



'Odisha under-reported police-action deaths'

NHRC seeks explanation for inconsistencies in information given to it and NCRB

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The Odisha government has reportedly made under-reporting of deaths caused by police action to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), the most authentic source of information on crime and criminals in India.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has written to the Odisha Chief Secretary pointing out inconsistencies in information provided to the Commission and the NCRB. It sought an explanation for the mismatch.

According to NHRC data, a total of 18 persons were killed in police action such as

deaths in police custody, fake encounters and police firing in Odisha during 2016. But when information was finally submitted to NCRB, the total deaths on account of police action came down to five.

Encounter deaths

A total of four persons had died in police custody in 2016, according to NHRC. However, NCRB data show there were no deaths in police custody in Odisha that year. As many as 11 encounter deaths were reported by NHRC during the same period. The NCRB table shows the number of deaths in police firing, including firing in self-defence, as only five.

The Odisha police had faced huge criticism after five persons, including two women and a child, were gunned down in a 'botched anti-Maoist operation' near Gumudumaha village in Kandhamal district on July 8, 2016. However, other States too have fared no better. In fact, discrepancy in information submitted to NHRC and NCRB has been found in the case of 16 States.

NHRC sources said: "It can be seen that deaths in police custody or firing, including in self-defence, were reported in higher numbers to NHRC compared to NCRB by Odisha, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand,

Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal."

Huge inconsistency has been noted in the case of Chhattisgarh, which is badly affected by left-wing extremism. As per NHRC data, 87 deaths were caused by police action, including 81 encounter deaths in the central Indian State, while only four were reported to NCRB.

Now, the Odisha Home Department has directed the DGP and the State Crime Records Bureau to furnish reports on deaths so that the discrepancy could be explained to NHRC.