

NHRC seeks status report on villages in Odisha's reserved forest areas

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
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The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has directed the Odisha Disaster Management Department to submit the up-to-date status report of villages located within the reserved forest area.

The Commission acting on a petition filed by human rights lawyer Radhakanta Tripathy, asked the authorities concerned to submit the district wise details of converted revenue villages and the status of provided facilities, claims within eight weeks.

Lack of bare necessities and basic amenities to the



villagers (mostly ST & SC) of forest villages described as 'Zero Villages' as they are within the reserved forest area.

As the forest villages are not on revenue records, they have no elected representatives or Gram Sabhas. As per the 2011 census, India has 4,526 forest villages in the country, out of which 458 forest villages are in Odisha. It has further been mentioned that in May 2016, the Union government had

admitted that there was a need for conversion of forest villages into revenue villages considering the difficulties faced by the people living in forest villages.

Tripathy also pointed out that there are issues of human trafficking, man-animal conflict, distress migration, malnutrition and absence of health care and educational facilities, which need to be resolved on priority basis. The villages located in Dhenkanal, Angul, Ganjam, Nayagarh Districts in Odisha are facing all these problems. Villagers of zero villages should have facilities of safe drinking water, playgrounds, all weather roads, PHC, education under RTE Act, toilets,

etc. for better livelihood.

Citing denial and deprivation of social justice, basic amenities to more than 4000 forest villages in India, Tripathy pointed out that the State of Odisha has more than four hundred twenty forest villages, where people lead miserable lives with sufferings. The forest villages in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and Northeast states are also struggling for basic amenities, bare necessities and other welfare schemes as well as suffering from Left-wing Extremism and ineffective constitutional Safeguards.

U.P. Police book trans activists fighting for horizontal reservation after complaint from transgender welfare board member

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/uttar-pradesh/up-police-book-trans-activists-fighting-for-horizontal-reservation-after-complaint-from-transgender-welfare-board-member/article69116196.ece>

The registration of FIR comes days after National Commission for Scheduled Castes took cognisance of a caste atrocity complaint against State Transgender Welfare Board Member Devika Devendra S. Manglamukhi

Published - January 19, 2025 07:38 pm IST - New Delhi Abhinay Lakshman

Uttar Pradesh Police have registered an FIR against prominent Dalit and Bahujan trans rights activists, including Chennai-based Grace Banu, based on a complaint from State's Transgender Welfare Board Member Devika Devendra S. Manglamukhi. The development comes days after Ms. Devika was called out for allegedly harassing activists fighting for horizontal reservation for trans people in public education and employment.

The friction between trans activists fighting for horizontal and those for vertical reservations came out in the open earlier this month when National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) took note of a caste atrocity complaint against Ms. Devika, filed by Saharanpur-based Dalit trans woman Yashika, who alleged that the Dalit trans community in the State "lives with fear because of her".

In the complaint, Ms. Yashika alleged that Ms. Devika, a "prominent upper caste transgender" and a strong proponent of vertical reservation for trans people, would "routinely" call and harass trans activists who advocated for horizontal reservations instead. She added that in one such call, the Transgender Welfare Board Member directed casteist and transphobic slurs at her. Ms. Devika has denied these allegations.

Horizontal reservation vs Vertical reservation

While vertical reservation would translate into a separate quota category to cover all trans people irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds, many trans activists across the country have stressed that horizontal reservations are the need of the hour as vertical reservation ignores the layered nature of discrimination trans people from marginalised castes face. They say horizontal reservation would ensure a percentage of opportunities for trans people under each socio-economic category.

Within 24 hours of the media reporting that NCSC had issued notice on the caste atrocity complaint, the Lucknow West Commissionerate of the U.P. Police registered an

FIR based on Ms. Devika's complaint under sections of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita that deal with robbery, criminal intimidation, and intentional insult to provoke breach of peace.

Those named in the FIR include Yashika, Jane Kaushi, a Delhi-based activist fighting for horizontal reservations in courts, Ritwick Das, another trans activist based between Lucknow and Delhi, and Grace Banu, who has led successful battles for horizontal reservations in States such as Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

In her complaint, Ms. Devika alleged that the accused wearing face masks accosted her outside her residence on December 22, robbed her of her purse which had some cash and jewellery, and also threatened her with "sharp weapons". She further alleged that they threatened to rape her and accused Ms. Yashika of "damaging" Constitutional values.

Activists say charges are 'absurd'

When The Hindu reached out to them, all four accused called the allegations "absurd" and "blatantly false". Ms. Yashika said, "I was in Lucknow then and so was Ritwick, for a gender sensitisation programme meant for police officials of 75 districts. During the trip, I had no contact with Ms. Devika." Ms. Grace Banu and Ms. Kaushik said they have never been to Lucknow.

