



NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Established under The Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993

A sentinel of equality, liberty, dignity and justice



ITEC Executive Capacity Building Programme on Human Rights

Background

Human rights are universal principles inherent to all individuals, transcending nationality, sex, race, religion, ethnicity, culture, language, and other statuses. They include civil, economic, political, cultural, and social rights that are innate, interdependent, inalienable, and indivisible. These values have been embedded in India's ancient civilizations, with scriptures like the Vedas, Upanishads, and Dharmashastras emphasizing dignity, equality, and ethical conduct. In 1948, a landmark document, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), outlining fundamental rights and freedoms was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. The UDHR formed the basis of international human rights framework that inspired over seventy human rights treaties worldwide.

It is noteworthy that India's Dr. Hansaben Mehta, a Gandhian and Lakshmi Menon, representing India at the UN in 1948, insisted on recognizing the equal rights of men and women in the UDHR's Article 1 and Preamble respectively. Mahatma Gandhi's philosophies broadened the human rights concept, emphasizing dignity beyond basic necessities.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, a staunch human rights advocate, played a key role in shaping the Indian Constitution, incorporating contemporary ideals of rights, freedom, and justice, while reflecting the ethos of interconnectedness, '*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*' (the whole world is one family).

Human Rights Framework of India

India's human rights framework is grounded in its ethos, constitutional provisions, statutes, institutional mechanisms, and international commitments. The cultural ethos of '*Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah*' (let the entire world be happy) is reflected in the Indian Constitution's values of empathy and compassion. The Indian Constitution supports democratic ideals through universal adult franchise, ensuring voting rights for all citizens regardless of caste, gender, religion, or socio-economic status. Fundamental rights and directive principles enshrined in the Constitution reflect the core of human rights in India. The Supreme Court and High Courts play a crucial role in addressing human rights issues through their judgments and Public Interest Litigations (PILs), which tackle concerns like child labor, environmental protection, and healthcare access.

Various statutory and constitutional bodies, such as the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and State Human Rights Commissions, are essential in promoting and safeguarding human rights, investigating complaints, and recommending actions to address abuses. Together, these institutions and constitutional guarantees create a comprehensive human rights framework in India.

About the National Human Rights Commission, India



The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India, established under the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 (PHRA), serves as the apex human rights institution in the country. It consists of a Chairperson, five full-time Members and the Secretary General as the Chief Executive Officer. It also has seven deemed Members representing various other Commissions like National Commission for Scheduled Castes; Schedule Tribes; Minorities; Women; Protection of Child Rights; Economically Backward Classes, and Commissioner for Disability.



NHRC has a wide mandate. It inquires, *suo moto* or on a petition presented to it by the victim or any person on victim's behalf, into complaints of violation of human rights and provides redressal, carries out spot enquiries and other forms of investigations, studies treaties and other international instruments of human rights and makes recommendations for their effective implementation, undertakes and promotes research, spreads human rights literacy and promotes awareness about the safeguards available for protection from human rights violation through publications, media, seminar and other means. It also encourages the efforts of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) working in the field of human rights. NHRC has also been involved in policy advocacy and law reform. It provides recommendations to the government on legislation and policy changes necessary to safeguard human rights effectively. The NHRC, from time to time, has endeavoured to give a positive meaning and a content to the objectives set out in the PHRA.

It has moved vigorously and effectively to use the opportunities provided to it by the Act to ensure human rights protection in the country. Considerable efforts have been made by the NHRC in protecting vulnerable groups, strengthening the criminal justice system, doing away with stringent legislations, protecting health and mental health, securing right to a healthy environment, protecting the right to education, among others.

About the Capacity Building Programme

The NHRC, India and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) are collaborating to organize a six-day ITEC Executive Capacity Building Programme on Human Rights for senior-level functionaries of National Human Rights Institutions of various countries to further strengthen, protect and promote human rights. This extensive programme aims to provide insights into various dimensions of human rights,

and share NHRC's experience over the past three decades to enhance awareness among participants of various National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs). The programme is designed for NHRIs of Global South in various grouping like India's neighbourhood, African countries, and ASEAN/ South-East Asia, etc. It seeks to strengthen South – South cooperation, enhance collaboration and networking, and improve human rights protection mechanisms through comprehensive capacity building and experience sharing.



Objectives of the Programme

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) India aims to empower participants through a comprehensive six-day capacity building programme to enhance understanding of various dimensions of human rights. The objectives of the programme are:

- **Enriching knowledge and skills:** Providing a platform for knowledge sharing and equipping participants with insights into various dimensions of human rights and NHRC's complaint management system, investigations, HRC-NET, and addressing various human rights violations.
- **Advancing best practices:** Facilitating the sharing of best practices, experiences, and ideas among NHRIs on human rights protection and promotion, fostering dialogue and alliances on human rights issues.

- **Enhancing human rights awareness and advocacy:** Raising awareness about contemporary human rights issues and situations, offering tools to curb violations, and promoting transparency in human rights protection.
- **Focusing on evolving human rights issues:** Equipping participants to address emerging challenges in human rights related to business, artificial intelligence, the environment, and sustainable development goals.

Expected Outcomes

After successful completion of the programme, participants will have:

- Develop a better understanding of international dimensions of human rights;
- A deeper understanding of NHRC's work in the field of human rights protection, and its best practices, which can be adopted by other NHRIs;
- Improved networking among NHRIs, fostering collaborations and partnerships at regional and international levels.
- Enhanced capability to contribute towards the protection and promotion of human rights.

Programme Structure

The programme structure will consist of:

- **Lectures and presentations:** Delivered by eminent experts and practitioners in the field of human rights
- **Interactive sessions:** Include group discussions, case studies, experience sharing presentations, etc.
- **Field visits:** Providing participants with real experience of human rights work on the ground
- **Cultural immersion experience:** Diving deep into India's vibrant history and rich traditions for an ethnic experience

Dates for the programmes

The first programme is scheduled from 11 November 2024 to 16 November 2024 at New Delhi.

Who can participate

Programme caters to senior level functionaries of NHRIs viz. Commissioners, CEOs, Members, etc. of three regions - India's neighbourhood, ASEAN/ South East Asia and Africa

