

Will there be a new Emergency Medical Services Act in Maharashtra?

Moneylife Public Interest | MONEYLIFE DIGITAL TEAM | 16/10/2014 02:36 PM



A PIL filed by Dr Sarita Parikh and Apoorva Agwan, from Crisis Foundation has widened the scope of emergency medical services with the Bombay High Court asking Maharashtra government to look into the NGOs research and methods for reducing deaths due to snake bites

The Bombay High Court, while hearing a public interest litigation (PIL), has asked Maharashtra government to consider whether the report prepared by Creative Responsible Integrated Systems Foundation (Crisis Foundation) can be accepted and inform the Court on other steps that can be taken to help snakebite victims.

While hearing the matter in detail, Justices VM Kanade and PD Kode pointed out, “We have heard the learned *amicus curiae* (JD Mistry). He has submitted a report on Snakebite Project Proposal.

The said report contains details about snake problems in India; the main causes for deaths on account of snakebites and the reasons why prompt action is not taken. The report also considers global solutions, which have been found by various countries, including Bombay High Court. Australia is where the largest number of snakebites is reported every year and the report is about the snakebite management in Australia. It also takes into consideration whether it is possible to have a Public Private Partnership between Crisys and the Government of Maharashtra. We are quite impressed by the research which has been done by Crisys Foundation. It has given statistical data about snakebites in Maharashtra and the other States in India. It gives a definite proposal how this problem can be resolved. The report also mentions about equipment which can be manufactured and used to help prevent snakebites.”

The High Court has directed the police in Thane, Maharashtra to ensure that members of Crisys Foundation, which has been helping tribals in the district in case of snakebite, are not obstructed by anyone in carrying out their work. There was some resistance to the work carried out by the NGO from Anantashram Trust and some adivasis, including an ex-sarpanch and a social worker.

The Bombay HC gave the directive after hearing the PIL filed by Dr Sarita Parikh and Apoorva Agwan, both members of the NGO. The court said: "Senior police inspector of the station should see that no one obstructs the petitioners and their apprentices who deal with cases of snakebite in tribal areas."

In conclusion, the Judges observed, “The learned *amicus curiae* have invited our attention to an Act passed by the State of Gujarat, which is called “the Gujarat Emergency Medical Services Act, 2007”. He has also invited our attention to the various provisions in the said Act and the comprehensive mechanism which has been evolved by the Gujarat Government under the said Act to provide emergency medical services to its residents. The State of Maharashtra may look into the provisions of the said Act and may consider whether it will be advisable to promulgate an Act of this nature in this State.”