Ms. Banu said, "I have never met or interacted with Ms. Devika but I have spoken out against her casteist views on reservations as I have always done throughout."

When contacted, Ms. Devika told The Hindu, "I have nothing to say. Please speak with the concerned police officials."

In her police complaint, Ms. Devika said that she had been too scared to report the incident on December 22 and had taken some time to build courage to report it. She said that she had filed complaints with **National Human Rights Commission** and NCSC over the "false allegations" against her.

Based on Ms. Yashika's complaint, NCSC had issued notice to local authorities in Saharanpur on January 3, asking for action taken reports within 15 days.

NHRC seeks explanation from Odisha chief secretary over police assault on woman

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bhubaneswar/nhrc-seeks-explanation-from-odisha-chief-secretary-over-police-assault-on-woman/articleshow/117377752.cms>

Jan 19, 2025, 11.08 PM IST

Bhubaneswar: National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has directed the chief secretary of Odisha to explain why the commission should not recommend monetary compensation of Rs 10,000 to Mita Sethi, a resident of Bhadrak district, who was allegedly assaulted by police officers at Chandbali police station in June last year.

NHRC issued the directive on Jan 16, following a petition by human rights activist and lawyer Radhakanta Tripathy. The complaint detailed that on June 25, 2024, Mita Sethi was assaulted at the Chandbali police station over a minor incident involving her child.

According to the petition, Sethi, her husband, and their child had visited the police station for a case-related matter. While at the premises, their child was playing with a shoe cover, which accidentally fell. An on-duty constable asked Sethi to pick it up. When she refused and argued, the constable slapped her. Two other officers reportedly joined in the assault. The incident was captured on a mobile phone by bystanders and later went viral on social media.

Arunachal: AUS to Host National Workshop on Right to Education (RTE)

<https://www.sentinelassam.com/north-east-india-news/arunachal-news/arunachal-aus-to-host-national-workshop-on-right-to-education-rte>

The Arunachal University of Studies (AUS) will host a two-day national workshop on the Right to Education (RTE) from January 20th to 21st at the university seminar hall.

19 Jan 2025, 8:56 am

NAMSAI: The Arunachal University of Studies (AUS) will host a two-day national workshop on the Right to Education (RTE) from January 20th to 21st at the university seminar hall.

Organized by the faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Legal Studies, and Education, and sponsored by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Government of India, New Delhi, the workshop will feature presentations by five distinguished resource persons from various fields. Special Representatives from the NHRC will also be in attendance.

Prof. (Dr.) D. S. Hernwal, Vice-Chancellor of AUS, will grace the inaugural session.

The workshop aims to enhance awareness, build capacity, and support the effective implementation of free and compulsory education for all children. It will provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of RTE provisions, including key topics such as inclusive education, child-centred teaching, infrastructure standards, and the role of the community in school management.

A total of 200 participants are expected to attend the workshop.

Arunachal : ऑस्ट्रेलिया शिक्षा के अधिकार (आरटीई) पर राष्ट्रीय कार्यशाला आयोजित करेगा

<https://jantaserishta.com/local/arunachal-pradesh/arunachal-australia-to-organise-national-workshop-on-right-to-education-rte-3780137>

19 Jan 2025 10:38 AM GMT

NAMSAI: अरुणाचल यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ स्टडीज (AUS) 20 से 21 जनवरी तक यूनिवर्सिटी सेमिनार हॉल में शिक्षा के अधिकार (RTE) पर दो दिवसीय राष्ट्रीय कार्यशाला आयोजित करेगा। कला और सामाजिक विज्ञान, कानूनी अध्ययन और शिक्षा संकाय द्वारा आयोजित और राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोग (NHRC), भारत सरकार, नई दिल्ली द्वारा प्रायोजित, कार्यशाला में विभिन्न क्षेत्रों के पाँच प्रतिष्ठित संसाधन व्यक्तियों द्वारा प्रस्तुतियाँ दी जाएँगी। NHRC के विशेष प्रतिनिधि भी उपस्थित रहेंगे।

