

**Report of Dr. Ashok Sahu, Thematic Special Rapporteur (Child/Bonded/Migrant Labour), NHRC on visit to Arunachal Pradesh (Itanagar, East Kameng and Papum Pare) during 12-16 November, 2018.**

## **I. General**

1.1 North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) created in 1954, became a State, named as Arunachal Pradesh, on 20.02.1987. It has 25 Districts, 2 being newly created. The State had a population of 0.14 crore according to 2011 census, of which Scheduled Tribes constitute 69 per cent. Its economy is primarily agricultural, though it has a great hydroelectric potential. The system of shifting cultivation is prevalent. The percentage of people below poverty line was 34.67 in Arunachal Pradesh as against all India average of 21.92 in 2011-12.

## **II. At State Level**

### **(a) Child Labour**

#### **Position**

2.1 Since local population does not encourage child labour system, it is not a major problem in Arunachal Pradesh. As on 31.10. 2018, 724 raids have been conducted, but no child labour has been detected.

#### **Important Steps Taken**

2.2 Following important steps have been taken by the State Government:

- Institutional arrangements like District Level Task Force and District Advisory Committee are in place.

- Awareness generation is emphasized.

## **(b) Bonded Labour**

### **Position**

2.3 Prevalence and eradication of bonded labour system (known as Sullung) in Arunachal Pradesh is a sensitive issue. Viewed from a socio-economic perspective, Sullungs (essentially landless) worked as bonded labour to powerful and landed communities like Nishi. They have been identified, released and rehabilitated through Government efforts and categorized as Puroik Community with Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.

2.4 The existence of bonded labour was first reported by the Deputy Commissioner, East Kameng District in 1997. Subsequently 3542 bonded labour (about 700 families) were identified, out of whom 2992 were later released and rehabilitated and the rest remain untraced, possibly due to migration. A Survey was conducted in 2003-04 in four Districts, namely, Papum Pare, Lower Subansiri, Upper Subansiri and KurungKumey, but existence of any bonded labour was not reported. The State Government, accordingly, submits 'nil' report to NHRC. However, of late, an organization called "All Puroik Welfare Society District units of KurungKamey and KraDaadi Districts" had reportedly claimed that 70 % of Puroik Community were still engaged as bonded labour in these Districts. The Deputy Commissioners of Kameng East,

KurungKamey, KraDaadi and Papum Pare have been asked to authenticate the claim.

2.5 According to the Socio-Economic Caste Census, 2011, conducted by the Ministry of Rural Development, the number of rehabilitated bonded labour households in Arunachal Pradesh was 1875 (180 in East Kameng and 126 in Papum Pare).

### **Important Steps Taken**

2.6 Nevertheless, following important steps have been taken by the State Government for social and economic upliftment of Puroikcommunity :

- A High Powered Committee (HPC), constituted for the purpose, has given 8-point recommendations like (i) release of Sullungs, (ii) land for their settlement, (iii) housing facilities, (iv) employment opportunities, (v) educational facilities, (vi) political participation, (vii) other assistance/benefits, (viii) constitution of Bonded Labour Monitoring Cell at State and District level. As per the recommendation one Sullung graduate was appointed to the post of Extra Assistant Commissioner (EAC) without observing any recruitment process.
- Reservation of a Zilla Parishad seat is being examined by the Panchayat Raj Department. But under existing ST reservation, Puroik community

members have been elected as Anchal Samiti and Gram panchayat members in the three Districts of East Kameng, Kurungkamey and KraDaadi.

- The Land Development Department shall put up a proposal under 'Scheme for Economically Backward People' for rehabilitation of Puroiks.
- Special coaching classes for students of the community is to be considered by the Department of Education.
- A Sullung Sub-Plan called 'Sullung Special Area Development Plan', with 1.5 % of the total budget earmarked shall be implemented in the Districts of KurungKamey, KraDaadi, Papum Pare and East Kameng.
- The ground reality on the basis of the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC-2011) is being assessed.
- As per the Government decision to allow only local contractors to participate in the contract work tenders, Puroikcommunity members are being encouraged to partipate.
- District/Sub-Divisional Level Vigilance Committees have been constituted.
- Autonomous Puroik Welfare Board has been constituted.

- Banks have been directed to give priority to Puroik community members in opening new bank accounts under JanDhan Yojana and provide interest free loans.
- 100% Aadhar enrolment is being ensured.
- Puroiks have been included in the Antodaya category and ration cards issued.
- The community is helped in formation of Self Help Groups.
- Administrative Officers are asked to furnish names of unemployed Puroik youth for placement in various Departments.
- Job cards are issued to Puroiks under MGNREGA.
- Benefits are given under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY).
- Awareness campaigns have been launched and grievances heard, discussed and placed before Government for further action.

