

Tribal

The Fight Against Discrimination by the First Irular Woman Panchayat President in a Tamil Nadu Village

Sangeetha expresses deep despair over her treatment as Panchayat president, feeling marginalized and degraded by her colleagues. Despite raising her concerns with higher authorities, she is repeatedly advised to avoid conflict due to the political connections of those mistreating her.



Following the Dalit panchayat president's demonstration, police registered a case against her under the BNS Act, citing a recent directive that mandates permission for protests outside Collectorate campus.

Geetha Sunil Pillai 

Published on: 04 Oct 2024, 9:53 am



Follow Us



Villupuram/Tamil Nadu- E. Sangeetha, the first Irular woman Panchayat president of Anangur village in Gingee taluk, Villupuram district, has been booked under multiple sections of the BNS Act following her protest at the District Collectorate on Wednesday.

She was demanding action against alleged caste-based discrimination and harassment by her deputy, Chitra Gunasekaran, and her husband, Gunasekaran, a local DMK branch secretary.

Sangeetha has filed formal complaints to the District Collector in July and August, accusing Chitra and her husband of obstructing her

official duties since she assumed office three years ago. Despite her efforts, no action has been taken against the couple. In her complaints, Sangeetha alleges that they have denied her access to essential digital tools necessary for her role, used her tribal identity to demean her in public, and threatened her with violence. Chitra has reportedly stated that Sangeetha does not deserve her position due to her caste.

Although the District Collector ordered an inquiry in August and instructed Chitra to grant Sangeetha access to the digital key, no direct communication or inspection has occurred since. Sangeetha continues to face verbal abuse and threats, prompting her to protest. Following her demonstration, police registered a case against her under the BNS Act, citing a recent directive that mandates permission for protests outside Collectorate campuses.

Superintendent of Police Deepak Siwach commented on the situation, stating, “We are looking into the issue and will verify the facts.”

@JuniorVikatan



@JuniorVikatan · Follow

விழுப்புரம்: 'என்னை சேர்ல கூட உட்கார விடல...' - வருந்தும்
பட்டியலின ஊராட்சி மன்றத் தலைவர்
bit.ly/3ZLqevK

#Government | #Villupuram | #TNPolitics

vikatan.com

விழுப்புரம்: 'என்னை சேர்ல கூட உட்கார விடல...' - வருந்தும் பட்டியலின
ஊராட்சி மன்றத் தலைவர்

5:05 AM · Oct 4, 2024



364



Reply



Copy link

[Read 30 replies](#)

In an emotional conversation, with a local media 'Junior Vikatan' Sangeetha shared, "I belong to the Irular tribe, a tribal community. The vice president never allows me to perform my duties. His husband interferes in the administration and makes all the decisions. His brother also meddles in this. It's been three years since I won the election. The first time I attended a village council meeting after my victory, they didn't even let me sit on a chair. They made me sit on the floor. Whatever the work is, they do it themselves, and they tell me that everything must be done as they say. During the recent Independence Day celebration, I was told that only Panchayat Presidents are supposed to hoist the flag, and if there were any issues, I should inform the police. I told them I had no problems, but when I went to hoist the flag, the vice president came over and insisted that we both do it together. They wouldn't even let me hoist

the flag alone.

Whenever I raise these issues with higher authorities, they just tell me not to stir up conflict since the other side has connections with many politicians. They always suggest that I make peace. For the past three years, I have been treated this way. There is also a ward member who speaks to me in a degrading manner. They say things like, 'You're an illiterate leader; you don't deserve to sit in this chair,' and they insult me using caste names. They even say, 'We are the ones who voted you in, you owe it to us.'

But I always respond that it was the people who elected me. These arguments happen even in the workplace. They mockingly say, 'Even though you are the leader, you cannot do anything, only we can do everything.' Even when I file complaints about this, all the higher authorities side with them. I've submitted petitions to the Department of Rural Development, the District Collector, and the Chief Minister. But no action has been taken. That's why I boycotted the village council meetings and participated in a protest. I've lodged complaints against them, and now I am being pressured by higher authorities to withdraw my complaint. But I haven't, and I won't. I will continue to fight," Sangeetha concluded.

This incident has sparked outrage among various social and political groups, who argue that Sangeetha's treatment reflects a broader issue of caste discrimination and injustice faced by Dalit leaders in Tamil Nadu. Edappadi Palaniswami, General Secretary of the AIADMK, criticized the ruling DMK party for failing to address these injustices while professing to uphold social justice.

Also Read-



The Tamil Nadu Village that Denies Dalits Access to Common Road for Funeral Processions