AUS के कुलपति प्रो. (डॉ.) डी.एस. हर्नवाल उद्घाटन सत्र की शोभा बढ़ाएँगे।

कार्यशाला का उद्देश्य जागरूकता बढ़ाना, क्षमता निर्माण करना और सभी बच्चों के लिए निःशुल्क और अनिवार्य शिक्षा के प्रभावी कार्यान्वयन का समर्थन करना है। यह प्रतिभागियों को RTE प्रावधानों की व्यापक समझ प्रदान करेगा, जिसमें समावेशी शिक्षा, बाल-केंद्रित शिक्षण, बुनियादी ढाँचा मानक और स्कूल प्रबंधन में समुदाय की भूमिका जैसे प्रमुख विषय शामिल हैं। कार्यशाला में कुल 200 प्रतिभागियों के भाग लेने की उम्मीद है।

Act on 'zero' villages: NHRC to Odisha govt

<https://www.orissapost.com/act-on-zero-villages-nhrc-to-odisha-govt/>

PNN Updated: January 19th, 2025, 09:13 IST in State, Top Stories

Keonjhar: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has instructed the Principal Secretary of the Revenue and Disaster Management Department, Government of Odisha, to present an up-to-date status report on the conversion of 589 'zero' villages and 20 'forest' villages.

The apex rights body has also requested district-wise details of converted revenue villages and the status of provided facilities and claims to be submitted within eight weeks, without fail.

The order was passed while monitoring a petition filed by rights activist and Supreme Court advocate Radhakanta Tripathy. The petition highlighted the lack of basic necessities and amenities for villagers (primarily from Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes) living in forest villages, also known as zero villages, which are located within reserved forest areas. These villages are not listed in revenue records and, as a result, lack elected representatives or Gram Sabhas.

According to the 2011 Census, there are 4,526 forest villages across India, of which 458 are in Odisha. The petition also noted that in May 2016, the Union government acknowledged the need to convert forest villages into revenue villages due to the difficulties faced by residents. Tripathy further pointed out various issues faced by the residents of these villages, including human trafficking, man-animal conflict, distress migration, malnutrition, and the absence of healthcare and educational facilities. These issues, he argued, should be addressed as a matter of priority. Villages in Dhenkanal, Angul, Ganjam, and Nayagarh districts in Odisha are particularly affected.

Residents of zero villages should have access to essential services such as safe drinking water, playgrounds, all-weather roads, primary health centres (PHCs), education under the Right to Education (RTE) Act, toilets, and other basic facilities.

Tripathy also highlighted the broader issue of denial of social justice and deprivation of basic amenities in more than 4,000 forest villages across India. Odisha, with more than 420 forest villages, is a key example of this deprivation, as people in these villages lead miserable lives. Villages in other states such as Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, and the Northeastern states are similarly struggling with a lack of basic amenities, welfare schemes, and are further affected by left-wing extremism (LWE) and ineffective constitutional safeguards.

In response to the gravity of the issue, the NHRC 13 August last year directed the Secretary of the Ministry of Rural Development, the Secretary of the Ministry of Forests, and the state Chief Secretary to address these serious concerns and ensure necessary action. They were instructed to submit their action-taken reports (ATRs) to the NHRC within eight weeks.

Despite these directions, the state government has submitted a series of communications admitting that proposals for conversion are pending at various levels. It is concerning that, despite specific laws and directives from the State Ministry, the Secretary of the Board of Revenue, Odisha, the Director of Land Records, Surveys and Consolidation, Odisha, and all District Collectors have failed to take prompt action to complete the conversion process within the stipulated time. Nearly nine years after guidelines were issued for the conversion of villages, the actual status of conversion remains unclear, as observed by the NHRC.

एनएचआरसी ने ओडिशा सरकार से कहा, 'शून्य' गांवों पर कार्रवाई करें

<https://jantaserishta.com/local/odisha/nhrc-asks-odisha-government-to-take-action-on-zero-villages-3779259>

19 Jan 2025 11:12 AM

Keonjhar क्योँझर: राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोग (एनएचआरसी) ने ओडिशा सरकार के राजस्व एवं आपदा प्रबंधन विभाग के प्रधान सचिव को 589 'शून्य' गांवों और 20 'वन' गांवों के रूपांतरण पर अद्यतन स्थिति रिपोर्ट प्रस्तुत करने का निर्देश दिया है। सर्वोच्च अधिकार निकाय ने परिवर्तित राजस्व गांवों का जिलावार विवरण और प्रदान की गई सुविधाओं और दावों की स्थिति को आठ सप्ताह के भीतर प्रस्तुत करने का भी अनुरोध किया है। यह आदेश अधिकार कार्यकर्ता और सुप्रीम कोर्ट के अधिवक्ता राधाकांत त्रिपाठी द्वारा दायर याचिका की निगरानी करते हुए पारित किया गया। याचिका में वन गांवों में रहने वाले ग्रामीणों (मुख्य रूप से अनुसूचित जनजातियों और अनुसूचित जातियों से) के लिए बुनियादी आवश्यकताओं और सुविधाओं की कमी को उजागर किया गया है, जिन्हें शून्य गांव भी कहा जाता है, जो आरक्षित वन क्षेत्रों में स्थित हैं। ये गांव राजस्व रिकॉर्ड में सूचीबद्ध नहीं हैं और परिणामस्वरूप, निर्वाचित प्रतिनिधियों या ग्राम सभाओं का अभाव है।

