

House nod for law on property rights of slum dwellers

By Express News Service |
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BHUBANESWAR: The Assembly on Tuesday passed Odisha Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2017 enabling the State Government to provide property rights to identified slum dwellers in municipal corporations. But, discussion on Odisha Land Rights to Slum Dwellers Bill, 2017 which intended to provide land rights to urban poor in municipalities and Notified Area Councils (NACs) remained inconclusive.

Introducing the two Bills, Housing and Urban Development Minister Niranjan Pujari said, shortage of affordable housing space and inability of the urban poor to afford housing due to steep land prices has resulted in large scale growth of slums and people occupying Government land in urban areas. As per 2011 Census, about 23.1 per cent of urban population lives in slum areas. The informal settlement of slums without land and property rights exposes its dwellers to insecurity of ownership of land and houses and they are under constant threat of either demolition or eviction.

On the need to amend the Odisha Municipal Corporation Act, 2003, the Minister said it became necessary as the existing provisions do not adequately provide a mechanism for implementing various development measures and assigning property rights to slum dwellers.

As per the amended provisions of Odisha Municipal Corporation Act, landless persons in occupation of land in slums of any municipal corporation will be entitled for allotment of dwelling space, size and cost of which will be decided by the Government.

Earlier, the State Government had said beneficiaries in areas under municipal corporation will avail 300 square feet built up areas for residential purpose while those in NACs and municipalities will get land measuring 600 square feet and 450 square feet respectively.

The residential property to be allotted to the beneficiaries will be inheritable but not transferable, Pujari said. The certificate of property right will be issued jointly in the name of both the spouses in case of married persons.

Congress chief whip Tara Prasad Bahinipati urged the Speaker to refer the Odisha Land Rights to Slum Dwellers Bill to a select committee of the House for further examination.