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Title: Plight of Tamils residing in Myanmar.

DR. P. VENUGOPAL : Hon. Chairman, Sir, I would like to thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak about the sufferings of the Indians, particularly the Tamilians in Myanmar.

The silent influx of Han Chinese, a group of tribals, into the border towns of Myanmar adjoining India such as Tamu, Minthar, Shaelabo and Kawngkanwn has made the security establishment in Delhi wary of China's understated expansionist policy.

Sir, I would like to bring to the notice of the Government of India that intelligence inputs suggest that the steady push of Han Chinese, who are getting into business along the Indo-Myanmar border towns in a big way, has out-dazzled thousands of people belonging to traditional Tamil trading community involved in smaller businesses in the border towns.

The relations between Myanmar and Tamils go back a long way to the times of the advent of maritime activities in the Bay of Bengal, as trade winds and currents were particularly conducive for the swift and direct communications between Myanmar, which was known in Sanskrit as "Swarnabhoomi", The Land of Gold.

The Chinese scheme to change the demography is fast outnumbering Tamil businessmen in Myanmar, especially in the border towns. The contrast is visible clearly in Mandalay and Tamu. These are the border towns close to Moreh in Manipur on the Indian side.

China, supported by Burmese Military Junta, is helping Han Chinese to invest in Myanmar and in the take-over of businesses controlled so far by the Tamils by improvising both products and methods. As a result, these towns thronged by Tamil business families not long ago, have given a way to the Hans and about 12 per cent of Myanmar's population now speaks Mandarin.

Aware of serious implications, I would like to warn the Government of India to awake from its slumber. Delhi should convey its concerns to the Myanmar Military Ruler Gen. Than-Shwe and take steps on war footing to safeguard the interests of Indians, particularly Tamilians in Myanmar.