

डा. रामेश्वर उराँव

अध्यक्ष

(भूतपूर्व सांसद--लोकसभा)

(पूर्व जनजातीय कार्य राज्यमन्त्री)

Dr. RAMESHWAR ORAON

Chairman

(Ex Member Parliament-LS)

(Former Minister of State for Tribal Affairs)

11/6/Tamil Nadu/2008/RU.IV



भारत सरकार

राष्ट्रीय अनुसूचित जनजाति आयोग

छठी मंजिल, लोकनायक भवन,

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Government of India

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Respected Madam,

I am writing this to apprise you of the assessment of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) with regard to implementation of various development schemes and safeguards concerning the Scheduled Tribes in the State of Tamil Nadu.

2. As you are aware, the NCST set up under Article 338-A of the Constitution is vested with duties, inter-alia, to investigate and monitor all matters relating to the safeguards provided to the Scheduled Tribes under the Constitution or any other law or order of the Govt. and to monitor and evaluate the working of such safeguards. Accordingly, the Commission visited the State of Tamil Nadu from 28th June to 7th July, 2012 to review and assess the development programmes being run by the State Govt. and implementation of various safeguards for the welfare of the STs. The programme included visit to tribal areas in Nilgiris Distt, etc. Subsequently, the Commission had discussion with the Chief Secretary-incharge and other senior officials of the State Govt.

3. At the outset, the Commission records its appreciation for the efforts by the officials of the State Govt., particularly, Shri A.S. Jeeva Rethinam, Secretary, Adi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare, Thiru K.V. Giridhar, Director Tribal Welfare, and his team, which helped the Commission in effectively monitoring safeguards and development programmes/schemes for the STs in the State.

4. The record of the proceedings of the meetings held during the visit is being issued separately. Meanwhile, the observations/points in critical areas emerged during the visit, which require urgent attention of the State Govt. are as under.

5. Briefly, the Commission has noted that there was wide gap in male and female literacy, and poor quality of education among STs and shortage of teachers and vocational opportunities, skill development training, inadequacy of the infrastructure in the residential schools for tribal children need attention on priority. The Commission has also noted that the seats reserved for STs in Engineering colleges are not getting filled. During the meeting held with the State Govt. officials on 6th July, 2012, the Commission had also projected the need to establish hostels exclusively for ST boys and girls separately in the Distt. Nilgiris and the State Capital (Chennai). The Commission notes with great appreciation that the State Govt. was very responsive to the requirement and also conveyed acceptance of the proposal later.

6. The Commission has noted that the STs constitutes 1% of the total population in the State but 25% of the population below the poverty line (BPL) in the State belongs to STs. Therefore, special measures are required to be taken for their socio-economic development. In this connection, the Commission would like the State Govt. to adopt need-based approach on funds allocation to Tribal Areas. The State Govt. should also ensure timely projection of demand regarding allocation of funds against SCA and its fuller utilization.

7. The Commission would also like to suggest setting up of a separate Tribal Welfare Deptt. to have special focus on STs. During the visit of the Commission, the demand for setting up of a SC and ST commission in the State to address issues relating to STs has also been projected, which may be examined by the State Govt.

8. The Commission noted with serious concern among tribals and other quarters about the reported alienation of land belonging to STs. The State Govt. may look into such matter and ensure timely restoration of land wherever required. In this connection, I would like to mention that the Commission has suggested setting up of Land Banks comprising lands resumed by the Govt. in cases of mortgage default; and such lands may be leased to the previous ST owners with the opportunity/ right to re-purchase the same at any subsequent

stage of time, beside rights to additional potential compensation due to change in land use pattern in future. I would urge that the State Govt. should address the problem relating to alienation of land of STs on an urgent basis, *inter-alia*, taking into consideration the views of the Commission and also adequacy of the existing laws pertaining to land alienation.

9. The Commission further noted that progress with regard to implementation of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 could also not be achieved as a result of stay order granted by the Court. The Commission would suggest the State Govt. to have the stay order vacated as early as possible so that the titles to the entitled category could be issued at the earliest.

10. The Commission also discussed the issue pertaining to false caste certificate and the abnormal delay being taken by the Scrutiny Committee in settlement of such cases. The Commission would like the State Govt. to have orders of the Scrutiny Committee expedited in all pending cases. It should also be ensured that there is no delay in issue of ST certificates to genuine candidates and proper procedures and mechanisms are evolved so that the genuine ST persons don't develop a feeling of being harassed as a result of procedural requirements.

11. The Commission has noted that the State Govt. has not filled backlog vacancies in respect of STs for a long time. The State Govt informed the Commission that necessary corrective measures through an administrative order have been issued to enable the Deptts. to fill up the vacant posts. In view of this, the backlog vacancies may please be got filled up in a time-bound manner.

12. Considering the need for development of our tribal areas and improvement in the economic and social condition of our tribal populations to achieve our goal of inclusive growth, I would request you to kindly look into the deficient areas assessed by the Commission and formulate a coherent strategy

to address these concerns and appraise us regarding action taken in the matter urgently. I would also like to discuss these issues with you in detail during your ensuing visit to Delhi for which convenient date/time may please be got communicated.

With high regards,

Rameshwar Oraon
(Dr. Rameshwar Oraon)

Selvi J. Jayalalithaa,
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Govt. of Tamil Nadu,
Chennai