

Volume 31 | Number 07 | July, 2024



# HUMAN RIGHTS

Newsletter

A Monthly publication of the National Human Rights Commission, India



## Lead story

Residential Capacity Building Programme on Human Rights for Senior Forest Officers.

## Article

NHRC, India's recent advisories on widows and begging

## Important intervention

NHRC, India takes a serious view of 'Nata Pratha'.

# HUMAN RIGHTS

## Newsletter

Volume 31 | Number 07 | July, 2024

### National Human Rights Commission

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The Newsletter is also available on the Commission's website [www.nhrc.nic.in](http://www.nhrc.nic.in). NGOs and other organizations are welcome to reproduce material of the Newsletter and disseminate it widely acknowledging the NHRC.



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# Monthly Recap

From the desk of the  
Secretary General & Chief Executive

“  
...the Commission aims  
to strengthen the  
capacities of officers of  
the All India Services  
(AIS) officers and  
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human rights issues.  
”

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India through its numerous initiatives aims to sensitize people from various sections of society on different aspects of human rights through customized programmes. In initial years, officers of All India Services (IAS, IPS and IFS) work at the grassroot level and are instrumental in addressing people's issues. Government officials regularly interact with the common people, and this necessitates that they be more sensitive and empathetic to the needs of the masses. Through concerted efforts towards this, including by designing courses on human rights, the Commission aims to strengthen the capacities of officers of the All India Services (AIS) officers and enhance their knowledge about human rights issues. These officers play a vital role in delivering public services and ensuring dignity for all by upholding people's rights. Collaborations with the AIS national academies to develop modules help to educate officers on civic, political, economic, social, and cultural rights encompassing human rights.

This month, the Commission launched its first 4-day Residential Capacity Building Programme for the officers of the Indian Forest Service (IFS) in collaboration with the Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy (IGNFA), Dehradun from 18<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 2024. These officers work with tribal communities and forest dwellers in addition to focusing on climate mitigation efforts. Through a series of more than 15 sessions featuring national and international experts, 35 officers chosen from different parts of the country were sensitized on various aspects of human rights. Key topics included the protection of tribal communities and other forest dwellers, mitigation of climate change, community welfare, and sustainable development goals aligning with national and international human rights frameworks.

In addition to sensitizing and re-orienting the officers on various dimensions of human rights, the course was also an opportunity to gauge the ground reality and understand what the officers working among the people require to enhance their understanding of human rights. This feedback would be used to improve modules on human rights for inclusion in the IFS officers' training programme when young probationers join the service. This edition of the Newsletter carries a brief report on this initiative.

The Commission also issued an important Advisory to Central and State government authorities, as well as Union Territory (UT) administrations, emphasizing on the welfare and protection of the human rights of widows. This advisory was issued based on the Commission's observations that widowed women not only endure the emotional distress of losing their spouse but also confront various other challenges such as social exclusion, loss of income, and even loss of their homes. A brief report on the advisory has been carried in this edition of the Newsletter,



“  
NHRC has taken a serious view of the social evil that continues to persist in the form of 'Nata Pratha' under which the girls in some communities are sold, either on a stamp paper or otherwise, in the name of marriage having no legal sanctity.  
”

highlighting some recommendations proposed by NHRC. The Commission issued another advisory to the Centre and State governments and UT Administrations to develop strategies aimed at eliminating begging and enhancing the quality of life for those involved in it. Issuing the advisory, the Commission noted that despite several initiatives and welfare programmes implemented by both the Centre and State Governments, the issue of begging persists across the country.

Human rights issues of women have been a major concern of the Commission. NHRC has taken a serious view of the social evil that continues to persist in the form of 'Nata Pratha' under which the girls in some communities are sold, either on a stamp paper or otherwise, in the name of marriage having no legal sanctity.

NHRC, India conducts internship programmes for university-level students at regular intervals. Besides the bi-monthly two-week online short-term internships, the month-long summer and winter internships in physical mode are very coveted programmes of the Commission. These are much sought after by the postgraduate-level students. The 2024 Summer Internship began in June, 2024. With limited seats and thousands of applicants from different parts of the country, the selection of interns was a grueling task. Of the more than 1,400 applicants, 80 were selected, representing various academic disciplines. It is the Commission's endeavor to motivate the students through these programmes to understand not only the national and international human rights frameworks but also to adopt the Indian ethos of empathy and compassion in protecting and promoting human rights.

The Commission invites proposals from reputed institutions, universities, national law schools, civil society organizations, autonomous bodies, etc. for organizing international and national conferences, seminars and workshops to protect and promote human rights. It also invites research proposals. Additionally, this edition includes a column highlighting research studies on various human rights issues and other regular activities of the Commission.

We have been receiving appreciation for the makeover of the NHRC Newsletter and are also working on suggestions to make it a more representative periodical. In addition to highlighting NHRC's work and initiatives, we hope to give new perspectives by providing a variety of related information and inputs, with contributions from State Human Rights Commissions, NGOs/HRDs & civil society organizations, academia as well as the voices of those who got relief through Commission's interventions in coming months. I hope with some of these added new features, this edition makes an interesting reading.

[ Bharat Lal ]  
Secretary General &  
Chief Executive Officer



# Lead story

## The first four-day Residential Capacity Building Programme (CBP) on Human Rights for Senior Forest Officers

**T**he National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India organized its first four-day residential capacity-building programme on human rights for senior forest officers of the Indian Forest Service (IFS) in collaboration with the Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy (IGNFA) at Dehradun from 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2024. 35 senior officers, including four women officers from various states and Union Territories attended this training programme. The initiative aimed to integrate human rights perspectives into forest and natural resource management, policy implementation, and practices on the ground.

On 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2024, Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General, NHRC, inaugurated the programme in the presence of Shri Jagmohan Sharma, Director, IGNFA and Shri Ajay Bhatnagar, DG (Investigation), NHRC. He emphasized the criticality of human rights education for forest officers and stressed the need to protect the rights of forest dwellers, Scheduled Tribes, and forest labourers amidst the challenges posed by climate change. Signaling the importance of knowledge of human rights, he said that the Commission was partnering with various All India Services (AIS) national academies to develop training modules on various dimensions of human rights to build the capacities of the officers.

► NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal inaugurating the first four-day Residential Capacity Building Programme (CBP) on Human Rights for Senior Forest Officers



Shri Lal urged the participants to internalize 'The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)' and other relevant laws to understand and appreciate human rights better. He also spoke on the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and Universal Periodic Review (UPR), their role in upholding the human rights of everyone, the Indian ethos of empathy and compassion, and the constitutional framework for safeguarding human rights in the country.

Addressing the valedictory session on 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2024, Dr Jagmohan, Director, IGNFA, highlighted the pivotal role of forest officers in national development and underscored the urgency to enforce human rights provisions, particularly under the Forest Rights Act. He commended NHRC's efforts in enhancing the officers' understanding of various dimensions of human rights issues and proposed integrating a dedicated module on human rights for the IFS probationers starting from the 2025 batch.

In about 15 training sessions featuring national and international experts, the officers were sensitized on a range of topics, including the impact of climate change on human rights, tribal and other forest dwellers communities' welfare, legal frameworks, and sustainable development goals aligning with national and international human rights frameworks, with the aim of equipping the officers with comprehensive knowledge and skills.

Sessions on Day 1 of the training programme included 'Institutional Framework for the Protection of Human Rights in India' by Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General of NHRC; 'Forest Dwellers and Human Rights' by Shri Prashant Kumar, Member of the Central Administrative Tribunal; 'Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993



and the National Human Rights Commission' by Shri Ajay Bhatnagar, Director General (Investigation) at NHRC; and POSH Act and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation in the Official Establishment by Ms Meenakshi Negi, Member Secretary, National Commission for Women.

Sessions on Day 2 included 'Law and the Role of a Forester – Some Thoughts' by Shri Sanjay Upadhyay, Senior Advocate, Supreme Court. Mr. Shombi Sharp, UN Resident Coordinator in India and Ms Sreetama Guptabaya of UNDP took a session on 'Leaving no one behind: Tribal Human Rights and Sustainability' and 'UN Convention on

▼  
Forest officers  
attending the training



► Shri Prashant Kumar  
Member, CAT

Human Rights'. Dr Leena Srivastava, Former Member of the SDG-7 Technical Advisory Group at the UN spoke on 'Climate Change and Human Rights: International and National Experiences and Challenges' and Shri Ashok Pai, Former PCCF of Uttarakhand addressed a session on the 'Implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006 in the Context of Human Rights.'

