

Challenges in Human Rights Protection in Haryana

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Abstract: *This study looks at the ongoing difficulties in protecting human rights in Haryana, one of the most economically advanced yet socially complicated states in India. This study identifies systemic shortcomings in healthcare delivery, police misconduct and custodial violence, urban governance and demolition drives, discrimination against marginalized communities, including bonded labor, and gender-based discrimination in property rights through an analysis of recent cases from 2025–2026, including incidents before the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and the Haryana Human Rights Commission (HHRC). This paper makes the case that, in spite of constitutional guarantees and institutional mechanisms, human rights violations in Haryana continue because of institutional negligence, insufficient implementation frameworks, and deeply ingrained social hierarchies. It does this by drawing on primary source materials such as commission orders, court rulings, and media reports. Recommendations for improving accountability systems and preventative tactics are included in the paper's conclusion.*

Keywords: Human Rights, Haryana, Police Custody, Healthcare, NHRC, Bonded Labour, Gender Justice.

I. INTRODUCTION

All Indian citizens are guaranteed fundamental rights under the Constitution, including the right to a dignified existence under Article 21. In order to look into violations and suggest solutions, India has also set up institutional institutions like the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and State Human Rights Commissions. Nonetheless, there is still variation in how Indian states implement the commitments made in the constitution.

A particularly useful case study is Haryana, a state that borders Delhi, the nation's capital. Haryana routinely scores low on human development indicators, especially those pertaining to gender, caste, and access to public services, despite being one of India's wealthiest states with substantial agricultural and industrial output (Singh, 2024). Custodial violence, honor killings, female foeticide, and prejudice against Dalit and minority communities have all been repeatedly reported in the state.

Through the lens of particular cases that have appeared before human rights commissioners and courts between 2025 and 2026, this report examines current human rights issues in Haryana. Instead of providing a comprehensive survey, it concentrates on five thematic areas where violations have been most noticeable: urban governance and demolition drives, bonded labor and child exploitation, police misconduct and custodial violence, healthcare infrastructure and medical negligence, and gender-based discrimination in property rights.

Press announcements from the NHRC, directives from the Haryana Human Rights Commission, rulings from the High Court, and confirmed media reports are among the major sources used in this qualitative, case-based technique. This method identifies patterns of systemic failure and enables a thorough analysis of how institutional processes react to violations.

II. HEALTHCARE INFRASTRUCTURE AND MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE

2.1 The Right to Health as a Human Rights Issue

The Indian Constitution's Article 21 recognizes the right to health as an essential part of the right to life. In *Consumer Education and Research Centre v. Union of India* (1995), the Supreme Court ruled that the right to health is a fundamental right that is necessary in order to exercise other rights. Recent events from Haryana, however, show serious shortcomings in the healthcare system that clearly violate this entitlement.

2.2 Mortuary Negligence: The Narwana Civil Hospital Case

A deceased body has been eaten by rats in the mortuary at Narwana Civil Hospital in the Jind district, according to media accounts from November 2025. It's important to note that this was apparently not the facility's first incident of this kind. The hospital administration admitted that the morgue freezer was broken and that no action had been taken in spite of notifications to the relevant business. A net had been put in place as a stopgap attempt to keep rats out, but this is obviously insufficient and indicates deeper systemic neglect.¹

The National Human Rights Commission observed that the media report's contents, if accurate, "raise serious issues of violation of human rights" and took suo motu cognizance of the matter.² The Chief Secretary of Haryana received a notification from the Commission requesting a thorough report within two weeks. This case demonstrates a systemic failure to uphold the fundamental dignity of the deceased, which the courts have determined is protected under Article 21 even after death (see *Parman and Katara v. Union of India*, 1989).

2.3 Anti-Rabies Vaccine Shortage and Preventable Death

The death of a 44-year-old man in Sonipat in March 2026 as a result of purported medical malpractice was even more concerning. A stray dog bit the victim, a garbage collector, in the lip.³ His family was told that anti-rabies serum and vaccine were not available when they hurried him to the public hospital in Sonipat. He had to be taken by the family to Raja Harishchandra Hospital in Narela, Delhi. On February 25, 2026, he was released from treatment after ten days.

