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‘India fails in implementation of rights’

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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 session with the 13-member Indian

delegation in Geneva, the CESCR also found that the report reflects “a lack of political will to actively consult and engage with civil society and to present the true reality of human rights in India”. Though India fared well for its initiatives and efforts taken in the field of constitutional provisions, laws policies, plans and schemes, the committee expressed its concern over the implementation of these initiatives.

Apart from the state report, “shadow reports” were also submitted 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 questioning, the committee also considered 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, rising food prices, threat to food security, forced land acquisition,

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state of Muslims in post-Godhra Gujarat and human rights violation of tribal people in the country.

The CESCR evaluates reports submitted by participating countries and then it gives its observations and recommendations on how these countries can improve its efforts on promoting and protecting the rights of people.

“Though the government tried hard to impress the UN committee 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 urbanisation, 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 continued discrimination against religious and sexuality minorities were also taken into consideration by independent experts

of this UN’s committee.

Meanwhile, civil society groups are waiting for the committee’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 government but they are only on papers. Ground reality is so different. 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 development and search for urgently required solutions in order to preserve the rule of law, democracy, and human rights and dignity of the Indian people,” added the official.

The CESCR suggested that India has an immediate obligation to realise certain rights, such as food, housing, health facilities, education and protection of women’s rights, in which the country still needs to perform better.