India fails in

implementation of rights'

By YOJNA GUSAI

New Delhi, May 11: India has
failed to impress United Nations
Committee on Economic, Social
and Cultural Rights (CESCR),
with its state report on issues
like human rights, women
issues, right to work, food,
housing, health, education and
cultural rights. The CESCR
examines measures taken by
157 countries to comply with
standards of the International
Covenant on Economic, Social
and Cultural Rights.
In the recently concluded ses-
sion with the 13-member Indian

delegation in Geneva, the
CESCR also found that the
report reflects "a lack of politi-
cal will to actively consult and
engage with civil society and to
present the true reality of human
rights in India". Though India
faired well for its initiatives and
efforts taken in the field of con-
stitutional provisions, laws poli-
cies, plans and schemes, the
committee expressed its concern
over the implementation of
these initiatives.

Apart from the state report,
"shadow reports" were also sub-
mitted by more than 300 civil
society groups from the country

that were used to supplement as
well as counter the information
provided by the government on
various issues. In its question-
ing, the committee also consid-
ered information provided in the
shadow reports on various
issues, submitted by the civil
society groups from the country.
Some of the issues that were
put up by these civil rights
groups in their reports and
which were missing from the
state report were agrarian crisis
leading to farmer suicides,
declining farm production, ris-
ing food prices, threat to food
security, forced land acquisition,

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state of Muslims in post-Godhra
Gujarat and human rights viola-
tion of tribal people in the coun-
try.
The CESCR evaluates reports
submitted by participating coun-
tries and then it gives its obser-
vations and recommendations
on how these countries can
improve its efforts on promoting
and protecting the rights of peo-
ple.
"Though the government tried
hard to impress the UN commit-
tee with its report, the verdict

was that India has not performed
well with issues like human
rights, uprooting people from
their land in the name of urbani-
sation, denial of basic facilities
to people living with
HIV/AIDS, disabled people,
rights to dalits and Muslims,"
said an official of a civil rights
group which participated in the
meeting.
Denial of basic services such
as water and electricity to
majority of population and con-
tinued discrimination against
religious and sexuality minori-
ties were also taken into consid-
eration by independent experts

of this UN's committee.
Meanwhile, civil society
groups are waiting for the com-
mittee's recommendations
which will come out in the form
of "concluding observations,"
which the civil society groups
think will force the government
to rethink on its "model of
development".
"There might be lot of good
things undertaken by the gov-
ernment but they are only on
papers. Ground reality is so dif-
ferent. Human rights violations
are taking place in India even
after enactment of so many laws
and government's initiatives,"

said the official. "We are hoping
that once these observations are
out, Indian government will
rethink its model of develop-
ment and search for urgently
required solutions in order to
preserve the rule of law, democ-
racy, and human rights and dig-
nity of the Indian people,"
added the official.

The CESCR suggested that
India has an immediate obliga-
tion to realise certain rights,
such as food, housing, health
facilities, education and protec-
tion of women's rights, in which
the country still needs to per-
form better.

<title>'India fails in implementation of rights'</title>
<author>Yojna Gusai</author>
<keywords>LR1 Human Rights</keywords>
<publication>The Asian Age</publication>
<pubDate>12/05/2008</pubDate>
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<entrydt>28/05/2008</entrydt>
<sd>VD</sd>