But on March 3, when he had a fever, his family took him back to the same hospital, where he was turned away due to the Holi festival. After going back and forth between an ESI dispensary, a private hospital that declined to treat him, and ultimately the Postgraduate Institute in Rohtak, the victim passed away. The family claimed that a deadly series of events was initiated by the civil hospital's lack of fundamental immunizations.

The NHRC noted that "the contents of the media report, if true, raise a serious issue of violation of human rights of the victim" after taking notice. The Commissioner of the Sonipat Municipal Corporation and the Director of the Directorate of General Health Services received notices from the Commission, which explicitly asked for details about the compensation given to the victim's family and the actions taken to prevent recurrence.

Inadequate municipal stray dog control, a lack of necessary vaccines at government hospitals, the denial of emergency care on holidays, and the lack of a coordinated referral system are just a few of the shortcomings that come together in this instance. These structural flaws proved lethal for an economically disadvantaged garbage collector.

¹ NHRC takes suo motu cognizance of reported nibbling of dead bodies by rats in Haryana hospital. (2025, December 1). ANI News.

² National Human Rights Commission. (2025, December 1). NHRC, India takes suo motu cognizance of the reported nibbling of dead bodies by rats in the mortuary of Narwana Civil Hospital in Jind, Haryana. Press Information Bureau.

³ National Human Rights Commission. (2026, March 20). NHRC, India takes suo motu cognizance of the reported death of a man bitten by dog due to medical negligence in Sonipat, Haryana. Press Information Bureau.

2.4 Dignity of the Deceased: Hearse Services and Mortuary Access

In January 2026, the Haryana Human Rights Commission took suo motu cognizance of a case in which a 35-year-old woman who passed away at Badshah Khan Civil Hospital in Faridabad was brought home on a motorized cart due to her family's inability to pay for hearse services. This was a significant development that demonstrated the extension of human rights protections to the deceased. "The right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution extends beyond mere existence and includes the right to dignity even after death," the Commission, led by Justice Lalit Batra, noted.⁴

In the same way that pregnant women receive free ambulance services, the Commission ordered the state government to develop a comprehensive policy for the free transportation of deceased individuals for low-income families. Additionally, it required that each district have a minimum of one operational hearse vehicle stationed on hospital property, with contact information clearly visible. Importantly, police security outside mortuaries was also mandated by the Commission "to prevent any illegal activities, tampering of evidence, or other untoward incidents."⁵

This instruction indirectly recognizes that mortuary neglect, like the rat infestation in Jind, is a violation of human dignity that calls for security infrastructure and other preventive measures.

III. POLICE CUSTODIAL VIOLENCE AND ILLEGAL DETENTION

3.1 A Persistent Challenge

Despite court rulings such as *D.K. Basu v. State of West Bengal* (1997), which established comprehensive criteria for arrest and detention, police custody in India has long been a site of human rights breaches, with torture and fatalities occurring in detention. Custodial violence incidents have been reported throughout the state of Haryana.

3.2 The Pinjore Illegal Re-arrest and Torture Case

The Haryana Human Rights Commission revealed a pattern of unlawful imprisonment and torture by police officers in the Panchkula area in a particularly heinous case from December 2025.⁶ On June 27, a local court granted bail to an 18-year-old boy who had been arrested on June 26, 2025, for celebratory gunfire after winning a panchayat poll.

Sub-Inspector Yadwinder Singh violated Section 46 of the Code of Criminal Procedure as construed in several Supreme Court rulings when he re-arrested the adolescent on July 15 without first getting the court's approval. The youth's medico-legal report (MLR) confirms that he was physically abused during this unlawful imprisonment.

Inspector Jagdish Chand, the Pinjore police station's Station House Officer at the time, failed to restrain his subordinate, neglected to report the misbehavior to superior authorities, and effectively aided the violation, according to the Commission's investigation. SI Yadwinder Singh was found guilty of "wilfully disobeying the court order, violating the human rights of the complainant and displaying gross negligence and indiscipline" according to the investigation.

Importantly, the Commission held that "it was a settled principle of law that the state is liable to compensate victims where fundamental rights were violated due to the misconduct or illegal actions of its employees, particularly police officials" and invoked the principle of state liability for compensation. The Additional Chief Secretary (Home) was given notice to provide justification for not awarding compensation.

