

# NHRC seeks report on witchcraft victims, compensation

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**  
BALASORE, 22 DECEMBER:

Expressing displeasure over the lackadaisical attitude of the State administration, in prevention of sorcery and witchcraft and in payment of compensation to the victims of such social evil, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in its recent order, sought reports from all the 30 District Collectors of Odisha.

The Director General of Police and Chief Secretary have also been directed to submit a report to the Commission on the steps taken to conduct the awareness

programmes at grass root level in all the villages and the compensation provided to the victims.

Issuing a direction recently on a petition filed by Activist-Lawyer Radhakan-ta Tripathy, the NHRC sought reports by 11 February 2021.

The chief secretary of Odisha is directed to take notice of the complaint in the spirit of Section-09 and 11 of the Act and directs all the District Magistrates to take action, create awareness and implement prevention of Witch Hunting Act, 2013 at the village level.

The government needs to provide monetary com-

pen-sation to the victims or their family members in cases of death, maimed, burnt or assaulted on the sus-picion of practicing witch-craft.

The NHRC in its order stated "Tripathy, an advocate and human right activist, had raised a very serious issue with the Commission qua the murder and killing of people on suspicion of Witch Craft. The Complainant had filed the seven page complaint in the year 2019, against the atrocities and violation of Human Rights, committed against villagers on suspicion of sorcery and witchcraft in Odisha".

# HC unhappy over Puri custodial death case probe

**PNS ■ CUTTACK**

Adjudicating a petition seeking court-monitored investigations into the Puri custodial death case, the Orissa High Court on Tuesday expressed its displeasure over the investigations made so far.

“The court also wanted to know from the Advocate General whether any policemen are booked under murder charges or not in this case,” informed the petitioner’s advocate Deepak Kumar Mohapatra.

The court also asked the AG to submit all case records, including the postmortem report and judicial report, if any, and the action-taken report so far by the next date of hearing on January 11 next,” Mohapatra said, adding that the court too directed the AG to make sure that the investigations are being made scrupulously following the

NHRC guidelines. A habitual offender, K Ramesh, was allegedly murdered in custody by the Baselisahi police of Puri town last month, following which the then district Superintendent of Police Akhilesvar Singh was shunted from his post.

A local advocate, Sarat Kumar Rayguru, has approached the court seeking adequate compensation to the family of the deceased and stringent punishment to the erring policemen.

While the court is adjudicating the writ petition, a judicial enquiry under a local judicial magistrate is also going on.

Besides, the NHRC and the OHRC too have taken cognisance of separate applications made in connection with the custodial death.

Also, the Puri district Human Rights Protection Cell headed by a DSP-rank officer is investigating the case.