The third day began with the session on 'SC & ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989: its implications and implementation in forest administration' by Shri Sisir Ratho, Former PCCF & HOFF, Odisha. Shri Apurv Mishra, Consultant at the



► Shri Apurv Mishra  
Consultant, EAC-PM



► Shri V K Tiwari  
Information Commissioner, CIC



► Dr Leena Srivastava  
Former member, SDG-7 Technical  
Advisory Group United Nations



► Shri Ashok Pai  
Former PCCF, Uttarakhand



► Shri Chandra Prakash Goyal  
Member, Central Empowered  
Committee, MoEFCC





▶ Mr. Shombi Sharp, UN Resident Coordinator in India interacting with the forest officers



▶ Shri Yugal Joshi, Advisor, NITI Aayog interacting with the forest officers

Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) delivered a talk on 'Tribal Rights and Economic Development'; and Dr Sanjeev Chopra, Former Director of LBSNAA addressed the participants on 'Human Rights of People Living in and Around Forests'. The topic 'Forest and Human Rights' was covered by Shri C. P. Goyal, Member, Central Empowered Committee, MoEF&CC.

On the fourth day, sessions included 'A Human Rights Perspective on Access to Information' by Shri Vinod Kumar Tiwari, Information Commissioner, Central Information Commission; 'SDG, Life and Human Rights' by Shri Yugal Joshi,

**The initiative aimed to integrate human rights perspectives into forest and natural resource management, policy implementation, and practices on the ground.**

Advisor, NITI Aayog, and 'Forest Frontline Workers: Challenges and Welfare' by Shri Gaurav Bansal, Advocate Supreme Court.

In the valedictory session, Dr Sivabala S, Course Coordinator at IGNFA and Dr Mukul Trivedi, Professor (IST) and I/C Additional Director at IGNFA, expressed satisfaction with the outcomes of the training. Shri Yuvraj, SSP and Course Coordinator at NHRC presented a comprehensive report on the Capacity Building Programme for Forest Officers on Human Rights. Shri Dushyant Singh, DySP, NHRC thanked and recognized the role of everyone who was part of this training programme.



▶ Shri Sisir Ratho  
Former Principal Chief  
Conservator of Forest, Odisha



▶ Shri Jagmohan Sharma  
Director, IGNFA



▶ Ms Meenakshi Negi  
Member Secretary, NCW



▶ Dr Sanjeev Chopra, former Director,  
Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy  
of Administration, Mussoorie



▶ Shri Ajay Bhatnagar  
DG (I), NHRC



## NHRC India's Recent Advisories

### Focus on Human Rights of Most Vulnerable Groups

- Devendra Kumar Nim  
Joint Secretary, NHRC

**T**he National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India has been issuing Advisories for the welfare, protection and promotion of the rights of women and other vulnerable segments of society. These are prepared in consultation with the different stakeholders to facilitate a well-documented, action - oriented, comprehensive approach on several socio-economic and other factors to guide the concerned authorities towards an effective way to address the concerns and the rights issues of the vulnerable and marginalized. As such, the Commission has issued more than 20 Advisories to the government authorities in the Centre and State governments and UT Administrations recommending steps to ameliorate the cause of human rights.

#### Advisory on Protection of Human Rights of the Widows

In June, 2024, the Commission issued an Advisory to ensure widows' welfare and protection of their human rights. The Commission felt the need to issue the Advisory as it observed that widowed women, apart from the emotional distress of losing their spouse, are also often faced with numerous other challenges including, but not limited to social exclusion, loss of income, and even loss of residence.

The Commission noted that as per the 2011 census data, women account for nearly 78% of the total population of 5.6 Crore widows in India.

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**The Commission noted that as per the 2011 census data, women account for nearly 78% of the total population of 5.6 Crore widows in India. Widowed women are often left to fend for themselves after the demise of their spouse.**



Widowed women are often left to fend for themselves after the demise of their spouse. Due to inadequate support from their families and the lack of financial independence, they are subjected to isolation from the community, even forced to leave their homes and seek refuge at shelter homes/ Ashrams. The prevalence of illiteracy and the economics of ageing further worsen their condition.

Therefore, considering the overall welfare of the widowed women, the NHRC, India in its Advisory has focused on 10 key areas and recommended

measures for action by the Centre, States and UT Administrations. These include, making available their proper identification documents; development and maintenance of shelter homes for them; granting them equal access to property; preventing their ouster from their homes and protection from exploitation; creating provisions for skill development and access to sustainable livelihoods, providing access to easy banking and financial independence, granting affordable and accessible healthcare and mental healthcare facilities; building community-based networks; and addressing lack of data on issues of destitute widows. It is also suggested that a centralized database of all government-run homes for widows be made available on the website of the Union Ministry of Women & Child Development (MoWCD), as well as the websites of all the concerned state departments. In addition to these, it is also the need of the hour to make use of the literature and suggestions made previously, including reviewing the Widows (Protection and Maintenance) Bill, 2015<sup>1</sup> introduced by Shri Janardan Singh Sigriwal, MP in the 17<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha, as well as the 2017 report of the Committee constituted under the directions of the Supreme Court so that appropriate legislation could be brought about for the welfare of the widows. The detailed advisory may be accessed from the NHRC, India website [www.nhrc.nic.in](http://www.nhrc.nic.in).

## Advisory on eliminating the need for begging

The Commission also issued an Advisory to the Centre and State governments and UT Administrations to develop strategies aimed at eliminating the need for begging and enhancing the quality of life of those involved in it. Issuing the Advisory, the Commission has noted that despite several initiatives and welfare programmes implemented by both the Centre and State Governments, the issue of begging persists across the country. As per the 2011 census, there were

**The Commission has also noted that the organized groups often manipulate vulnerable children into begging, to enrich the lives of the groups' leaders.**

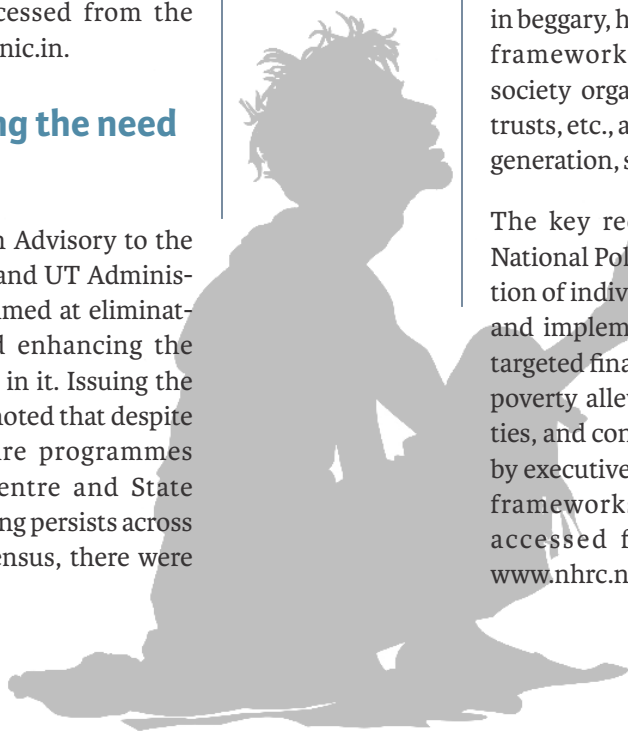
more than 413 thousand beggars and vagrants in India. They include women, children, transgender and the elderly who are forced to beg for survival.

The Commission has also noted that the organized groups often manipulate vulnerable children into begging, to enrich the lives of the groups' leaders. In some cases, those engaged in beggary were abducted and later coerced into begging, generating substantial amounts of money for their captors. Further, because of societal neglect, physically challenged individuals have no choice but to depend on others for survival and daily sustenance.

Therefore, the Commission has felt that to address a gamut of issues surrounding the practice of begging, a comprehensive approach was needed. It should include social welfare interventions, access to basic facilities, strong legal frameworks and its enforcement to protect their rights and help them reintegrate into society.

The Advisory has been divided into eight key areas of action by the concerned authorities to address the cause of begging. These include surveying, identification, mapping and preparing data bank, rehabilitation of individuals engaged in beggary, healthcare, education, legal and policy framework, collaboration with NGOs, civil society organizations, private sector, charitable trusts, etc., access to financial services, awareness generation, sensitization and monitoring.

The key recommendations include having a National Policy for the protection and rehabilitation of individuals involved in beggary to prepare and implement welfare schemes for them with targeted financial assistance, vocational training, poverty alleviation and employment opportunities, and continuous monitoring and supervision by executive actions for implementation of those frameworks. The detailed advisory may be accessed from the NHRC, India website [www.nhrc.nic.in](http://www.nhrc.nic.in).