This case serves as an example of how official impunity works: the officer in charge of enforcing the law decided to disobey a court order, and his supervisor did nothing about it. Although the final result is still pending, the Commission's insistence on departmental processes and potential compensation serves as an accountability tool.

⁴ Haryana rights panel directs authorities to ensure hearse access in every district. (2026, May 3). Hindustan Times.

⁵ Haryana human rights panel tells authorities to help poor get hearse services at hospitals. (2026, May 2). Hindustan Times.

⁶ Teen's torture in illegal custody: Human rights panel seeks report from Haryana DGP. (2025, December 20). Hindustan Times.

3.3 Political Affiliation and Police Raids: The GJUST Case

When Jannayak Janata Party (JJP) leaders and employees complained to the Haryana Human Rights Commission in April 2026 about unlawful nighttime raids that targeted individuals because of their political affiliation, a new aspect of police behavior became apparent. Several police teams allegedly carried out late-night raids on April 16–17, 2026, in conjunction with a formal complaint that was submitted at the Hisar City police station.⁷

The complainants claimed that they were singled out because of their affiliation with the JJP and its student wing, even though they were not mentioned in the FIR. Police teams with a DSP and inspectors raiding homes without a warrant, forcible entry into homes, searches carried out without the presence of female police officers despite the presence of female family members, detention without following the proper legal procedure, and seizure of property, including a DVR containing CCTV footage, without providing receipts were among the specific allegations.

Gaurav Saini, the president of the JJP Youth Wing in Hisar city, was one of the complainants. He said that a police squad broke into his home at 4:30 AM, searched it, and took the DVR. Women in his household were allegedly intimidated and mistreated. Despite not being included in the FIR, Saini was allegedly brought to the police station and made to sign paperwork.

The lack of search warrants (violating Section 47 of the CrPC and Article 21's privacy protections), the lack of female police officers during searches of properties with female occupants (violating D.K. Basu guidelines), political targeting (violating Article 19's protection of political association), and possible coercion to sign documents (coerced self-incrimination, violating Article 20(3)) would all be violations if this case were proven.

3.4 Professional Arbitrariness: The Ashoka University Professor Case

In May 2025, the NHRC took suo motu cognizance of the arrest and remand to custody of a professor at Ashoka University in Haryana. The Commission noted that media reports concerning the arrest "discloses, prima facie, that the human rights and liberty of the said Professor have been violated".⁸ Notice was issued to the Director General of Police, Haryana, calling for a detailed report within one week.

While the specific allegations against the professor have not been publicly detailed in Commission documents, the NHRC's immediate intervention is itself significant. The Commission's observation that the report "discloses, prima facie, the violation of human rights and liberty" suggests concerns about the procedural regularity of the arrest and the conditions of remand. This case highlights the vulnerability even of privileged professionals to arbitrary state action when legal safeguards are not observed.

IV. URBAN GOVERNANCE, DEMOLITION DRIVES, AND THE RIGHT TO HOUSING

4.1 The Gurugram Demolition Controversy

Urban development in Haryana, particularly in the Gurugram region adjoining Delhi, has increasingly raised human rights concerns regarding housing rights, procedural due process, and the balance between development and displacement. In April 2026, the Punjab and Haryana High Court addressed a contentious demolition drive in Gurugram that residents alleged was being conducted arbitrarily under the garb of a court order.

The controversy originated from an April 2, 2026, High Court order restraining the state from implementing its "stilt + 4 floor policy" for residential plots. The Court had observed that merely to earn revenue, the state had "put the safety and security of the general public at stake" by failing to conduct an infrastructure capacity audit before permitting additional floors. The Court noted that the state "has abdicated its constitutional duty of ensuring clean and healthy urban environment for the citizens of Gurugram".

⁷ GJUST row: JJP leaders move rights panel, allege midnight raids. (2026, April 21). The Times of India.

⁸ National Human Rights Commission. (2025, May 21). NHRC, India takes suo motu cognizance of a media report regarding the arrest and remand to custody of a Professor of Ashoka University in Haryana.

