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HC notice to Maharashtra government on relief for snake-bite victims

[Rosy Sequeira](#), TNN | Jun 9, 2014, 11.27 PM IST

MUMBAI: Bombay High Court on Monday issued notice to the State government in a public interest litigation seeking its help to deliver free snake-bite kits to victims in tribal areas.

A division bench of Chief Justice Mohit Shah and Justice M S Sonak heard a petition by Dr Sarita Parikh and Apurva Agvan attached to an NGO Creative Responsible Integrated Systems Foundation pointing out that nearly 10 persons die daily in Thane district due to snake bites and the figure goes up to 20 in the monsoons. Their petition said 3 out of 4 victims die only because they were unable to reach the hospital in time due to lack of roads in the rural areas.

The petitioners argued that adivasis who are in powerful positions are a hindrance to the implementation of the program and cited instances where they were stopped from reaching the victims. The government's advocate G W Mattos submitted that if such instances are brought to the notice of the authorities they are bound to see that they do not repeat. The petitioners specifically cited instances in Thane. The judges directed the senior inspector of Vartak Nagar police station to take necessary steps to see that there is no persons obstructs the petitioners or their apprentices when they reach out to the tribal population for the purpose of helping them deal with snake-bite."

The NGO has developed a mono-wheel ambulance suited for rough and rocky terrain and a portable low/no power ventilator that can be used in villages with no electricity. It urged for direction to the government to set up an emergency team to organize logistics and funding to help deliver snake-bite kits to all affected persons. The judges directed notices to be issued to the principle secretaries of the Public Health, Rural Development and Tribal Affairs departments and posted the next hearing on June 23, 2014.