

# Ensure basic rights of tribals: NCST to Odisha government

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Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik (Photo | Special Arrangement)

By [Express News Service](#)

**BHUBANESWAR:** The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) has asked the Odisha government to ensure basic human rights and justice to tribals residing in more than 45 villages bordering West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh.

Taking cognisance of a petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer and rights activist Radhakanta Tripathy, the apex panel for tribal rights has issued notice to chief secretary Pradeep Kumar Jena seeking a detailed reply within 15 days.

Odisha continues to grapple with unresolved border disputes with four neighbouring states spanning eight out of its 30 districts. As many as 14 of the 30 districts share borders with Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.

The state has border dispute with neighbouring Andhra Pradesh over 42 villages, followed by West Bengal over 14 villages, Jharkhand 13 and Chhattisgarh five villages respectively. The government had admitted the boundaries of over 100 villages at the state's border could not be determined.

Alleging deprivation of basic human rights of tribals living in the border villages due to apathy, negligence and attitude of the bordering states, Tripathy had sought intervention of the commission for a permanent solution. The tribals continue to suffer with absence of bare necessities like potable drinking water, communication facilities, benefits of social welfare schemes, education and healthcare, the petition alleged.

The annual verification, specifically in the villages sharing boundary with neighbouring states, is an important component of revenue administration. The dispute arises as neither such assessment is made by the collectors of bordering districts nor is it properly monitored by the department concerned, it added.

“Odisha does not have proper records of the disputed villages at its border as demarcation is yet to be done. This is a classic case of failure of the state mechanism in acting over the issue,” the petitioner contended and urged the commission to get the matter investigated in a timely manner so that the sacrosanct right of every individual can be protected.

### **Disputed borders**

Odisha has disputes with Andhra Pradesh over 21 villages in Ganjam district, 16 in Gajapati and five in Rayagada

With West Bengal, over six villages in Balasore and eight in Mayurbhanj