Following this order, municipal authorities launched a demolition drive across multiple sectors, removing encroachments including boundary walls, fencing, and ramps that extended into roads. Residents filed an application alleging that authorities were "running rogue" and demolishing properties under the garb of the interim order. The state's counsel, Senior Advocate Ankur Mittal, defended the action as not pursuant to the court order but to "secure right to way in these areas," claiming that 336 km of lanes had been cleared of encroachments.

The High Court declined to stop the demolition drive, with Chief Justice Sheel Nagu remarking that "drastic steps were needed to improve the situation in Gurugram," noting that "people are leaving these colonies in Delhi because they don't find space to walk" and highlighting the chaos during monsoons. However, the Court also clarified that its earlier order was limited to Gurugram, prospective in nature, and that authorities must follow "due process of law" including issuing notices before demolition.

This case illuminates the tension between urban planning imperatives and housing rights. While unchecked encroachment may indeed create public hazards, the absence of proper notice periods, the timing of demolitions, and the lack of rehabilitation provisions for affected residents raise due process concerns. The residents' allegation that authorities were demolishing under the "garb" of a court order—and the state's admission that demolitions were not actually mandated by that order—suggests potential executive overreach.

V. BONDED LABOUR, CHILD EXPLOITATION, AND POLICE APATHY

5.1 The Bihar Teenager Case

Perhaps the most harrowing case of human rights violation in Haryana involves a 14-year-old boy from Bihar who was subjected to bonded labour and lost his left arm while operating a fodder-cutting machine. According to reports, the minor got stranded at Bahadurgarh Railway Station, where a stranger lured him with the promise of a job at a buffalo dairy farm with a salary of Rs 10,000 per month. Instead, he was allegedly subjected to two months of forced labour and physical abuse. After the accident with the machine, the injured boy walked 150 km to Nuh—clutching his severed arm—where a teacher rescued him.⁹

The Haryana State Human Rights Commission took suo motu cognizance based on a news report in The Indian Express. However, the police investigation revealed systemic failures. The Commission, in its November 4, 2025, order, termed the police report as "incomplete, vague, and lacking in vital details".

Specifically, the Commission noted that the report was "silent on the precise location of the incident and fails to pinpoint the exact site where the alleged chopping or cutting off of the left arm of the minor victim-child took place". Furthermore, "the police report does not disclose any progress regarding the identification, tracing or arrest of the alleged culprits involved in this heinous act".

The Commission observed that "abduction, illegal confinement and subsequent physical assault were all part of a continuous chain of criminal acts, which require thorough and time-bound investigation". Directions were issued to multiple police authorities including the SP Railways, Ambala; Commissioner of Police, Jhajjar; and SP Nuh to coordinate and submit comprehensive reports.

This case exemplifies how procedural deficiencies—vague statements, failure to pinpoint crime scenes, lack of progress on arrests—compound the original violation. The boy's journey of 150 km clutching his severed arm is a stark metaphor for how the system itself is dismembered: fragmented jurisdiction between railway police and district police allows responsibility to be diffused until no one is accountable.

⁹ 'Vague, incomplete': Haryana human rights body on police probe into Bihar teen bonded labour case. (2025, November 11). The Indian Express.

VI. GENDER JUSTICE: PROPERTY RIGHTS AND CUSTOMARY DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES

6.1 The Meo Community Property Rights Case

While the previous sections focus on violations of civil and political rights, gender-based discrimination in property inheritance represents a distinct category of human rights challenge deeply embedded in social custom. In a landmark judgment from January 2026, the Punjab and Haryana High Court addressed the conflict between customary practices and constitutional guarantees of gender equality.

The case, *Mohd. Ashraf and Another v. Sadiq (Since Deceased) through his LRs and Others*, involved a woman who had been disinherited by a trial court based on the "customary rights prevailing in the Meo ethnic group of the Mewat region" of Haryana.¹⁰ The trial court had held that under Meo custom, a woman could not alienate non-ancestral property inherited from her husband.

The High Court reversed this decision, holding that "any custom or restriction curtailing the right of a female to alienate a non-ancestral property inherited by her from her husband is inherently discriminatory". The Court's reasoning implicitly relies on the constitutional scheme: Article 15 prohibits discrimination on grounds of sex, Article 14 guarantees equality before the law, and the Hindu Succession Act (which applies to Meos as Hindus under certain interpretations) has progressively expanded women's inheritance rights.

