



HIGH COURT OF CHHATTISGARH AT BILASPUR

WPIL No. 90 of 2025

In The Matter Of Suo Moto Public Interest Litigation Of The Pathetic Condition Of Gram Panchayat Muktidham At Rahngi Lacking In Basic Amenities And Also There Is A Solid And Wet Waste Management Shed Adjacent To Funeral Place Of Muktidham, Which Is Highly Inappropriate.

... Petitioner(s)

versus

- 1 - State of Chhattisgarh Through Chief Secretary, Mahanadi Bhawan Atal Nagar, Nawa Raipur, Chhattisgarh**
- 2 - Secretary Public Works Department, Mahanadi Bhawan, Atal Nagar Nawa Raipur, Chhattisgarh.**
- 3 - Secretary Department Of Energy, C.S.P.D.C.L. Mahanadi Bhawan, Atal Nagar Nawa Raipur, Chhattisgarh.**
- 4 - Collector Bilaspur, District- Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh.**
- 5 - Sub Divisional Officer Bilha, District- Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh.**
- 6 - Chief Executive Officer Janpad Panchayat Bilha, District- Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh.**
- 7 - Sarpanch Gram Panchayat Rahngi Tahsil Bilha, District- Bilaspur Chhattisgarh.**

... Respondent(s)

Order Sheet

29/09/2025	<p>This is an office reference.</p> <p>Yesterday, Hon'ble the Chief Justice of this High Court had gone to attend a funeral at Muktidham (funeral place) situated at Rahangi Gram Panchayat, wherein the Muktidham was found to be in a pathetic condition. Hence, the said situation has constrained to take cognizance of the matter and registration of this <i>suo moto</i> public interest litigation.</p> <p>During the visit, it was found that the aforesaid Muktidham does not have the bare minimal facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firstly, there is no boundary wall or fencing so that it can be identified that what is the area or upto which place the funeral/cremation or burial can be done. • There is no approach road and the said path is full of ditches and in this rainy season, it was filled with water making the people to reach the funeral ground a tiresome job. • The area is full of bushes and shrubs which makes the place dangerous as it gives a safe haven for the snakes and other poisonous insects. Further, it was observed that there was complete lack of cleaning

as the articles used before and after cremation, discarded clothing, polythene bags, liquor bottles, and other unwanted articles were lying here and there without there being a single garbage bin.

- There is no lighting facility, no shed for the visitors/ mourners, no facility for sitting and the people are constrained to stand under the open sky in all weather conditions for long hours.
- Absence of any authorised person / care taker who can be contacted for any sort of help / services. No signboard indicating at least mobile numbers of the authorised personnel.
- Absence of toilet(s).
- Existence of a solid and wet waste management shed in the said Muktidham which is highly inappropriate.

Heard Mr. Shashank Thakur, learned Deputy Advocate General for the State/respondents No. 1, 2, 4 and 5 as well as Mr. Mayank Chandrakar, learned counsel for the respondent No. 3/CSPDCL.

Fundamental rights under Article 21 of the Constitution of India includes the right to a dignified death and cremation. When

a person leaves for heavenly abode, his body deserves a respectable seeoff. A dead body is not an object which can be disposed in an inhuman manner. Sentiments are attached with the person who had expired and hence, any family members/relatives etc. would definitely like to bid an adieu in a respectful manner and in a pacifying ambiance.

It is the constitutional obligation of the State to ensure decent and sanitary conditions in such public facilities, and the failure to do so is an abdication of its duty under the Constitution, the Municipal Acts, and various environmental and public health laws.

It has been brought to the notice that such situation exists almost in the entire State, especially when the said Muktidham falls under a Gram Panchayat or rural areas and the cremation ground (Muktidham) is the place which is given the least priority. The State Administration/District Administration/ Local Administration is required to take the following measures:

1. Clean-up Operation:

- The Municipal Corporation/Local Body shall immediately undertake a comprehensive cleaning and sanitation drive at the funeral ground.
- Removal of garbage, weeds, stagnant water, and other waste materials.

2. Basic Infrastructure Repairs:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any broken platforms, pathways, sheds, or fencing/walls shall be repaired or reconstructed on a priority basis. <p>3. Water & Electricity Supply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Functional water taps and lighting arrangements must be restored or installed without delay. <p>4. Shelter and Seating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A covered shelter with seating must be constructed/provided for the use of the deceased's family and relatives during last rites. <p>5. Toilets and Waste Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least two clean and functional toilets (with gender segregation) must be made available. Waste disposal bins must be placed and cleared daily. <p>6. Cremation Infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the availability of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate firewood or LPG supply. Electric or gas crematorium, if already installed, to be fully functional and staffed. A designated area for immersion/ disposal of ashes, in compliance with pollution control norms. <p>7. Appointment of Staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least two dedicated sanitation workers and one caretaker to be deployed at the site. A Nodal Officer be appointed to monitor the
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condition of all cremation grounds in the District.

8. Record Maintenance:

- A register (digital or manual) to be maintained for all cremations/burials.
- A helpline number and grievance redressal mechanism to be displayed at the site.

9. Regular Monitoring:

- The State may constitute a Committee headed by the District Magistrate and including Municipal Officials, Health Officers, and local NGOs, to inspect cremation grounds at regular intervals.

10. Budget Allocation:

- The State Government shall ensure allocation of adequate funds for maintenance and upgradation of all cremation/funeral grounds in urban and rural areas.

11. Standard Guidelines:

- The State may frame minimum standard guidelines/road map for the upgradation and betterment of the funeral grounds.

Mr. Shashank Thakur, learned Deputy Advocate General appearing for the State/respondents No. 1, 2, 4 and 5 submits that some of the authorities of the District Administration/Janpad Panchayat would be visiting the said Muktidham today itself. He further submits that the Secretary, Panchayat and Social Welfare Department, Government of Chhattisgarh, would also have a say

in this issue and as such, it may also be impleaded as party-respondent.

We direct the Registry to implead the Secretary, Government of Chhattisgarh, Panchayat and Social Welfare Department, as party respondent No. 8 in this petition today itself.

We also direct the Chief Secretary, Government of Chhattisgarh, the Secretary, Panchayat and Social Welfare Department, Government of Chhattisgarh as well as the District Magistrate/Collector, Bilaspur to file their respective personal affidavits on the issue and to inform this Court with regard to the road-map or vision of the State with regard to the betterment of the cremation grounds.

Let the matter be listed again on **13th October, 2025**.

The Registrar (Judicial) as well as the learned State counsel are directed to communicate this order to all the authorities/respondents concerned, forthwith, for information and necessary compliance.

Sd/-
(Bibhu Datta Guru)
JUDGE

Sd/-
(Ramesh Sinha)
CHIEF JUSTICE