



IN THE HIGH COURT OF ORISSA AT CUTTACK

W.P.(C) Nos. 11487 of 2020
along with W.P.(C) Nos.11489 & 11488 of 2020

In W.P.(C) No.11487 of 2020

*Anugul Grama Rakhi Sangha,
Barapadara*

.....

Petitioner

Mr. K.A. Guru, Adv.

-versus-

State of Odisha & Ors.

.....

Opposite Parties

Mr. G.R. Mohapatra, ASC

In W.P.(C) No. 11489 of 2020

*Baragarh District Grama Rakhi
Sangha, Kumelsingha*

.....

Petitioner

Mr. K.A. Guru, Adv.

-versus-

State of Odisha & Ors.

.....

Opposite Parties

Mr. G.R. Mohapatra, ASC

In W.P.(C) No. 11488 of 2020

*Keonjhar District Grama Rakhi
Sangha, Siribahal*

.....

Petitioner

Mr. K.A. Guru, Adv.

-versus-

State of Odisha & Ors.

.....

Opposite Parties

Mr. G.R. Mohapatra, ASC



**CORAM:
DR. JUSTICE S.K. PANIGRAHI**

**ORDER
16.07.2024**

Order No.

- 3.
1. These matters are taken up through hybrid arrangement.
 2. Heard Learned Counsels for the parties.
 3. The present Writ Petition has been filed by the Petitioner with the following prayer:

“It is therefore prayed that this Hon’ble Court would be graciously pleased to:-

ISSUE RULE NISI calling upon the Opp. Parties to show cause as to why an appropriate Writ in the nature of certiorari/mandamus and/or any other appropriate Writ/Writs or order/orders or direction to revise the pay condition of the Gram Rakhi and to give other service benefit at par with the State Govt. Employee.

If the Opposite Parties fails to show cause or show inadequate or false cause, make the aforesaid rule nisi absolute.”

4. Learned Counsel for the Petitioner submits that there are about 18445 Grama Rakhis serving in the State and getting monthly salary of Rs.800/- only which is a very small amount to maintain their family in the economic system prevailing in this country. The Grama Rakhis of the State are putting in hard labour and discharge the following functions apart from other directions of the authorities:



- a) *To give immediate information to the officer-in-charge of the police station within whose local limits, the village, of which he is the Grama Rakshi is situated of every unnatural suspicious or sudden death which may occur and of every offence specified in the Schedule which is committed in such village;*
- b) *To keep the police informed of all disputes, which are likely to lead to a riot or serious affray;*
- c) *To the best of his ability, to prevent and interpose for the purpose of preventing the commission of any offence specified in the schedule;*
- d) *To assist private persons in making such arrests as they may lawfully make and to report such arrests without delay to the officer-in-charge of the aforesaid police-station;*
- e) *To observe and from time to time, in report to the officer-in-charge of the aforesaid police-station the movement of all bad characters and also of the arrival of any suspicious characters within his jurisdiction;*
- f) *To report the births and deaths, which have occurred within his jurisdiction to the officer-in-charge of the aforesaid police-station at an interval of fifteen days;*
- g) *To supply any local information which the Magistrate of the district, Sub-divisional Officer or any Police Officer may require;*
- h) *To assist the Grama Panchayat and the Revenue Officers within whose local limits he is appointed, in making collections of taxes levied by the Grama Panchayat and of dues payable to Government and to assist the Grama Panchayat in serving notices issued by it and calling persons to attend at all meetings convened by it;*
- i) *To assist the police officers in investigation of offence and in identification of witnesses, persons summoned by a court, and persons against whom warrants-of-arrest have been issued by a Court;*
- j) *To report immediately to the officer-in-charge of the aforesaid police-station any damage to any protected monument or public property;*
- k) *To regulate and control the traffic in the streets, and to prevent obstructions therein;*



l) To take care of Government land, orchards, trees and other Government property entrusted to him.

m) Such other duties imposed on the Grama Rakhis.

5. Learned counsel for the Petitioner submits that the Grama Rakhis are the policemen without uniform who work in rural areas of the State. They minimize the gap between policemen and citizens. Apart from these duties, the Grama Rakhis are also discharging important functions like identifying the criminals in their area and helping the police in execution of warrant and arrest. They collect all the important crime/secret reports and advance this information to the Police Station by producing their notebook regularly. They also help in conducting the postmortem and perform duties as per the direction of the respective Police Station. The Grama Rakhis take official dak to different Government Offices such as Blocks, Tahasils and Panchayats. They guard the place of accident, vehicles, goods etc. when an accident takes place. They also watch over the dead bodies and help in the postmortem work. In view of the multifarious work undertaken by the Grama Rakhis, the allowances granted to them are not commensurate with the duties they perform.

6. Learned Counsel for the Petitioner further contends that though the Grama Rakhis perform their official duties like



any other Government Employees working on a similar footing, but their allowances do not match to the hard work they put in. He further submits that the Grama Rakhis are the police with the community especially in rural areas. It is contended that the I.G. of Police (Modernisation) has given a recommendation to the Principal Secretary to Government of Odisha, Home Department on 18.04.2015 for enhancing the allowances of the Grama Rakhis from Rs.1250/- to Rs.6,600/- per month, which is at par with the Home Guards, in order to motivate them to be effective in collecting intelligence and performing community and rural policing. He further submits that the recommendation of the I.G. of Police (Modernisation) dated 18.04.2015 has been acted upon in 2018 by enhancing a meagre sum of Rs.300/-. The Grama Rakhis are one of the most important units of the community police system at the village level and they come across many hazardous situations while discharging their duties. Hence, their allowances should be enhanced at par with the Home Guards.

7. The role of Grama Rakhis proactive rather than reactive unlike the police. In fact, increased bureaucratization of police forces gave rise to the emergence of community policing like the Grama Rakhis which emphasises more on crime



prevention than crime combating. They do commendable work in helping out police in the rural areas in crime control.

8. In such view of the matter, this Court realizes the importance of the Writ Petition filed by the Petitioners and is also deeply concerned about the abysmally low allowances paid to the Grama Rakhis, who are an integral part of the community policing system in the State. However, this Court deems it appropriate to refrain from passing any order fixing the allowances of the Grama Rakhis by way of mandamus. Hence, the Petitioners are directed to approach the concerned department to ventilate their grievances and the said department shall consider a decent allowance structure for the Grama Rakhis considering their diverse and multitasking job profile. The concerned department shall decide the aforesaid allowances in commensurate with their diverse job profile within a period of three months from the date of presentation of the order.

9. Accordingly, the Writ Petitions are disposed of.

(Dr. S.K. Panigrahi)
Judge