This judgment is significant for several reasons. First, it affirms that constitutional guarantees override discriminatory customs, regardless of how long such customs have been practised or how deeply they are embedded in community identity. Second, it specifically addresses the Mewat region, one of Haryana's most underdeveloped districts with poor human development indicators. Third, by protecting a woman's right to alienate property (i.e., sell or transfer it), the court recognizes that ownership without alienation rights is hollow—it is the power to dispose of property that gives ownership its meaning.

However, the very fact that a 44-year-old case (the judgment mentions it as a "44-year case") reached the High Court in 2026 indicates the glacial pace of justice for women challenging customary discrimination. The case's duration—likely spanning from the original trial court filing in the 1980s to final appellate resolution in 2026—suggests that even when the law is progressive, access to timely justice remains a human rights challenge.

VII. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS AND THEIR LIMITATIONS

7.1 The Role of the National Human Rights Commission

The NHRC has been active in taking suo motu cognizance of human rights violations in Haryana, as evidenced by the cases discussed above. The Commission has the power to issue notices, call for reports, and recommend compensation. However, its recommendations are not binding on the state government; they are enforceable only through contempt proceedings initiated in the High Court if the state fails to comply. This structural limitation means that the NHRC's effectiveness depends on state cooperation—which may be lacking when violations involve state actors such as police or municipal authorities.

7.2 The Haryana Human Rights Commission

The HHRC has demonstrated greater specificity in its directions, as seen in the hearse services case where it mandated concrete actions including the placement of vehicles, display of contact information, and submission of district-wise reports. The HHRC's order in the Pinjore custodial torture case also explicitly invoked the principle of state compensation and initiated departmental proceedings against specific officers.

However, the HHRC's docket appears heavily reactive rather than proactive. With the exception of the hearse services case, all matters discussed originated from media reports rather than from systematic monitoring or complaint

¹⁰ Mohd. Ashraf and Another v. Sadiq (Since Deceased) through his LRs and Others, Punjab and Haryana High Court (2026). Reported in Bar and Bench.

mechanisms accessible to marginalized populations. The bonded labour case, despite the Commission's sharp criticism of police investigations, still required a media report to trigger action.

7.3 Judicial Oversight

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has played a crucial role in both protecting rights (as in the Meo property case and the Gurugram demolition case, where it insisted on due process) and, paradoxically, in authorizing actions that may affect rights (as in refusing to stay the demolition drive). The Court's observation that "drastic steps" are needed in Gurugram reflects a broader judicial tendency to prioritize urban planning and public order over individual housing claims, particularly in the absence of clear legal rights to encroached public land.

VIII. THEMATIC ANALYSIS: PATTERNS AND STRUCTURAL CAUSES

8.1 Institutional Negligence as a Recurring Pattern

Across healthcare, police conduct, and urban governance, a pattern emerges of institutional negligence enabled by weak accountability mechanisms. The Narwana hospital's mortuary freezer was non-functional; the company complained to had not responded; the temporary solution was a mesh against rats. The Sonipat hospital lacked anti-rabies vaccines; when the patient returned with fever, he was turned away for a holiday. In each instance, the violation is not merely an individual act but a systemic failure of maintenance, supply chains, and emergency protocols.

8.2 Impunity and the Police

Police misconduct cases reveal a particularly troubling pattern: officers who violate court orders, illegally detain individuals, and commit physical assault face departmental inquiries but rarely criminal prosecution. In the Pinjore case, the Commission noted that SI Yadwinder Singh was held guilty in the departmental inquiry and that Inspector Jagdish Chand was found to have "abetted and facilitated the misconduct". However, the ultimate outcome—whether any criminal case was registered, whether any dismissal from service occurred—remains unclear. This opacity itself is a form of impunity.

8.3 Social Hierarchy and Vulnerability

The cases discussed disproportionately affect vulnerable populations: garbage collectors (Sonipat dog bite victim), migrants from Bihar (bonded labour case), women challenging customary property norms (Meo case), youth from non-dominant political parties (GJUST raids). Conversely, the Ashoka University professor case—involving an elite institution—garnered immediate NHRC intervention. This disparity suggests that human rights protection remains stratified by social and economic status, despite constitutional guarantees of equality.

