

BIHAR HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

9, Bailey Road, Patna

File No. BHRC/Comp-3124/2014

(Suo Motu Cognizance)

Subject: Victims of Witchcraft & WITCH HUNT

News related to **inhuman treatment meted out to victims of Witchcraft** are occasionally appearing in News papers / Electronic Media from various parts of Bihar. It is also true that initial administrative responses including police actions, as they appear in the media, are generally satisfactory but the actions so far have, in totality, impacted little to stop such incidents/ practices.

2. BHRC, therefore, takes Suo motu cognizance of the issue and would like to contribute effectively in bringing down resultant Human Rights Violations. BHRC would like to involve various agencies of the government so that an effective & holistic response is generated.

3. According to information out of 119 such murders recorded in the country in the year 2012, Odisha contributed-- 32, Jharkhand—26, Andhra Pradesh—24, Bihar—13 Bihar is the first State in the country to enact a law on this subject in 1999 known as Prevention of Witchcraft (Dyaeen) Practices Act, 1999 followed by the State of Jharkhand(2001), Chhattisgrah (2005) and Rajasthan (2006).

4. As a first step BHRC would like the DGP, Bihar to get a study conducted on the following points:-

(a) Which districts/ areas of the state are more prone to such incidents?

(b) Status of criminal cases instituted in the last 10 years. Percentage of Charge-Sheets and result of trial (convictions, if any)

(c) Whether WITCH HUNTERS object is to rob the women of her property or punish her for turning down sexual advances or settling grouse arising out of village politics?

(d) Other possible reasons behind such incidents.

(e) Whether the existing law is effective enough or it needs to be more stringent?

(f) The agencies (State & non –State) which police would like to associate in effectively denting the related issues.

5. BHRC would also like to know from the **Principal Secretary, Social Welfare department**, Govt. of Bihar whether there are any provisions for rehabilitation, or any form of compensation to women who are victim of such violence/ treatment. Often victims of such violence continue to live ostracized from their villages and have no means for sustenance.

6. **Commission would be expecting reports from the Director General of Police, Bihar & the Principal Secretary , Social Welfare Deptt., Govt. of Bihar by 30th November, 2014.**

7. Let a Copy of the order be sent to the **Director General of Police, Bihar & Principal Secretary , Social Welfare Deptt., Govt. of Bihar** for necessary action.

8. The matter be listed next on 05th December,2014.

Date: 20.08.2015

SP/ DS.

Sd/...
(Neelmani)
Member