looks the other side\ Spurious supplies of the fertilizers and seeds things have become from bad to worse. It appears that in view of their non-representation in legislature and corridor of powers these groups of farmers have become voiceless and are year after year being neglected. In spite of fifty years of Independence of the country. Their life remains miserable. Politicians, people in power are themselves moneylenders and hand in gloves with the administration. Thus making the life of the poor farmers more and more difficult.

This pathetic conditions leads to migration and adds to numerous dimensions to their already existing worries and problems.74th amendment of the Indian Constitution provides for poverty alleviation strategies, safeguarding the interest of the weaker section of the society. The Constitution preamble speaks of justice, social and economic Constitution Art 14(4) and 14(6) as well as 21,38advocates making the life of the disadvantaged meaningful. This is inconsistent with UN Declaration on the right of Minorities Art 2(2) Art 5 (1) (2)

Often most have migrate to urban places forcing them to live in pathetic conditions and wiping of the future of their dependents both, educationally as well as their health and home losing their identity.

Practically all the leading newspapers and TV Channels highlighted these aspects forcefully. Like-minded, social activist recently took a four-day march to highlight these burning problems.

No doubt some of the families got some financial compensation provided to the members of the family who had committed suicides, but majority of them are still in the clutches of the moneylenders and financial institutions.

Even the Prime Minister of India Dr. Man Mohan Singh toured the affected areas and promised packages for the enlistment, it is as is usually a case that after some time all this is neglected and forgotten

Sir, in the light of above what has been stated May I request The Working Group on Minorities to impress upon the Govt. of India;

1. To condemn the state government officials for neglecting their duty to the affected farmers the society, just because they have no voice in the polity.
2. To see that their duties towards the farmers are not neglected in the future
3. To pressurise the local administration to wipe out the corruption where the traders supply spurious seeds and fertilizers
4. To see to it that money lenders act is strictly implemented in its true spirits.
5. Suggest a positive step for a turnaround for this community of farmers that in case of failure of rains that they should be financed until an alternative income can be generated
6. Funds should be invested towards development to bring about irrigation and other facilities to prevent future suicides.

Thank you Mr Chairman in anticipation of an immediate action

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