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# Important intervention

## NHRC, India takes a serious view of 'Nata Pratha'

**T**he protection and promotion of human rights of all sections of society and particularly the vulnerable has been a focus area of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India. With the same spirit, the Commission has taken a serious view of social evil in the form of 'Nata Pratha' under which girls belonging to certain communities of Rajasthan and the adjoining areas in the States of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat are sold, either on a stamp paper or otherwise, in the name of marriage having no legal sanctity in parts of.

Given the unethical and immoral consequences of the 'Nata Pratha' on the women and minor girls, the Commission has called for its eradication and abolition, and issued notices accordingly to the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) and to the States of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat. They have been directed to submit a report on the measures taken or proposed to be taken to address this practice.

The Commission's directions have come following its intervention into a complaint dated 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2020 from the father of a minor girl, who, he claimed was allegedly kidnapped in Rajasthan's Salamgarh, District Pratapgarh. Her body was later found in Danpur, District Banswada in the State. The

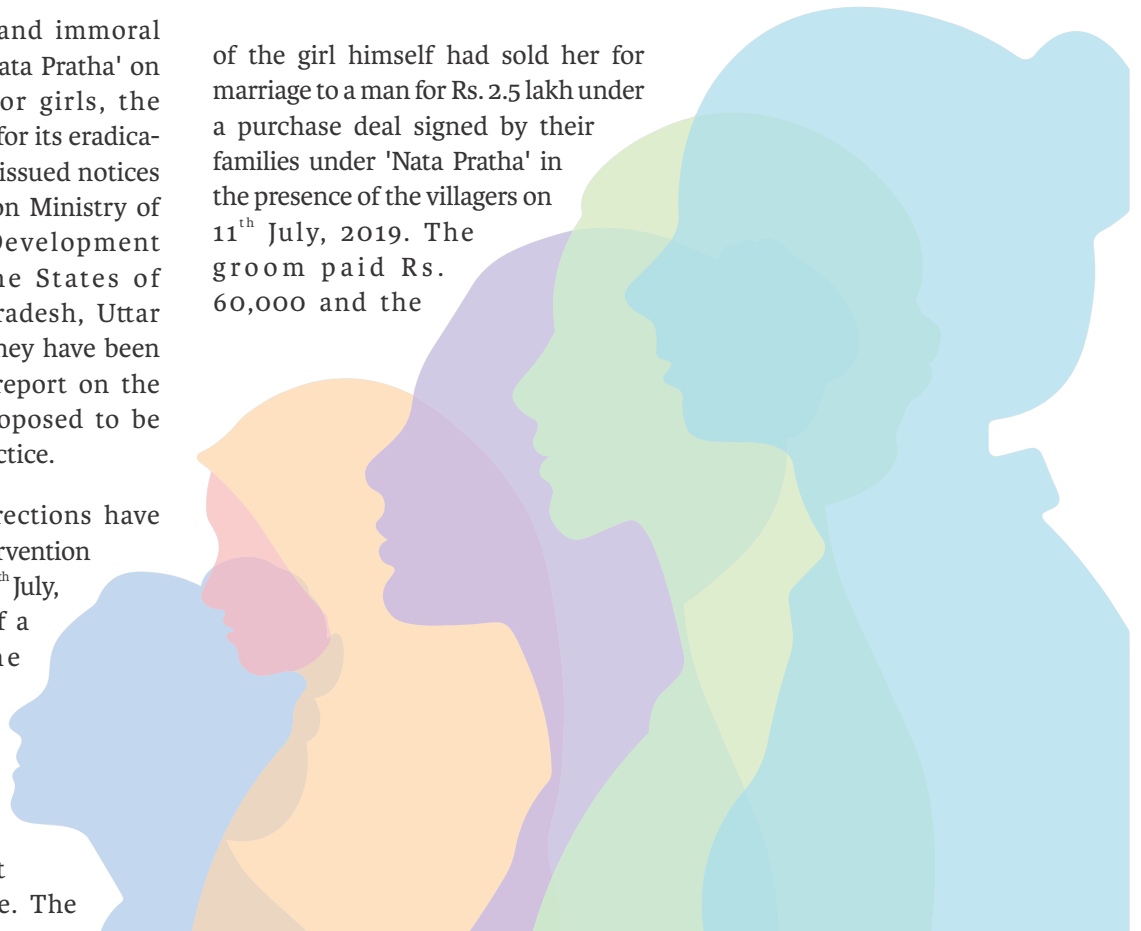
Commission, through its Investigation Division, conducted a spot enquiry into the matter. It was found that the father

**Given the unethical and immoral consequences of the 'Nata Pratha' on the women and minor girls, the Commission has called for its eradication and abolition.**

remaining amount was to be paid by 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2020.

However, when he failed to pay the remaining amount within the stipulated time, the father brought his daughter back and fixed her 'Nata' with another man for Rs. 32,000. The girl objected to this and returned to her earlier husband at Gagarwa. She also made a complaint with the SP, Banswada against her father, alleging that he was an alcoholic and had made several attempts to fix her 'Nata' against her will with many boys to earn

of the girl himself had sold her for marriage to a man for Rs. 2.5 lakh under a purchase deal signed by their families under 'Nata Pratha' in the presence of the villagers on 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2019. The groom paid Rs. 60,000 and the



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money, adding that he had also threatened to kill her. Allegedly, the police failed to take any action on her complaint, and she committed suicide on 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 by consuming poison.

The NHRC enquiry revealed that the father had filed the complaint in the Commission alleging the kidnapping and murder of his daughter to save himself from any action on the police complaint filed by her against him. The Investigation Division suggested legal action against the father for selling his minor daughter and action against the police personnel of Danpur for their inaction on the girl's complaint. The

NHRC spot enquiry team also suggested that the State Government should enact a law to stop the social evil of 'Nata Pratha'.

Thereafter on 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2020, the Commission deputed its Special Rapporteur to make an exhaustive enquiry into the matter of selling girls in Rajasthan, who suggested the urgent need to address this social evil through a multifaceted strategy as it violated basic human rights.

Among various measures, it suggested that besides enacting a law, the individuals involved in forcing women to go for 'Nata Pratha' must be prose-

cuted under laws relating to human trafficking and for selling the minor girls under the relevant provision of the POCSO Act to check this menace. It also suggested setting up a board or a group at the village level to register the cases of 'Nata Pratha' in addition to building awareness and providing education and employment to improve the economic and social status of girls and women.

The Commission shared these inputs with the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development on 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2024, which also opined that the 'Nata Pratha' practice was derogatory to women and needed to be abolished.

## *Suo motu cognizance*

**T**he media reports have been a very useful instrument for the National Human Rights Commission to know about many cases of human rights violations. Over the years, it has taken *suo motu* cognizance of many such issues and brought respite to the victims of human rights violations. During June, 2024, the Commission took *suo motu* cognizance in 14 cases of alleged human rights violations reported by the media and issued notices to the concerned authorities for reports. Summaries of the cases are as follows:

### **Banishing new mothers and menstruating women to distant and isolated huts**

(Case No. 485/10/20/2024-WC)

The media reported that a 19-year-old woman, who underwent a caesarean

operation, was banished to a distant and isolated hut, as per the tradition for new mothers and menstruating women in the Bisadihalli area of Tumakuru district of Karnataka. These huts lack basic facilities, including a bed and toilet.

Reportedly, this practice persists to this date in rural areas of some States and in Karnataka among the people belonging to the Kadu Golla community. During this stay, the women and the newborn children are exposed not only to the vagaries of nature but also to the grave risks posed by the unhygienic conditions, and the threat of street dogs, scorpions and snakes which enter these huts.

The Commission has observed that the contents of the news report, if true, raises serious issues of violation of the human rights of innocent women and young babies. Accordingly, it has

issued a notice to the Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka calling for a detailed report in the matter. The report should include data on the places where such evil practices are still prevalent in the State and details of the steps taken/ proposed to be taken by the government authorities to deal with the subject.

Issuing the notice, the Commission also recorded that in the year 2013, it had received a complaint raising a similar grievance concerning the women belonging to Scheduled Tribes in the Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra. The State Government of Maharashtra had submitted a comprehensive report elaborating that it was making sincere efforts to eradicate this inhuman practice of 'Gaokor/ Kurma'.

According to the media report carried on 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2024, while the young



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people do not want to continue with this practice the elder members of the families and the community support the continuation on the grounds that the huts provide much better conditions to the women and babies than their own houses. Though the government agencies conduct inspections in the village regularly, they were not successful in putting an end to this practice.

