

**NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
CAMP SITTING / OPEN HEARING AT RANCHI**

(7th & 8th September, 2016)

CURTAIN RAISER

The National Human Rights Commission has been organising Camp Sittings in different States with an aim to dispose of pending cases concerning one particular State by hearing the senior government officers; sensitize them about the importance of human rights issues and compliance of NHRC recommendations by them; meet the local NGOs to get an insight into the problems being faced by the people.

In its endeavour to implement the recommendations made by Shri K.B. Saxena, IAS (Retd.) in his report submitted by him after carrying out a study about the atrocities against persons belonging to Scheduled Castes, on the request of the Commission, public hearings on various issues relating to atrocities and problems faced by Scheduled Castes, have also been held in a number of States in the country.

The Commission has now decided to hold its Open Hearing/Camp Sitting from 7th – 8th September, 2016 at Ranchi, Jharkhand. The Commission will take up 63 cases in Open Hearing and 27 cases in Full Commission and Division Bench Sittings in its Camp Sitting.

Public notices were also published in national and local dailies in the State of Jharkhand inviting complaints for public hearing at Ranchi on the problems and grievances of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes from the persons belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes who have a complaint of atrocity committed by a public servant or of negligence by a public servant in prevention of atrocity.

In response to the public notices, the Commission received 59 complaints. Out of these 59 cases, the Commission called for reports in 51 cases from concerned authorities to submit reports as these matters would be taken up during the Open Hearing. The Commission has also decided to take up 18 cases of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes victims, already under consideration of the Commission, during the Open Hearing. The authorities concerned have been asked to remain present at the time of hearing of the cases.

Hon'ble Chairperson Justice Shri H. L. Dattu will inaugurate the Open Hearing on 07.09.2016 at 10.00 AM at Judicial Academy Jharkhand, Ranchi. After inauguration, the Commission will take up 15 cases in the sitting of Full Commission between 11.00 AM and 12.00 Noon and thereafter, the Open Hearing at the same venue will commence when the Commission will hear the grievances of aggrieved people and the problems they face in seeking justice from Government agencies in the presence of the concerned authorities who

have been asked to remain present at the time of hearing of cases. The 69 matters shall be heard in three single benches, to be presided over by Hon'ble Members Justice Shri Cyriac Joseph, Justice Shri D. Murugesan and Shri S. C. Sinha. These cases include matters relating to Atrocities on Scheduled Castes and other depressed sections of society.

On the second day i.e. 8th September, 2016, the sittings of Division Benches will take place at the same venue between 10.00 AM and 12.00 Noon. The matters relating to death in police action and of custodial deaths.

On 8th September, 2016 in the afternoon, the Commission will hold a meeting with NGOs of the State on human rights issues at Judicial Academy Jharkhand, Ranchi from 12.30 to 01.30 PM. Thereafter, the Commission will hold discussions with the Chief Secretary, DGP, DMs, SPs and other senior civil, police and jail officers of the State on the issues raised by the NGOs at Project Bhawan, Secretariat, Ranchi from 3.00 to 4.30 P.M. The following issues are also likely to be taken up during discussion with senior officers of the State Government:

- Atrocities on Scheduled Castes and other depressed sections of society, including the incidents of alleged rape of two primitive tribe girls aged 15 & 16 years, resident of Village Madwadih, Tikahara Panchayat, Block Gomiya, District Bokaro, Jharkhand, issue of inclusion of Ghatwal-Ghatwar tribes as Scheduled Tribes in the State of Jharkhand, land related issues, denial of old age pension etc..
- Child labour in illegal coal mining.
- Death of Twelve Maoists including four minors in an encounter took place between the combined team of the District Police Palamu and the COBRA Battalion of CRPF in Bakoria Village, Palamu District in the wee hours of 9.6.2015.
- Silicosis; Payment of compensation to the NoK of deceased persons, medical treatment and Rehabilitation of victims, besides facilities for preventive health care.
- High fluoride level in underground water, maiming and killing of people in Garhwa District
- Implementation of the various welfare schemes e.g. Indira Awas Yojna, Mid Day Meal, NRHM, ICDS, SSA, PDS, MGNREGA etc. Non-receipt of action taken reports from authorities on observations made by the Team of the Commission during its visit to Gumla and Simdega districts. The matter will also be taken up during sitting of the Commission.
- Health; Vacancies of doctors and para medical staff in PHCs, CHCs and irregular/inadequate supply of medicines in

hospitals/PHCs. Infrastructure such as x-ray equipment, lab facilities and preventive health check up..

