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The Maharashtra State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) has come down heavily on a government's residential school in Panvel, after finding that the tribal students housed there were living in inhuman and unsafe conditions.

Pranali Lotlikar | **Updated:** Thursday, July 24, 2025, 11:28 PM IST



SHRC inspection exposes shocking conditions at Panvel tribal school; girls forced to defecate in the open | File Photo

Mumbai: The Maharashtra State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) has come down heavily on a government's residential school in Panvel, after finding that the tribal students housed there were living in inhuman and unsafe conditions.

SHRC Launches Proceedings Against Govt Residential School in Panvel

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The SHRC has initiated proceedings in the case and issued notices to the Chief Secretary of Maharashtra, the Tribal Development Department, and other concerned authorities, including the headmaster of the Shaskiya Madhyamik Ashram Shala, directing them to file a comprehensive report within eight months.

The suo motu action follows a surprise inspection conducted on June 18 by an SHRC team comprising member Sanjay Kumar, Registrar Vijay Kedar, and other officials. The team visited the Panvel-based Ashram Shala, which has been operational for over 21 years and is run by locals Hemant and Sharda Patil. The government reportedly pays a monthly rent of Rs 1,46,477 for the facility.

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The SHRC's six-page inspection report paints a sorry picture of the conditions at the school, which is sanctioned for 500 Adivasi students (400 residential and 100 non-residential) studying from Class 1 to Class 10. However, only 244 students were enrolled at the time of the visit—237 residential and 7 non-residential. Among them were 106 boys and 138 girls.

Dilapidated Infrastructure, Open Defecation Highlighted in SHRC Report

According to the report, the school is housed in a dilapidated, unhygienic, and unsafe structure, surrounded by pollution from a nearby brick kiln located just 100 metres away. The building lacks basic infrastructure and security arrangements, posing serious risks to the students, especially girls.

Students Sleep, Eat, and Study on Floors, No Beds or Dining Area Provided

"There is no designated residential area for either boys or girls. The same rooms are being used for sleeping, classes and dining. No beds are provided—students sleep on the floor using a single synthetic blanket," the report noted.

Further, the girls' residential area, accommodating 136 students, had only two toilets. The lack of sanitation facilities forces some girls to resort to open defecation across the road, a situation the SHRC called "inhuman" and a violation of the students' right to dignity.

The report also exposed serious flaws in the school's kitchen and food arrangements. Meals for all 244 students are cooked in a cramped 8x10 ft room with no designated dining space. Students are made to serve

themselves and eat in classrooms or dormitories. Boys are forced to carry their food between buildings, and students clean their utensils in open areas or even in the toilets.

Classrooms lack basic infrastructure—no benches or desks are available, and all classes are conducted on the floor from Class 1 to Class 10.



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“The school premises remain open and unsecured, endangering the safety of all students. Academic performance is also below par, clearly reflecting poor learning outcomes. Despite being over two decades old, the school’s conditions remain unchanged, placing an unnecessary burden on government resources,” the report added.

“While the scheme for tribal welfare is commendable, its implementation at this Ashram Shala is grossly inadequate and calls for urgent corrective action,” the commission observed.

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