## Death of three persons inside in a septic tank

(Case No. 11068/24/52/2024)

On 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2024, the media reported that three workers died after they went down the septic tank of a food outlet in Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh on 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2024. They were hired by a private contractor and were reportedly electrocuted while repairing a motor inside the septic tank without any safety gear. The Commission has issued notices to the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police, Uttar Pradesh calling for a detailed report.

## Anti-labour practices at multinational company warehouses

(Case no. 978/7/5/2024)

The media reported that at one of the warehouses of a multi-national company in Haryana's Manesar, a 24-year-old worker was asked to pledge that after their team's 30-minute tea break had ended, they would not take toilet or water breaks until they finished unloading packages from six trucks, each measuring 24-feet. A female employee at the Manesar warehouse reportedly stated that no restroom facilities were available on the working sites. Reportedly, the labour



associations in India have accused five warehouses in and around Manesar of violating regulations outlined in the Factories Act, 1948. While Labour Inspectors have demanded corrections, there is limited enforcement. The Commission has issued notice to the Secretary, Union Ministry of Labour and Employment calling for a detailed report in the matter.

## Delaying surgery

(Case No. 2132/30/3/2024)

On 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2024, the media reported that the cardiac surgery for a 6-year-old boy from Bihar's Begusarai has been delayed since 2019, when he was three months old. Doctors at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi have reportedly only been providing dates for the surgery on every visit by his family. The child faces extreme physical discomfort. He cannot walk more than 15 steps without experiencing breathlessness, and his physical development has also been hindered. The Commission has issued notices to the Secretary, Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and the Director, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi calling for a detailed report.

## Medical negligence

(Case No. 1000/7/15/2024)

The media reported that a patient was wrongly operated upon his left knee, instead of the injured right knee at a hospital in Panipat, Haryana. Reportedly, when the family members of the patient protested, the doctors immediately conducted surgery on the other knee, but the patient is unable to walk. The hospital charged a sum of Rs. 8,000/- from him and took away his Ayushman Card. The Commission has issued notices to the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police, Haryana, calling for a detailed report.

## Death of two workers while cleaning a septic tank

(Case No. 977/7/19/2024)

On 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2024, the media reported that two brothers died after inhaling poisonous gas while cleaning a septic tank at a private packaging factory near the village Bazidpur Saboli in the Sonipat district, Haryana. Their third companion from the same village had reportedly survived the accident. The police authorities have sent the bodies of the deceased for post-mortem examination and an FIR has been registered against the factory owner.

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The negligence of the factory owner and the local authorities is apparent, as reportedly, the workers were not provided any safety gear while cleaning the septic tank. The Commission has issued notices to the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police, Haryana calling for a detailed report.

## **Sexual exploitation of women workers**

(Case No. 2318/4/23/2024-WC)

On 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2024, the media reported that a number of women working in a private network company in Muzaffarpur district, Bihar, were given intoxicating pills, beaten, and forced to make physical relations by the operator of the company. Reportedly, the number of such victimized girls is stated to be more than one hundred. The operator of the networking company is alleged to have a history of involvement in criminal activities. He is said to take the girls to Nepal in the garb of providing training, where they are physically exploited and if they protest, they are mercilessly beaten up.

A large number of criminal cases have been registered in various districts of Bihar against the company, but the police are yet to take any strict action in the matter. The Commission has issued notices to the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police, Bihar calling for a detailed report.

## **Sexual assault on minor**

(Case No. 11745/24/8/2024)

On 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2024, the media reported that a village Panchayat asked the mother of a minor girl, who was a victim of sexual assault to take a sum of Rs. 5,000/- from her daughter's tormentors and terminate her pregnancy in Singhaoli Ahir area of district Baghpat

in Uttar Pradesh. Reportedly, the aggrieved family also received threats at the behest of the miscreants, if they did not adhere to their diktat. The Commission has issued notices to the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police, Uttar Pradesh calling for a detailed report.

## **Death of 47 people after consuming spurious liquor**

(Case No. 1195/22/0/2024)

On 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2024, the media reported that more than 47 people lost their lives after consuming spurious liquor in Kallakurichi district, Tamil Nadu. Reportedly, many people, including women, were under treatment in hospitals, some of whom were in a critical condition. The Commission observed that the States have exclusive power to regulate the production, manufacture, possession, transport, purchase, and sale of intoxicating liquors. Accordingly, it has issued notices to the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police, Government of Tamil Nadu calling for a detailed report.

## **Medical negligence at a government-run hospital**

(Case No. 634/34/4/2024)

On 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2024, the media reported that two unknown mentally ill patients were not being provided any medical treatment by the doctors in the government-run Shaheed Nirmal Mahto Medical College Hospital (SNMMCH) in Dhanbad, Jharkhand. The media report also carried the pictures of the alleged helpless patients lying without clothes on the floor. The hospital staff were also allegedly providing them food in polythene bags. Reportedly, the

Superintendent of the hospital has stated that there are no doctors available in the facility to treat mentally ill patients. The Commission has issued notice to the Chief Secretary, Government of Jharkhand calling for a detailed report.

## **Sexual assault of a woman by a police constable**

(Case No. 2355/30/0/2024-WC)

On 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2024, the media reported that a Delhi Police constable befriended a woman, sexually assaulted her and also made a video of the act. Later, threatening to post the video on social media, he continued to commit rape on her. Reportedly, the victim had been visiting the Kalyanpuri and Malviya Nagar police stations in Delhi for over 15 days, but the police were yet to take any action on her complaint. The Commission has issued notice to the Commissioner of Police, Delhi calling for a detailed report on the matter.

## **Suicide of two brothers due to police atrocity**

(Case No. 12403/24/1/2024)

On 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2024, the media reported that two brothers of Agra committed suicide within three days due to the alleged harassment by the police personnel of Sadabad police station in Hathras, Uttar Pradesh. Allegedly, the police had wrongly picked the brothers one after the other and released them only after taking a hefty amount in bribes. They were further mounting pressure on the brothers to pay some more amount as bribe. Reportedly, a suicide note in this regard was left by one of the brothers. The Commission has issued a notice to the Director General of Police, Uttar Pradesh calling for a detailed report.

# Recommendations for relief

One of the primary responsibilities of the National Human Rights Commission is to address cases of human rights violations, listen to the grievances of victims, and recommend appropriate relief in such instances. It regularly

takes up various cases and directs the concerned authorities to provide relief to the victims. In June, 2024, monetary relief of more than Rs. 80.75 lakh was recommended to the victims or their next of kin (NoK) in the 22 cases, wherein it was found that public

servants had either violated human rights or had been negligent in protecting them. The specific details of these cases can be downloaded from the NHRC website by logging the case number given in the table below:

| S. No. | Case Number         | Nature of complaint                                   | Amounts (Rs. in lakh) | Authority      |
|--------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| 1.     | 798/1/10/2023-JCD   | Death in judicial custody                             | 05.00                 | Andhra Pradesh |
| 2.     | 7243/30/2/2022-JCD  | Death in judicial custody                             | 05.00                 | Delhi          |
| 3.     | 207/7/6/2023-JCD    | Death in judicial custody                             | 05.00                 | Haryana        |
| 4.     | 2844/7/15/2022-JCD  | Death in judicial custody                             | 05.00                 | Haryana        |
| 5.     | 476/13/23/2022-JCD  | Death in judicial custody                             | 05.00                 | Maharashtra    |
| 6.     | 1353/18/13/2023-JCD | Death in judicial custody                             | 05.00                 | Odisha         |
| 7.     | 519/18/24/2023-JCD  | Death in judicial custody                             | 05.00                 | Odisha         |
| 8.     | 1107/20/14/2020-JCD | Death in judicial custody                             | 05.00                 | Rajasthan      |
| 9.     | 1561/20/21/2021-JCD | Death in judicial custody                             | 05.00                 | Rajasthan      |
| 10.    | 5055/20/19/2022-JCD | Death in judicial custody                             | 7.50                  | Rajasthan      |
| 11.    | 411/36/26/2022-JCD  | Death in judicial custody                             | 05.00                 | Telangana      |
| 12.    | 713/25/5/2020-JCD   | Death in custody judicial                             | 05.00                 | West Bengal    |
| 13.    | 5001/4/1/2022       | Harassment of students and parents                    | 00.25                 | Bihar          |
| 14.    | 5218/4/11/2022      | Educational/ technical institutions (Govt./ Pvt.)     | 01.00                 | Bihar          |
| 15.    | 992/12/18/2023      | Abuse of power                                        | 00.25                 | Madhya Pradesh |
| 16.    | 31144/24/30/2023    | Failure in taking lawful action                       | 00.25                 | Uttar Pradesh  |
| 17.    | 57/30/9/2022        | Children                                              | 05.00                 | Delhi          |
| 18.    | 7558/24/69/2023     | Murder of child                                       | 05.00                 | Uttar Pradesh  |
| 19.    | 1372/18/7/2023      | Medical negligence                                    | 04.00                 | Odisha         |
| 20.    | 19398/24/48/2020    | Denial of doctors/ para medical staff during pandemic | 01.50                 | Uttar Pradesh  |
| 21.    | 32000/24/16/2022    | Death due to electrocution                            | 05.00                 | Uttar Pradesh  |
| 22.    | 6448/30/8/2022      | Miscellaneous                                         | 00.50                 | Delhi          |