- Public Distribution System.
- Irregular payment of remuneration to Aanganwadi workers.
- Shortage of teachers in government schools. Vacancies not being filled up, school buildings, study material for poor students.
- Irregularity in Indira Awas Yojana; Delay in receipt of grants and priority list being ignored.
- Delay in submission of compliance reports including inquest, PMR and MER in cases of encounters and custodial deaths
- Timely submission of legible copies of reports by authorities.
- Jail reforms.
- Condition of juvenile homes.
- Timely submission of response to the show cause notices and timely submission of compliance reports in all cases, where the Commission makes a recommendation for payment of monetary relief.

Later on, Hon'ble Chairperson Justice Shri H. L. Dattu and Hon'ble Members of the Commission would brief the media about the outcome of the Open Hearing/Camp Sitting as well as discussions with the NGOs and senior officers of the State Governments for wider dissemination of information on the human rights issues and action taken by the NHRC for their protection and promotion. The media briefing will also be held at Project Bhawan, Secretariat, Ranchi 4.30 PM on 08th September, 2016.

Since its inception, the Commission has been actively engaged in protection and promotion of the rights of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Apart from taking cognizance suo-motu and on complaints relating to atrocities against Scheduled Castes, the Commission has also engaged key stakeholders on the issue; published booklets; and held training programmes and workshops aimed at sensitizing various stakeholders on the issue so as to eliminate atrocities, discrimination, and any other form of violation of their human rights.

The National Human Rights Commission, being deeply concerned about the atrocities against persons belonging to Scheduled Castes, requested Shri K.B. Saxena, IAS (Retd.) to carry out a study in this regard and suggest appropriate recommendations. Accordingly, Shri Saxena

undertook the study and submitted his comprehensive and detailed report. This report is available on the website of Commission i.e. www.nhrc.nic.in. Among the recommendations Mr. Saxena made was one that the Commission organise at least one open hearing a year "where the victims of major atrocities can present their experiences and grievances in seeking justice from Government agencies and human rights bodies/non-governmental organizations/social workers and activists may apprise the Commission of difficulties encountered by them in taking up their complaints. In the interaction with the State Government subsequent to the hearing, the Commission may convey its observations and advice on various actions to be taken for effective enforcement of law, sustaining confidence of victims and, where required, looking into the conduct of officials coming in for adverse reference during the hearing. The follow up action on the hearings may be monitored."

The Commission co-organised a National Consultation on "Strengthening Civil Society Initiatives for Scheduled Castes" with the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights in December, 2007 at New Delhi.

The Commission also took a decision to launch awareness campaigns in four districts which had a high record of atrocities against Scheduled Castes. In this connection, members and senior officials from the Commission have been visiting Bharatpur in Rajasthan; Faridabad in Haryana and Jaipur and Ajmer in Rajasthan.

So far, such Open Hearings have been held in the States of Bihar, Odisha, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala and at Chandigarh for the States of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and UT of Chandigarh. The Commission also held an Open Hearing in its office at Manav Adhikar Bhawan, New Delhi to hear complaints received from Meerut region of Uttar Pradesh. Besides, the Commission also organized one Regional Public Hearing on Right to Health Care in collaboration with the Jan Swasthya Abhiyan (JSA) at Mumbai on 6th-7th January, 2016 for the States of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Goa and Union Territories of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli.

In the past, the NHRC has also organised its Camp Sitzings in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bengaluru (for four southern States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu), Bihar, Odisha, Gujarat, Assam, Meghalaya, Chhattisgarh, Manipur, Madhya Pradesh, Chandigarh (for the States of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and UT of Chandigarh) and Hyderabad for the States of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.