### **(c) Migrant Labour**

#### **Position**

2.7 Arunachal Pradesh is mostly a Host State. The inflow is from Assam and other States to work as casual labour (including barbers) and in construction sector.

#### **Important Steps Taken**

2.8 Following important steps have been taken by the State Government:

- Under Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Condition of Service) Act, 1979, total number of labour licence issued and workers covered are 132 and 3688 respectively.
- Efforts are also being made to register eligible workers as building and construction workers so that the benefits flowing from the Building and Other Construction Workers Cess Fund would accrue to them.

### **Highlights of Discussion**

2.9 The State level meeting at Itanagar was attended by Labour Commissioner and officials of Labour and Employment Department. During interaction it was pointed out that some child labour, working mostly as domestic help and identified by NGO were rescued and rehabilitated, for which the State Government allocated Rs.24 lakh. Childline, CWC and District Level Task Force are functioning. In respect of bonded labour the position indicated at para 2.3 to 2.6 were briefly discussed. It was felt that conducting fresh Surveys on Child and Bonded Labour would be desirable. Migrant workers are visible mostly in the construction sector. About 40,000 workers have been registered as building and other construction workers to avail benefits under the Cess Fund. Sometimes, boots, tool kits, blankets etc. have been distributed. It was, however, pointed out that the State Labour and Employment Department is hugely understaffed, its officials having been posted in 9

Districts only. Its functions are being performed by officials of other Departments, which amounts to unwarranted compromise. It was discussed that the feasibility of accessing Internal Line Permit (ILP) data by Labour and Employment Department to identify Inter-State migrant workers needs to be examined.

### **Field Visit**

2.10 A visit was made to Oju Welfare Association, Naharlagun (a NGO) which is an integrated complex having Swadhar Greh (a short stay Home for women in difficult circumstances sponsored by the Ministry of Women and Child Development), Sishu Greh (Special Adoption Agency catering to 0-6 age group registered with CARA), Children Home catering to 7-18 age group, along with Family Counselling Centre, Women Helpline, Legal Aid Clinic and Vocational Units offering weaving, cutting and tailoring and beautician courses. In Children Home presently there are 52 inmates against capacity of 50, out of whom 17 are rescued child labour earlier engaged in household activities, being physically harassed. The management, staff members and inmates were interacted with. Inadequate funding and late release of funds were stated as constraints.

### **III. At District 1 (East Kameng) Level: Child/Bonded/Migrant Labour**

#### **Highlights of the Discussion**

3.1 The meeting with East Kameng District level officials at Seppa was attended by the Deputy Commissioner and representatives of Administration, Police, Labour and other Welfare Departments. At the outset the purpose of the meeting was explained. During interaction the position relating to bonded labour as mentioned above was reiterated. The problem relating to child labour, bonded labour and trafficking is apparently not there. However, need was felt for conducting fresh Surveys relating to child and bonded labour.

#### **Field Visit**

3.2 A visit was made to Arunodaya Model village, New Seppa where 30 families of Puroik community have been settled in 2000. Some of the settled family members were interacted with. Their main grievance pertained to effective implementation of reservation policy in Government, proper representation in Welfare Board and Autonomous Council and rehabilitation of left out Puroik community members.

#### **IV. At District 2 (Papum Pare) Level: Child/Bonded/Migrant Labour**

##### **Highlights of the Discussion**

4.1 The meeting with Papum Pare District level officials at Yupiawas attended by the Deputy Commissioner, Superintendent of Police and officials representing Labour and other welfare Departments. The position in this



District is broadly same as in East Kameng District except that Yupia being close to Itanagar has to deal with migrant labour relatively more.

### **Field Visit**

4.2 A visit was made to Upia Outdoor Stadium under construction where the management and the Inter-State migrant workers were interacted with. The workers appeared contented but were not registered as building and other construction workers to avail benefits under Cess Fund, which the management was asked to facilitate by cooperating with Labour & Employment Department.

### **V. Any Other Important Observation**

5.1 There is no major trafficking problem though constant vigilance is necessary.

### **VI. Recommendations**

(i) The State Government may consider undertaking fresh child and bonded labour surveys.

(ii) The problem of bonded labour in the State needs to be tackled by effectively monitoring the points mentioned at para 2.6.

(iii) It may be examined if the Inner Line Permit (ILP) system can be used to identify inter-State migrant labour.

(iv) The State Government may consider posting Labour Department officials in each District.

-----