# Payment of relief to the victims

**T**he Commission closed 05 cases, either on receipt of the compliance reports and proof of payment from the public authorities

or by giving other observations/directions. An amount of Rs. 14.25 lakh was paid to the victims or their next of kin (NoK) on the recommendations of

the Commission. The specific details of these cases can be downloaded from the NHRC website by logging the case number given in the table below:

| S. No | Case Number        | Nature of complaint                 | Amounts (Rs. in lakh) | Authority      |
|-------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| 1.    | 381/33/11/2021-JCD | Death in judicial custody           | 05.00                 | Chhattisgarh   |
| 2.    | 168/34/16/2022-JCD | Death in judicial custody           | 03.00                 | Jharkhand      |
| 3.    | 966/20/19/2018     | Alleged death in home               | 03.00                 | Rajasthan      |
| 4.    | 936/12/31/2021     | Negligence of medical professionals | 03.00                 | Madhya Pradesh |
| 5.    | 396/3/2/2022       | Miscellaneous                       | 00.25                 | Assam          |

## Case studies

**I**n many cases, the Commission, contrary to the claims of the concerned State authorities, has found that the human rights of the victims were violated due to their unlawful action, inaction or omission. Therefore, the Commission, in accordance with the Protection of Human Rights Act, not only recommended punitive action against erring officials on case-to-case basis, but also recommended monetary relief to the victims of human rights violations or their next of kin. The Commission also received reports of compliance of its recommendations by the respective state authorities. Summaries of some of these cases are as under:

### Death in judicial custody

(Case No. 168/34/16/2022-JCD)

The matter pertained to the death of a man in judicial custody while undergoing treatment in the hospital of Birsa

Munda Central Jail, Hotwar, Ranchi, Jharkhand in 2022, where he had been jailed since 2016. Based on the material on record, the Commission found that the deceased was not given adequate medical care and attention, and there was continuous negligence on the part of the Jail authorities that amounted to the violation of the human rights of the prisoner. Therefore, the Commission recommended that the Government of Jharkhand pay a relief of Rs. 3 lakh to the next of kin of the victim, which was paid.

### Death of a boy in a correctional home

(Case No. 966/20/19/2018)

The matter pertained to the death of a boy in Child Correctional Home in Jodhpur, Rajasthan in 2018. Based on the material on record received from the concerned State authorities in response to its notices, the Commis-

sion found that the boy died due to the negligence of the authorities of the Home. The protection and wellness of the deceased was the responsibility of the Child Correctional Home, Jodhpur, and the State was vicariously responsible for such unnatural deaths. Therefore, it recommended that the Government of Rajasthan pay a relief of Rs. 3 lakh to the next of kin of victim, which was complied.

### Suicide of a prisoner

(Case No. 381/33/11/2021-JCD)

The matter pertained to the death of a man in judicial custody in Sub Jail Manandergarh, Chhattisgarh in 2021. The prisoner committed suicide by hanging in the toilet of the jail. Based on the material on record, the Commission found that the jail authorities failed in their primary responsibility of protecting the rights of the prisoner, resulting in his death. The Commis-

sion recommended that the Government of Rajasthan pay a relief of Rs. 5 lakh to the next of kin of the deceased which was complied.

### Death of a worker during sewage line excavation (Case No. 2500/7/15/2023)

The matter pertained to the death of a man during sewage line excavation near a railway station in Panipat district, Haryana in 2023. Reportedly, another worker was injured during this incident. The Commission issued notices to the concerned authorities in the Government of Haryana calling for reports. Based on the material on record, it was found that the victim died due to negligence of Government authorities. The Commission recommended a relief of Rs. 11,94,144/- and the contractor paid Rs. 12,00,000/- to the next of kin of the victim.

### Death of a man during construction work (Case No. 6611/30/8/2022)

The matter pertained to the death of a worker during re-development work at Safdarjung Railway station in Delhi in 2022. Based on the material received on record from the concerned authorities in response to the Commission's notices, a report was received from the

office of the Director/GS, Ministry of Railways, Railway Board, New Delhi, along with other reports stating that Rs. 2.5 lakh compensation was paid to the family of the deceased through cheque. It was further reported that compensation of Rs. 13,38,675/- was paid to the victim's family by the M/s HDFC Agro General Insurance Company Limited, as ordered by the Court of Commissioner for Employees Compensation.

## Spot enquiry

On 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2024 the Commission's officers in its Investigation Division conducted a spot enquiry in case no. 6702/30/8/2024 alleging police inaction in registering an FIR in a murder case at Ambedkar Nagar police station, New Delhi.

# Visits of Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India has designated 15 Special Rapporteurs to monitor human rights conditions across various regions of the country. They conduct visits to shelter homes, prisons, observation homes, and similar institutions, compiling reports for the Commission that detail their observations and suggestions for future action. Additionally, the Commission has appointed 17 Special Monitors tasked with overseeing specific thematic human rights issues and reporting their findings to the Commission. Throughout June 2024, both Special Rapporteurs and Monitors conducted visits to numerous locations.

## I.) Special Rapporteurs

- From 7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2024, Shri Mahesh Kumar Singla visited the Model Prison in Chandigarh and Women Jail Ludhiana, Punjab to assess the condition of the inmates and the facilities made available to them.
- From 23<sup>rd</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2024, Dr Ashok Kumar Verma visited the District Jail and Observation Home at Shimla and Sub Jail, Kinnaur in Himachal Pradesh to make an assessment of the human rights situation of the inmates.
- From 6<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> June & 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2024 Smt. Suchitra Sinha visited various institutions situated at Gumla and Jamshedpur in Jharkhand.



▶ NHRC Special Rapporteur, Shri Mahesh Kumar Singla on an onsite inspection in Punjab

◀ NHRC Special Rapporteur, Smt. Suchitra Sinha on an onsite inspection in Jharkhand



- Between 17<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 2024 Shri Umesh Kumar visited District Jail, Diphu, Karbi-Anglong, Assam to access the facilities made available for the prison inmates.

## ii.) Special Monitors

- From 23<sup>rd</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2024, Dr. Yogesh Dube visited a 'one stop centre' set up in Tirupati district of Andhra Pradesh for immediate support of the women affected by sexual assault/ domestic violence and Balaka Greh/ Girls Home to assess the

facilities made available for the inmates. He also visited Chittoor district to assess the utilization of the national fund for persons with disabilities and the implementation of central and state government schemes for their welfare.

- From 24<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2024, Shri Prem Singh Bisht undertook a visit to a training institute located in District Hissar, Punjab to inspect Public Sector Units prone to human rights violation.

# Research on human rights issues

**T**he National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India promotes and sponsors research studies on various aspects of human rights for building awareness and seeking solutions to the challenges to human rights. The Commission has approved the findings of the six research studies commissioned by it and sent these along with recommendations to the concerned public authorities for necessary action. The six research studies are as under:

## 1. 'Prevalence of Malnutrition and Associated Factors among children aged 3-5 years attending ICDS Anganwadis: A study of Northern India'

The objectives of the study, conducted by Dr. Archana Dassi, was to assess the prevalence of malnutrition among children aged 3-5 years attending Integrated Child Development

Services (ICDS) Anganwadi centres, explore the factors associated with malnutrition among children, and study the challenges and nutrition practices (both at home and at Anganwadi centre) among young children to identify gaps in policies and their implementation. The study also aimed to design nutritional intervention for children attending Anganwadi centres. It was found that many Anganwadi centres lacked proper kitchens, and storage, electric-



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ity and toilet facilities. High junk food consumption among children was also reported. It was felt necessary that the Anganwadi workers and supervisors were trained in Social and Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC) to improve community nutrition practices. The inclusion of cost effective, locally available nutritious food in diet plans supported by adequate funding was also recommended, among other measures.

