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Delhi HC issues notice to govt on plea seeking appointments to NCPCR

New Delhi: The Delhi high court on Wednesday issued notice to the central government in response to a plea seeking appointment of three members to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), which is currently functioning below its full administrative capacity.

The public interest litigation (PIL), brought by advocate Radhakanta Tripathy, aims to ensure better administration at the apex panel for safeguarding interests of children by seeking a court directive for the filling of vacancies.

As per the statutory mandate under the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005, the commission should have six members and a chairperson. At present, the child rights panel has three members -- Priyank Kanoongo, Yashwant Jain and Rupa Kapoor. Stuti Narain Kacker is the chairperson.

The petition said that inaction of the government in not appointing members of the panel over the years is “arbitrary, unreasonable and in violation of Article 14 (Right to Equality), 21 (Right to Life) of the Constitution of India.” Under the mandate, fresh appointments must be made within 90 days from the time of the occurrence of the vacancy.

The petition further said non-appointment of commission members frustrates the mechanism for dispensing justice and increases the pendency of cases pertaining to child rights.

NCPCR, established in 2007, is responsible for implementation of child rights such as right to food, protection of children from sexual offences and free and compulsory education among others.