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Call for NHRC probe into poll day violence against dalits

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Trichy: On a day when a deputy superintendent of police (DSP) began his inquiry into the atrocities against dalits by upper caste Hindus on April 18 at Ponparappi in Ariyalur district, Evidence, an NGO working for the welfare of dalits, demanded a direct inquiry by the national human rights commission (NHRC) instead of involving the police in it.

DSP P Elanchezhyan of Ariyalur division 8 carried out inquiries with Rajendran, 57, Anbazhagan, 60, Krishnamoorthy, 40, Punitharajan, 30, Vellaiammal, 45, Govindaraj, 50, and Chinnaiyan, 60, at his office on Tuesday. The inquiry was based on the complaints sent by dalit residents of the village to NHRC in April. The commission had asked the DSP to inquire with the dalit people on Tuesday. The affected people had demanded that the accused be booked under appropriate sections of Tamil Nadu women harassment Act and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (prevention of atrocities) Act 2015.

“The people explained to the officer the atrocities meted out to them, how they were asked not to vote for certain candidates, insulting of the image of departed dalit leader and harassment against dalit women under SC/ST Act,” said the director of Evidence, A Kathir, adding that the DSP assured them to consider their demands. Superintendent of police of Ariyalur district V R Srinivasan confirmed the enquiry by the DSP today.

While welcoming the inquiry, Evidence expressed dissatisfaction over the decision of the NHRC not to visit the area for inquiry and to rely on the inquiry by the DSP who was also the investigation officer in the case. “DSP may inquire, but the visit of the commission is necessary when atrocities of such a large scale happen to dalits,” said Kathir. As reported, a clash between vanniyaars and dalits had marred the election at Ponparappi village in Ariyalur district which falls under Chidambaram constituency where VCK chief Thol Thirumavalavan was contesting on ‘Pot’ symbol. An argument between the two over the breaking of ‘Pot’ by the vanniyaars led to the clash leading to vandalization of the houses of dalits besides attack on 14 dalits and damaging of their vehicles. The police booked 24 vanniyaars on charges of rioting, reciting obscene words, for wrongful

confinement, voluntarily causing hurt with weapons, attempt to murder and harassment against women. The police had also booked 25 dalits over the clash.