

NHRC'S HELP TO PROVIDE BASIC AMENITIES TO STAN SWAMY

NEW DELHI: The National Platform for the Rights of the Disabled (NPRD) has sought the National Human Rights Commission's (NHRC) intervention to provide reasonable accommodation and assistive aids like straws and sippers to tribal rights activist Father Stan Swamy, who is lodged in the Tal-oja Jail in Maharashtra.

Eighty-three-year-old Swamy, a jesuit priest, was arrested for his alleged role inciting mob violence in Koregaon Bhima. He suffers from Parkinson's disease, and filed an application before a special court, seeking that he be allowed to use a straw and sipper. In a petition to chairman of the National Human Rights Commission, H L Dattu, NPRD general secretary Muralidharan sought the commission's "immediate intervention" to ensure that Swamy is provided with requisite age and disability appropriate accommodation, assistive aids including straws and sippers, and human care assistance as required.

"Given this condition (tremor in hands etc.) he has been using a sipper as also a straw for intake of water and fluids. He was carrying these essentials (straw and sipper) with him when he was arrested by the NIA. The NIA refused to hand them back and the jail authorities refused to provide him these inexpensive but essential assistive items.," Muralidharan said. **PTI**

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NHRC notes a drop in women workers

Expert group to come up with Ministry-wise recommendations to increase their participation

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI

Guidelines to the government to improve women's participation in the workforce would be issued by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) soon, NHRC member Jyotika Kalra told *The Hindu* on Tuesday.

A meeting of the NHRC's core group on women, attended by representatives of the Women and Child Development and Skill Development Ministries, NGOs, lawyers and civil society members, on Tuesday discussed the reasons for the low participation of women in the labour force.

Ms. Kalra, who chaired the meeting, said the NHRC would be coming up with Mi-



Survival skill: The NHRC core group felt more women should take up jobs like drivers and electricians. • SANDEEP SAXENA

nistry-wise recommendations based on the discussion soon. According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey reports released by the

National Statistical Office, women's participation in the workforce "fell to its lowest points since Independence in the year 2017-18. The most

major decline can be seen since 2004, from 29.4% to 17.5% in 2017-18. This has marginally increased to 18.6% in the year 2018-19," a note for the core group meeting said.

"One of the suggestions was that there should be investment in the care economy as well as regulatory mechanism. The state must come forward and private players can also participate. In Nepal, for example, there is a community care system," Ms. Kalra said.

Job guarantee

Among the suggestions were the need for better working conditions, gender sensitivity at workplaces, and equal sharing of household work.

"It was suggested that an urban employment guarantee scheme be started along the lines of the MGNREGA with reservation for women. Many times, women want to work but the opportunities are not there," she said.

The group discussed skill training and encouraging women to take up "unconventional" jobs like of drivers and electricians. The importance of digital literacy, especially with working from home becoming more prevalent during the pandemic, was also discussed.

In terms of making workplaces safer, Ms. Kalra said while the law against sexual harassment was in place there was a lot more to be done.

Bhadrak Collector submits report to NHRC

Lack of promotion of Rakta Tirtha

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Responding to the National Human Rights Commission's (NHRC) warning of coercive action over the lack of protection and promotion of 'Rakta Tirtha Eram' in Bhadrak district of Odisha, the District Collector in a report has stated that needful has been done and the process would be completed by December 31, 2020.

The NHRC has expressed its serious displeasure against the Odisha Government time and again over the six-year pending case filed by human rights activist and lawyer Radhakanta Tripathy. Visiting the spot and witnessing the situation recently, Tripathy said that even after 78 years of

freedom struggle, Rakta Tirtha Eram known as 'Jalianawalabagh of Odisha' continued to be neglected and never got the historical importance it deserves.

In 2014, the NHRC had asked the State Chief Secretary to submit an action taken report over the issue. Later on, the Ministry of Home Affairs had also taken cognisance of an application submitted by Tripathy for providing tourist tag to Eram and doing the needful for making it a place of national importance. Since then the issue is making rounds in the bureaucratic juggernauts.

Even after five years of announcement of the area as a tourist place, nothing has been done to develop the place. Pertinent to mention here three years ago Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan had sanctioned Rs 1 crore to develop Eram. However, the money lies unspent, Tripathy alleged.

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