8.4 Urban Development vs. Housing Rights

The Gurugram demolition case highlights an emerging tension in rapidly urbanizing Haryana. The state's "stilt + 4 floor policy" was motivated by revenue generation rather than infrastructure capacity. Residents, many of whom may have invested life savings in their homes, faced demolition with minimal notice. While the Court insisted on "due process of law," the practical reality of demolitions during a court-mandated pause in new construction reveals how development agendas can override housing rights.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis of cases, the following recommendations are proposed:

9.1 Healthcare Infrastructure

Mandatory functional mortuary equipment: The health department should conduct monthly audits of mortuary freezers and other critical equipment in all district hospitals, with non-functional equipment reportable to the HHRC.

Vaccine supply chain reform: The shortage of anti-rabies vaccine in Sonipat suggests systemic supply chain vulnerability. Buffer stocks should be maintained at district level, and no hospital should be permitted to turn away animal bite victims due to vaccine shortage.

Holiday emergency protocols: The Sonipat case where a patient was refused admission due to a holiday indicates the need for mandatory 24/7 emergency services at all civil hospitals, with clear penalties for denial of emergency care.

Hearse service implementation: The HHRC's direction for district-wise hearse vehicles should be implemented within a defined timeline, with monitoring mechanisms and public awareness campaigns.

9.2 Police Accountability

Criminal prosecution for custodial violence: Departmental proceedings are insufficient when police officers commit assault. The state should mandate registration of criminal cases where MLR evidence confirms torture during custody.

Mandatory videography of searches: All search operations, particularly night raids, should be videographed to prevent destruction of evidence regarding procedural compliance or violation.

Independent police complaints authority: Maharashtra's establishment of police complaint authorities independent of the police department provides a model that Haryana should consider.

Compensation as a routine remedy: The HHRC's direction to show cause for compensation in the Pinjore case should become standard practice whenever custodial violence is established.

9.3 Bonded Labour and Child Protection

Inter-state coordination mechanism: The Bihar teenager case demonstrates how victims cross state boundaries while police jurisdictions remain siloed. A formal coordination protocol between Bihar and Haryana police should be established for trafficking and bonded labour cases.

Railway station surveillance: Bahadurgarh Railway Station, where the minor was lured, should have functional CCTV coverage and child helpdesks as mandated by the Railway Protection Force.

9.4 Urban Governance

Notice period for demolitions: Demolition drives should be preceded by minimum 15-day notice periods, with exceptions only for imminent safety hazards certified by an independent engineer.

Rehabilitation framework: The state should develop a policy for resettlement or compensation for residents affected by demolitions, particularly for those who can demonstrate good-faith purchase or construction.

9.5 Gender Justice

Customary law audit: The state should commission an audit of discriminatory customary practices affecting women's property rights across Haryana's communities, followed by targeted legal awareness campaigns in districts like Mewat where such customs remain prevalent.

X. CONCLUSION

Haryana's human rights challenges reflect broader Indian predicaments: the gap between constitutional promises and institutional realities; the persistence of social hierarchies that determine whose rights are protected; the impunity enjoyed by state actors; and the reactive rather than preventive posture of human rights commissions. The cases analyzed—from rat-nibbled corpses in Jind to teenagers walking 150 km with severed arms—are not isolated aberrations but symptoms of systemic deficiencies.

Yet, the responses of the NHRC, HHRC, and High Court also demonstrate that institutional mechanisms, however imperfect, can serve as sites of accountability. The HHRC's recognition that dignity extends beyond death (the hearse services case), its invocation of state compensation for police torture (the Pinjore case), and its sharp criticism of vague police investigations (the bonded labour case) all represent progressive interpretations of human rights. The High Court's affirmation that discriminatory customs cannot override constitutional guarantees (the Meo property case) reinforces the primacy of fundamental rights.

The challenge remains implementation. Commission recommendations require state compliance; court orders require executive enforcement. In Haryana, as in much of India, the gap between adjudication and implementation remains

wide. Bridging this gap requires not merely stronger commissions or more active courts, but political will, bureaucratic accountability, and—most fundamentally—a citizenry empowered to claim its rights.

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