2011 की जनगणना के अनुसार, पूरे भारत में 4,526 वन गांव हैं, जिनमें से 458 ओडिशा में हैं। याचिका में यह भी उल्लेख किया गया है कि मई 2016 में, केंद्र सरकार ने निवासियों द्वारा सामना की जा रही कठिनाइयों के कारण वन गांवों को राजस्व गांवों में बदलने की आवश्यकता को स्वीकार किया। त्रिपाठी ने इन गांवों के निवासियों द्वारा सामना किए जाने वाले विभिन्न मुद्दों की ओर भी ध्यान दिलाया, जिनमें मानव तस्करी, मानव-पशु संघर्ष, संकटपूर्ण प्रवास, कुपोषण और स्वास्थ्य सेवा और शैक्षिक सुविधाओं की अनुपस्थिति शामिल है। उन्होंने तर्क दिया कि इन मुद्दों को प्राथमिकता के तौर पर संबोधित किया जाना चाहिए। ओडिशा के ढेंकनाल, अंगुल, गंजम और नयागढ़ जिलों के गांव विशेष रूप से प्रभावित हैं।

शून्य गांवों के निवासियों को सुरक्षित पेयजल, खेल के मैदान, सभी मौसमों के अनुकूल सड़कें, प्राथमिक स्वास्थ्य केंद्र (PHC), शिक्षा का अधिकार (RTE) अधिनियम के तहत शिक्षा, शौचालय और अन्य बुनियादी सुविधाओं जैसी आवश्यक सेवाओं तक पहुँच होनी चाहिए। त्रिपाठी ने भारत भर में 4,000 से अधिक वन गांवों में सामाजिक न्याय से वंचित होने और बुनियादी सुविधाओं से वंचित होने के व्यापक मुद्दे को भी उजागर किया। ओडिशा, जिसके 420 से ज़्यादा वन गाँव हैं, इस अभाव का एक प्रमुख उदाहरण है, क्योंकि इन गाँवों में लोग दयनीय जीवन जीते हैं। छत्तीसगढ़, मध्य प्रदेश, झारखंड, पश्चिम बंगाल, महाराष्ट्र, तेलंगाना, आंध्र प्रदेश, तमिलनाडु, केरल, कर्नाटक और पूर्वोत्तर राज्यों जैसे अन्य राज्यों के गाँव भी इसी तरह बुनियादी सुविधाओं, कल्याणकारी योजनाओं की कमी से जूझ रहे हैं और वामपंथी उग्रवाद (LWE) और अप्रभावी संवैधानिक सुरक्षा उपायों से और भी ज़्यादा प्रभावित हैं।

इस मुद्दे की गंभीरता को देखते हुए, NHRC ने पिछले साल 13 अगस्त को ग्रामीण विकास मंत्रालय के सचिव, वन मंत्रालय के सचिव और राज्य के मुख्य सचिव को इन गंभीर चिंताओं को दूर करने और आवश्यक

कार्रवाई सुनिश्चित करने का निर्देश दिया था। उन्हें आठ सप्ताह के भीतर NHRC को अपनी कार्रवाई रिपोर्ट (ATR) प्रस्तुत करने का निर्देश दिया गया था। इन निर्देशों के बावजूद, राज्य सरकार ने कई संचार प्रस्तुत किए हैं, जिसमें स्वीकार किया गया है कि रूपांतरण के प्रस्ताव विभिन्न स्तरों पर लंबित हैं। यह चिंताजनक है कि राज्य मंत्रालय के विशिष्ट कानूनों और निर्देशों के बावजूद, ओडिशा के राजस्व बोर्ड के सचिव, ओडिशा के भूमि अभिलेख, सर्वेक्षण और चकबंदी निदेशक और सभी जिला कलेक्टर निर्धारित समय के भीतर रूपांतरण प्रक्रिया को पूरा करने के लिए त्वरित कार्रवाई करने में विफल रहे हैं। गांवों के रूपांतरण के लिए दिशा-निर्देश जारी किए जाने के लगभग नौ साल बाद भी, एनएचआरसी द्वारा देखी गई वास्तविक स्थिति अस्पष्ट बनी हुई है।