

Oral Statement

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AGENDA ITEM # 5: Minority Women and Effective Participation in Economic, Social and Cultural Life

Thank you Madam Chair for giving me the opportunity.

My name is Arti Verma. I am from the Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion, an NGO based in New Delhi, India.

In relation to the draft recommendations no. 78, 79 and 80, I would like to focus my intervention on Dalit Women's effective participation in economic life.

Despite the economic growth, global competition and increased privatization, caste continues to play critical role in the experiences of Dalit Women in employment in India. Dalit Women spoke differently in this regard; many women are alright with exposing their caste identity in the work place, while there are a considerable number who also felt to

not share openly their caste identity at workplace, particularly when jobs are not got on the basis of reservation. While looking at all the sectors, Dalit women in the government sector are more open to recognizing their caste identity which was supported by the affirmative action policies followed by the government. This has created an opportunity for Dalit Women to be open about caste identity.

The private sector had the greatest difficulty in acknowledging caste as a factor in social or professional relationships. This was reflected by the larger number of Dalit Women who did not wish to expose their caste identity in their work place. Unfortunately the state's efforts of constitutional and legislative provisions, which have opened up spaces for Dalit Women and have even abolished untouchability and caste-based disabilities through the constitutional measures, these biases, still to continue operate in both public and private spaces. Sufficient efforts for public education or stringent monitoring mechanisms have not been able to tackle the behavior. Thus the social justice efforts of the state need to be augmented and continuing disabilities and exclusion need to be addressed more effectively.

Therefore, we urge the Govt. of India to:

- **Support and enhance the capability of Dalit Women to access existing rights and entitlements through focused information dissemination, orientation programmes at educational institutions and work places.**
- **Periodically assess the implementation and impact of special programmes meant for educated Dalit Women meant to facilitate their employment and make necessary changes according to the market demands.**
 - **Ensure that vocational and technical training centres are adequate in number and location with adequate financing, equipments, and quality instructions linked with placement and their performance is periodically monitored.**
 - **Promote greater financial inclusion in the government sector banks and link the community based financial bodies to them.**

We also urge Civil Society Organization's that:

- **NGOs should promote diversity profile at the board, senior staff and other levels of employment.**

- **NGOs working on labour and employment should include caste based discrimination and employment of Dalit Women in their analysis and advocacy.**

Thank You!