

Bandana Bishwakarma Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization (NNDSWO) – Statement for the UN Forum on Minority Issues 2023

Minorities issues - caste-based discrimination and untouchability culture in Nepal

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, I shed light on the persistent challenges faced by the Dalit community in Nepal, urging global attention and collaborative action to rectify the severe violations of their human rights.

Nepal, celebrated for its cultural diversity, grapples with deep-rooted issues of caste-based discrimination, especially affecting Dalits. Untouchability, an affront to human dignity, remains a harsh reality, marginalizing Dalits and impeding their access to education, employment, and healthcare, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and inequality.

In certain instances, religious practices clash with legal norms, hindering justice. A 12-year-old Dalit girl was forced into marriage with her rapist, leading to tragic consequences. Similarly, in 2020, in Chaurjahari Municipality, Nawaraj BK and his friends faced brutal violence from a dominant caste mob, resulting in six deaths. These incidents underscore societal acceptance of gross human rights violations and the urgent need for criminal justice reform.

Exploitative practices like bonded labor persist, including Haliya, Khaliya, Haruwa, Charuwa, Balighare, Bhaijbar, and Badi, denying Dalits basic human rights and perpetuating oppression.

NNDSWO has call on the international community to collaborate with the Nepalese government and civil society to enforce existing laws and policies, fostering inclusive education, economic empowerment, and eliminating discriminatory practices.

Let us uphold the core values of the United Nations, championing equality, justice, and human dignity. Addressing the challenges faced by the Dalit community contributes to universal ideals.

In conclusion, let us unite to create a world where every individual, regardless of caste, can live free from discrimination. The 16th Session of the UN Forum on Minority Issues provides a crucial platform to foster dialogue and catalyze positive change. Together, let us strive for a more inclusive and just world for the Dalit community in Nepal and marginalized communities globally.

Thank you.