

Manjolai workers appeal to TN government against forceful eviction; seek time till disposal of SLP

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The women tea estate workers are engaged in their job in Manjolai in Tirunelveli (File photo | V Karthikalagu, EPS)

MADURAI: Former **Manjolai tea estate workers** appealed to the state government not to force them to leave the estate till the disposal of their special leave petition (SLP) by the Supreme Court, in which they have sought better rehabilitation measures than the one currently being offered to them by the state.

Addressing media persons at the office of the NGO, People's Watch, on Saturday, the workers said they are ready to obey the High Court's order and have no intention to remain at the estate. But the authorities call each worker individually over phone, demanding them to leave the estate in threatening tones, they alleged.

"The fact remains that we have lost our livelihood and are being uprooted and made to adapt to a place which is entirely different from the habitat in which we were born and raised. Every part of our lifestyle will change, including the weather in which we lived, the type of clothes we wore, the food we ate, etc. All we ask is to let us live with dignity," said, A John Kennedy, one of the workers.

The government is undertaking the rehabilitation measures in a mechanical manner without understanding the basic needs of the workers, advocate I Robert Chandra Kumar said. Instead of being separated and made to relocate to different places, they want the state to allot them a separate locality - a 'samatthuvapuram'- where they all can live together without caste and religious differences, just as how they lived in the estate, he added.

The workers want the state government to pay them Rs 25 lakh each under the Compensatory Afforestation Fund, executive director of People's Watch Henri Tiphagne said. The authorities are under the wrong impression that the workers are trying to remain at the estate eternally, he added.

In their SLP, the workers seek rights to visit the burial ground in the Manjolai hills, to pay respects at the graves of their ancestors from time to time. This itself would prove that they are willing to leave the estate, Robert pointed out.

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil-nadu/2025/Apr/27/manjolai-workers-appeal-to-tn-government-against-forceful-eviction-see-time-till-disposal-of-slp#:~:text=MADURAI%3A%20Former%20Manjolai%20tea%20estate%20workers%20appealed%20to,currentl%20being%20offered%20to%20them%20by%20the%20state.>