

Rights organisation says jobs offered were low-ranking

Many of the victims of police firing during the anti-Sterlite protests in Thoothukudi last May have not been adequately compensated, People's Watch, a human rights organisation, has said.

In a report titled 'A year after Thoothukudi burned,' released here on Monday, the organisation said the worst affected were those who sustained bullet injuries. Acknowledging that the families of all those killed in the firing had received the compensation of Rs. 20 lakh each from the government, the report, however, highlighted that the employment provided to a family member of each deceased person was not satisfactory.

Addressing media here after releasing the report, Henri Tiphagne, executive director, People's Watch, said while almost all the persons were provided the job of 'Thalaiyari (Village Assistants),' one person was appointed as a Cook Assistant under the Nutritious Meal Scheme, though a few of them had undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

"Thalaiyari is among the jobs in the lowest rank with a poor pay and requires a qualification of only Class 10," he said. The report pointed out that two persons, studying in colleges, had to give up their education to take up these jobs. Those who had taken up the job also included a person with M.Sc, B. Ed. qualification and another with B.B.A. qualification, the report said. "This means that the government had no serious concerns over rehabilitating the families properly. The postings were also in different places in the district, because of which a considerable portion of their paltry salary is spent on commuting itself," he said.

Mr. Tiphagne said some of the persons who sustained bullet injuries required second or third surgery. "The compensation provided to them was not adequate. The government should enable them to get treatment at any private hospital of their choice with all the expenses taken care of," he said.

He added that the government had failed to rehabilitate many of the injured persons, who lost their livelihood in fishing or agriculture due to injuries.

"Also, there was no counselling provided to any of the family members of the

deceased, or those injured in the violence,” he alleged.