## **2. 'Education for Refugee Learners in India: Visualizing Policy-Oriented Innovation and Technological Approach for Increasing Access'**

The Commission had entrusted a study on 'Education for Refugee Learners in India: Visualizing Policy-Oriented Innovation and Technological Approach for Increasing Access' in collaboration with the Rajiv Gandhi School of Intellectual Property Law, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kharagpur to P.I. Dr. Shuvro Prosun Sarker, Assistant Professor, Gandhi School of Intellectual Property Law, IIT, Kharagpur.

The study found that a significant portion of refugees lack proper registration documents, leading to difficulties securing admission to educational institutions. They often encounter discrimination, affecting their integration into the local educational system. Government schools in refugee areas lack necessary facilities and experienced teachers, impacting the quality of education. The significant recommendations included prevention of discrimination and simplification of the document process for refugees by accepting various identification documents that can

facilitate their school enrolment. The need for a uniform policy was also recommended to ensure equal educational opportunities for refugee children, in addition to addressing issues like access, integration, language support, psychosocial assistance, and higher education opportunities.

## **3. 'Domestic Workers in South India and North-East: A Situational Analysis from Dignity & Rights Perspective'**

The Commission had entrusted a study on "Domestic Workers in South India and North East: A Situational Analysis from Dignity and Rights Perspective" in collaboration with Central University of Tamil Nadu. Dr. Lekha D. Bhat, Assistant Professor, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, in the same university is the Principal Investigator of the research study.

The study found that the average age of domestic workers in the two regions is 40.5 years with experience ranging from 5 to 45 years indicating low social mobility. 92% domestic workers belong from urban areas, 8% from rural including 56% Hindus and 43% Christians. 37.2% were found to be high school educated, 20% have higher secondary education. 50% of them have 4 to 5 family members. 62% own houses with better conditions in Kerala and Mizoram than Tamil Nadu. 32% have private taps, 47% depend on public taps. 42% of domestic workers own land, which is mostly registered in man's name. 68.5% reported health issues, including backache (19.5%), ligament tear (28.3%), and chronic illnesses. 58.2% rely on relatives, 13.3% use public healthcare and receive minimal help from employers.

It was also reported that 83% feel humiliated, 97% experienced verbal abuse, 98% faced abusive language, and 33% faced sexual harassment at workplaces. Additionally, 92% of the domestic workers were unaware of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013.

The recommendations emphasize the need for comprehensive policy and legal frameworks to recognize domestic work as legitimate employment and to ensure labor rights. Field interventions which focus on data-driven approaches and capacity-building initiatives, and multi-stakeholder involvement are crucial for advocacy and implementing reforms. Overall, these measures aim to enhance the quality of life for domestic workers while addressing the unique challenges they face.

## **4. 'Local Self Governance and Promotion of Dalit (SC & ST) Rights: A Comparative Study of Malkangiri District in Odisha and Gumla District in Jharkhand'**

The Commission had entrusted a research study to Dr. Umesh Chandra Sahoo, as Principal Investigator on "Local Self Governance and Promotion of Dalit (SC&ST) Rights: A Comparative Study of Malkangiri District in Odisha and Gumla District in Jharkhand" in collaboration with the Gurukul Foundation, Bhubaneswar.

It was found that there were disparities in participation among social groups, with lower participation of SCs and STs in Gumla compared to Malkangiri. Skepticism about the effectiveness of the welfare policies was noted due to poverty and lack of awareness. The panchayat, gram sabhas and local self-

government systems needed impetus to come out of the passiveness in addressing local issues. It was found that SC and ST representatives in Panchayati Raj Institutions were not genuinely empowered despite constitutional provisions. Panchayat Secretaries continue to be influenced by local political elites. The study recommended, among others, training of elected representatives and grass-roots functionaries on rules, regulations, and policies besides effective implementation of the PESA Act (Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas Act) in Odisha and Jharkhand to promote the rights of SCs and STs.

### 5. 'Promotion of Human Rights in the Rural Local Self Governance: Evidence from Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh'

The Commission had entrusted a study to Dr. Puneet Pathak on "Promotion of Human Rights in the Rural Local Self Governance: Evidence from Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh" in collaboration with the School of Legal Studies, Central University of Punjab. This research revealed that only 13.33% of members have graduated or have other higher degrees. It was recommended therefore, that persons with higher education should actively participate in voting and contesting in elections for the development of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).

There should be proper mechanisms and funding to train the PRI representatives on different schemes related to education, health, work, social security and political participation. It is necessary that the Panchayats become self – reliant and utilize the funds properly.

Members of PRIs are unaware of the proper ways to utilize funds, which remain unutilized and are returned to the funding agency. Therefore, PRI members should be trained to use tied and untied funds interchangeably so that scarcity of funds would not be the reason to violate fundamental human rights.

### 6. 'A study on the Status, Functioning and Effectiveness of Swadhar Grehs and Ujjawala Homes for Women and adolescent girl'

The study was entrusted to Prof. (Dr.) S. Shanthakumar, Vice Chancellor, Gujarat National Law University. It was found that in the case of Swadhar Greh residents, 93.61% respondents from Tamil Nadu, 47.22% in Gujarat, 72.72% in Chhattisgarh, and 64.79% in Rajasthan indicated that they faced financial hardships prior to their stay in the Swadhar Greh. In the case of residents of Ujjawala Homes, 93.3% respondents were facing financial

hardships out of which 60% were in Chhattisgarh.

In Swadhar Greh in Tamil Nadu and Gujarat, majority of the residents were moderately satisfied with hygiene and maintenance of the mess/ canteen. In Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, the majority of residents were highly satisfied with the hygiene. However, in Rajasthan, 12.67% residents were highly dissatisfied with the hygiene and maintenance of mess/ canteen.

Regarding the provision of clothes, most of the residents of Swadhar Greh reported that they were given clothes every 3 to 6 months. 48.85% respondents in Tamil Nadu, 16.66% in Gujarat, 81.81% in Chhattisgarh, and 67.60% in Rajasthan stated that they received clothes every 3 months, while 49.77% respondents in Tamil Nadu, 83.33% in Gujarat, 12.67% residents of Swadhar Greh Rajasthan and 18.18% residents of Swadhar Greh Chhattisgarh stated that they were given clothes once in 6 months. All residents of Ujjawala Home,

► Women learning skills at a Swadhar Greh



Chhattisgarh stated that they were given clothes once in 3 months.

In the Swadhar Grehs in all four states, majority of residents were aware of the provision to provide for pocket money to each resident. In all four states, most residents always received pocket money and majority agreed that the amount of money received was constant throughout the year. In the Ujjawala Home in Tamil Nadu, majority of residents were not aware that of the provision to receive pocket money from the Home. In the Ujjawala Homes in Chhattisgarh and Tamil Nadu, none of the residents received any pocket money.

The majority of the respondents in both Swadhar Grehs and Ujjawala Homes were unaware of the Swadhar Greh and Ujjawala Home schemes before coming to stay in shelter homes. This indicates the lack of awareness among ordinary people about the Swadhar Greh and Ujjawala Home schemes.

It was observed that numerous districts in Tamil Nadu- Tenkasi, Tuticorin, Mayiladuthurai, Ramanathapuram, Krishnagiri, Kallakurichi, Ranipet, and Erode, do not have homes for women in distress. It is recommended that the government set up Shelter Homes and

Ujjawala Homes in all districts of the state, and the government may consider setting up more homes in districts with higher populations. There should be Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in place about the functioning of Swadhar Grehs and Ujjawala Homes to provide guidance to caretakers and staff on how to run them. These guidelines should be made available to all such homes and care should be taken to monitor their implementation. Adequate space for recreational activities must be provided in the Swadhar Greh and Ujjawala Home.

## Human rights awareness capacity building



► NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal inaugurating the summer internship programme

### Summer internship programme

The highly-coveted month-long Summer Internship Programme of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) began at Commission's premises on 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2024. Out of more than 1,400 applicants for this highly sought-after programme, 80 students from diverse academic backgrounds across the country were selected to attend the programme.

Inaugurating the programme, Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General, NHRC, encouraged the students to embrace the Indian ethos of empathy and compassion to protect and promote human rights, for which sensitivity and responsiveness are most crucial. He said that we all must draw inspiration from the lives and works of people like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and others who evolved and dedicated their entire life to the task of improving the lives of others.

He further added that since the present generation is enjoying the fruits of the hard work put in by the earlier generations, it was our duty to make the Earth and our society, a better place for coming generations. We live in an interconnected





► A section of the participants

world which relies on certain universal values. It is therefore our responsibility to imbibe those values and do everything possible to promote and uphold them.

Shri Lal said that the Preamble of the Constitution of India shows the vision of the country. We must internalize the essence of the Fundamental Rights and Duties enshrined in our Constitution, as well as the cherished principles of equality, justice, liberty and fraternity to contribute in the making of a better society and a developed India. Every person must have an improved quality of life and must be able to live with dignity.

The Secretary General also highlighted India's robust human rights protection framework, which includes Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy enshrined in the Constitution, powers to the Supreme Court and High Courts to protect the Fundamental Rights of people, various National level constitutional and statutory Commissions and their state counterparts, the National Human Rights Commission, and 27 State Human Rights Commissions. He

**Out of more than 1,400 applicants for this highly sought-after programme, 80 students from diverse academic backgrounds across the country were selected to attend the programme.**

stated that the NHRC collaborates with all these institutions as well as with over 30 Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors, and 12 Core Groups comprising experts from NGOs, civil society, academia and human rights defenders.

These groups as well as Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors work as the eyes and ears of the Commission and suggest measures to the Commission to protect the human rights of all human beings in the country. He expressed hope that the interns would make the best use of this opportunity to understand the spirit behind the fundamental rights and duties as enshrined in our Constitution and help in generating awareness among the masses.

NHRC Joint Secretary, Shri Devendra Kumar Nim gave an overview of the internship programme. He highlighted the features of the internship programme, which included sessions by experts on various aspects and thematic areas of human rights, and field visits to jails, police stations, and government/ NGO shelter homes to have a first-hand understanding of their functioning.



## Collaborative programmes

On 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2024, NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Shri D.K. Nim presided as the Guest of Honour in the inaugural session of the one-day Training Program on human rights for officials working in Juvenile Homes, Nursing Homes & the Health Sector organized at the ILI, Delhi in collaboration with the Commission.



## Student & faculty visits

The National Human Rights Commission invites college-level students and their faculty members to visit the Commission to raise awareness of human rights among them and to gain an understanding of human rights, their protection mechanism, and how it functions in accordance with the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA) 1993.

During the month of June, around 81 visiting students & three faculty members from Delhi University's Law Centre-I and Law Centre -II Faculty of Law, University of Delhi visited NHRC. They were briefed about the functioning of the Law & Investigation Divisions and the complaints



► NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Shri D.K. Nim inaugurating the programme



management system by senior officers of the Commission. They were also administered the human rights pledge.

## Gender sensitization programme

On 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2024, NHRC, India organized a gender sensitization program for its officers and staff. As a guest speaker, Dr Charu Wali Khanna, Advocate, Supreme Court & an expert on the rights of women, held an interactive session on 'Empowering women at the workplace.' She gave an overview of the POSH Act, the functioning of the Internal Complaint Committee, and laws associated with sexual harassment at the workplace. Joint Secretary, Smt Anita Sinha, Director, Lt Col Virender Singh, and other senior officers were in attendance.

◄ Dr Charu Wali Khanna, Advocate, Supreme Court & an expert on the rights of women addressing the officers and staff of the Commission



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# NHRC, India observes International Yoga Day



She highlighted how the Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's appeal at the 69<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly for observing an International Yoga Day for the physical and mental well-being of people was adopted and has now influenced the entire world. She said that Yoga should not be linked with religion. She said that the United Nation deciding to observe the International Yoga Day on 21<sup>st</sup> June every year is also very significant because it is the longest day for the Sun's journey from east to west giving its maximum energy for life on the Earth.

Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani also briefly threw light on the various concepts of Yoga and different ancient Indian texts of wisdom including eight sutras given in Patanjali's Ashtang Yoga including yamas (abstinences), niyama (observances), asana (posture), pranayama (breathing), pratyahara (withdrawal), dharana (concentration), dhyana (meditation) and samadhi (absorption) which are key to practicing Yoga for overall well-being of people.

► NHRC, India Acting Chairperson, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani addressing the senior officers and staff of the Commission

**N**HRC, India Acting Chairperson, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani led the senior officers and staff of the Commission in performing Yoga on the occasion of International Yoga Day on 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2024. Earlier, addressing them, she said that Yoga is a 'Sanatan' Indian tradition, which has a scientific basis for ensuring good health and happiness of individuals and society. Yoga should be practiced everyday not only for one's own good but also for universal peace.



► Yoga session in progress



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# NHRC in the international arena

**T**he National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India continues to engage with various international programmes to foster exchange of ideas on various aspects of human rights. Several foreign institutional delegates visit the Commission and meet the Chairperson, Members and the Secretary General to understand the functioning of the Commission for the promotion and protection of human rights. The Commission's Chairperson, Members and other senior officers also visit various international forums to share their thoughts on the achievements of the Commission, interact with other NHRIs, and discuss the challenges to human rights in the fast-evolving world.

## 56<sup>th</sup> Session of Human Rights Council

As part of the 56<sup>th</sup> Session of Human Rights Council, there were interactive dialogue sessions on various thematic issues with the Special Rapporteurs and various Working Groups on different thematic issues concerning human rights for which statements were sought from the respective NHRIs. During the sessions in June 2024, the NHRC, India through its Acting Chairperson, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, and Director General (Investigation), Shri Ajay Bhatnagar gave the video statements on the following subjects:

### i.) Internally displaced persons

On 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2024, the NHRC, India Acting Chairperson, Smt. Vijaya

Bharathi Sayani in her video statement in the interactive dialogue with Special Rapporteur on Internally Displaced Persons said that the internally displaced persons, as individuals or groups, are forced to flee their homes due to various reasons such as terrorism, armed conflict, violence, human rights violations, natural disasters, or development projects.

She said that the challenges confronted by the displaced sufferers in India, such as Kashmiri Pandits, people from Assam, Chhattisgarh, Manipur, Jharkhand and many others, are numerous and daunting. They need better access to shelter, healthcare, and education, as livelihood opportunities are often limited or non-existent, coupled with risk to physical safety and vulnerability to exploitation, abuse, and violations. Many face the constant threat of forced return to unsafe areas, deprived of the legal support they desperately need.

But amidst these challenges, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani said that there is hope in the collective efforts of organizations like the NHRC, India, playing a pivotal role in advocating for the rights and needs of internally displaced persons. Through its various initiatives, it seeks to provide relief, rehabilitation and protection to those affected.

She said that the NHRC, India stands as a beacon of hope for the displaced through investigation, rehabilitation and legal support. It collaborates with Government, NGOs and international bodies and conducts awareness camps, workshops, and seminars, all aimed at ensuring that the rights of

internally displaced persons are safeguarded and respected.

### ii.) Trafficking

On 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2024, NHRC, India Director General (Investigation), Shri Ajay Bhatnagar in his video statement in the interactive dialogue with Special Rapporteur on Trafficking said that India is deeply committed to upholding human rights and confronting the scourge of human trafficking with unwavering determination. To fulfill its international commitments, India has been a member of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and a signatory to its protocol since the year 2011.

He said that India's commitment to eradicating human trafficking is enshrined in the Constitution of India. Provisions such as Article 14, Article 23, and Article 39(e) serve as cornerstones in India's legal framework against trafficking. India has enacted robust legislation such as the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, to address various forms of trafficking.

Shri Bhatnagar said that the NHRC, India has taken initiatives to enquire into matters related to human trafficking and has followed up by issuing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Combating Trafficking of Persons. As India's position on human trafficking is anchored in its constitutional commitments, India remains steadfast in its resolve to combat this violation of human dignity.

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# News from State Human Rights Commissions

The promotion and protection of human rights is always a work in progress given the ever-expanding dimensions of human life and related challenges. In India, besides the democratically elected governments constitutionally committed to ensuring the welfare of the people by protecting their basic human rights, there are institutions of legislature, judiciary, a vibrant media, the National Human Rights Commission and State Human Rights Commissions, as well as the other National Commissions and their state counterparts working as custodian of rights issues of various segments of society. This column intends to highlight the exceptional activities of the SHRCs undertaken to protect and promote human rights.

## The Punjab State Human Rights Commission

The Punjab State Human Rights Commission (PSHRC) was set up on 16th July, 1997 and is completing 27 years of its journey. Its present Chairperson is Justice Sant Prakash and the Member is Justice Nirmaljit Kaur. Since its inception, till 30th June, 2024, PSHRC registered a total of 325477 cases. From 1st January, 2024 to 30th June, 2024, the Commission registered 4461 cases of human rights violation in the state and disposed of 4596 cases including pending cases in previous years. Its focus has been on the swift resolution of the cases.

Besides the resolution of cases, the Commission is also spreading human rights literacy. For the past 15 years, it



Punjab SHRC Chairperson, Justice Sant Prakash visiting Faridkot Jail

has conducted biannual four weeks summer and winter internship programmes. In June 2024 alone, the PSHRC trained 90 interns. The Commission continued with its unique initiative of “Each One Each Ten” during the internships, wherein each intern is required to educate at least ten individuals about human rights and the working of the Human Rights Commission.

The Chairperson has also visited different jails in Punjab to assess their conditions and facilities for the inmates to make recommendations for improvements. Recently, he took a significant step towards promoting and safeguarding the human rights of the state by formally requesting the state authorities to comply with the implementation of various guidelines and advisories issued by the National Human Rights Commission.

## Chhattisgarh State Human Rights Commission

The Chhattisgarh State Human Rights Commission (CGSHRC) was established on 16<sup>th</sup> April, 2001. In addition to the resolution of the complaints of human rights violations in the state, the Commission is focused on spreading human rights literacy, particularly among the youth by organizing several competitions including essay writing, debates, slogan/ poster making, and quizzes on human rights issues.





► A function organized by the Chhattisgarh SHRC in collaboration with the State Government to mark International Women's Day

The other focus area of the Commission has been on spreading awareness about gender equality and women empowerment. For this, the Commission recently collaborated with the state law department and J. Yoganadam Chhattisgarh Mahavidyalaya, Raipur to organize a three-day event from 4th to 7th March, 2024 in the run up to the International Women's Day on 8th March under the theme 'Promote Inclusion'. Addressing the participants, the State Governor, Shri Bishwabhusan Harichandan, the CGSHRC Acting Chairperson, Shri Giridhari Nayak and the Principal of the J. Yoganadam Chhattisgarh Mahavidyalaya Dr. Amitabh Banerjee emphasized the significance of gender equality and women empowerment to make an inclusive and progressive society. The winners of various competitions were also presented awards.

► Human rights awareness programme by Tripura SHRC in progress



## The Tripura Human Rights Commission

The Tripura Human Rights Commission (THRC) has been functional w.e.f. January, 2016. From January to June, 2024, the THRC registered 51 cases on the basis of complaints & 11 cases on suo motu cognizance, out of which it has disposed 46 complaint cases & 04 suo motu cases recommending relief to the victims or their next of kin. The TSHRC has been organizing awareness programs to educate the people regarding human rights. It has organized three awareness programs w.e.f. January, 2024 to June, 2024 in three separate districts of the state namely, Gomati, Sepahijala and South Tripura district, covering over 990 participants including locals, Gram Panchayat Pradhans, NSS Volunteers, NGO Members, Police personnel, officials from the Department of Education, PWD (R&B), ICA & Forest.

For awareness programmes, the Commission translated the relevant provisions of the PHRA, 1993, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the local language. Apart from this, THRC is also publishing Half Yearly Newsletters, other leaflets and Annual Reports. The Commission has organized internship programs for College & University level students to enhance their knowledge of human rights.



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# Voices of victims getting relief

Over the years since its inception on 12<sup>th</sup> October, 1993, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India has brought succor to various victims of human rights violations or their next of kin through its interventions. This column carries a brief extract on the voices of such victims who have been beneficiaries of the NHRC's recommendations implemented by the different government authorities.

## Road connectivity and other basic facilities

(Case No.734/18/8/2015)

Deula and Nisaniput villages in district Koraput of Odisha did not have road connectivity and other basic facilities for long till the Commission heard their complaint in this regard, which eventually resulted in them getting these facilities. 19 villagers of Deula and Nisaniput in district Koraput in Odisha, have conveyed their gratitude to the Commission in writing, adding that basic facilities were now provided by the Government of Odisha, ensuring the protection of their human rights.

Since the construction of the road and the bridge is nearing completion, it is a dream come true for the villagers. With the all-weather connectivity, the villagers are now hopeful that the ambulance and fire-brigades can easily access their village. This has also increased the possibility of better transporting their agricultural products to markets easily, thereby helping them to earn their livelihood, besides ensuring access to primary education facilities to all children. They also thanked the social activists

and human rights defender Shri Radhakant Tripathi for taking up their cause with the Commission resulting in the much-required relief.

## Compensation to the displaced villagers

(Case No.439/18/18/09-10)

The complainant, Shri Radhakanta Tripathy, who is a human rights activist, through his complaint dated 10.11.2009 brought to the notice of the Commission, the case of human rights violations due to the forceful displacement of more than twenty thousand families. These included people belonging to Scheduled Castes, those living Below the Poverty Line, handicapped, poor farmers, 'Socially and Educationally Backward Classes' who were displaced from their homes and agricultural lands illegally under the garb of implementation of government projects, namely, 'Reba Kapali River-Canal Sanskar Project' in Bhadrak District of Odisha. The Commission also received many complaints from the affected victims of the Salandi-Nalia River Project and accordingly

about 409 cases were registered and notices were issued to the Chief Secretary, Government of Odisha calling for requisite reports.

During the continuous follow up of the matter with the state authorities over of nearly 9 years, the Commission ensured that compensation was paid to the affected under the provisions of Right to Fair Compensation & Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation & Resettlement Act, 2013. In some villages, the social impact studies were undertaken and after receipt of the final report, necessary steps will be taken for disbursement of compensation under the provisions of the Act to the affected families.

One of the beneficiaries of the Commission's interventions, Shri. Prabhash Ku. Barik of Barapadi village, district Bhadrak has written to the Commission that all his fellow villagers have received compensation. He has also annexed a document signed by his fellow villagers in acknowledgement of the relief they got after the Commission's proactive engagement with the state government.



# Farewell

## NHRC Chairperson Justice Arun Mishra and Member, Shri Rajiv Jain complete their tenure

On 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2024, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India held a valedictory event in the honour of Justice Arun Mishra, Chairperson, NHRC and Shri Rajiv Jain, Member, NHRC upon the completion of their three-year tenure in the Commission on 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2024. They joined the Commission on 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2021.

Addressing the gathering, Justice Mishra appreciated the support of Members, senior officers and staff in the expeditious disposal of cases and expanding the outreach of the Commission nationally and internationally. He also highlighted the contributions from various stakeholders besides the Members and officers of the Commission in the preparation of various Advisories issued for the welfare and protection of human rights of different vulnerable sections of society. He expressed the hope that the officers and staff of the Commission would continue to contribute meaningfully with the same dedication for the promotion and protection of human rights.

Shri Rajiv Jain, Member, said that his tenure in the Commission provided yet another opportunity to learn about the various dimensions of human rights, which is a work in progress. He also

NHRC, India Member,  
Shri Rajiv Jain  
addressing the  
gathering



remembered the institutional support he received in helping him deal with several cases of human rights violations and ensuring justice for the victims.

Earlier, the NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal, recalling the contributions of Justice Mishra and Shri Jain said that they brought huge experience to the Commission, which immensely benefitting it with their guidance and leadership. Through their thought process, approach and work, they took NHRC to the next level. They made valuable contributions for protection and promotion of human rights, especially of those at the margins. They expanded the outreach and enhanced the presence of NHRC at the international level. He concluded encouraging all to take forward their great work and contribute in furthering the objectives of the NHRC in this journey to serve people.

NHRC DG(I), Shri Ajay Bhatnagar, Registrar (Law), Shri Surajit Dey, Joint Secretaries, Smt. Anita Sinha and Shri D.K. Nim and General Secretary of NHRC Sports, Culture and Welfare Society, Shri Ravi Singh expressed their gratitude for the leadership of Justice Mishra and Shri Jain in guiding towards the promotion and protection of human rights.

NHRC, India  
Chairperson, Justice  
Arun Mishra  
addressing the  
gathering



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# News in brief

- On 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2024, the President of India under Section 7(1) of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993, has authorized Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Member, NHRC to act as the Chairperson, with effect, until the appointment of a new Chairperson.
- On 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2024, NHRC, India joined the global fraternity in celebrating World Environment Day with the theme 'Land Restoration, Desertification & Drought Resilience' to raise awareness among all stakeholders on the need to protect & revive ecosystems to sustain planet Earth for our future. The Commission has consistently worked to protect the environment through advisories, interventions, and consultations. An advisory was issued to prevent, minimize, and mitigate the impact of environmental pollution on human rights.

Additionally, the NHRC, India initiated a case on environmental pollution and continues to hear updates from Chief Secretaries of various states and the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change. Its international seminar on 20th September, 2023 highlighted the impact of climate change on human rights and emphasized corporate responsibility. This was followed by its core group meeting on the impact of climate action on employment on 26th October, 2023. The NHRC, India believes that raising awareness and fostering responsibility can inspire global change.

- On 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2024, NHRC, India Acting Chairperson, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani addressed the National Symposium and open house discussion on 'Derogatory practices Towards Women in India: Challenges and the way forward' at Devi Ahilya University, Indore, Madhya Pradesh as the Chief Guest. She said that NHRC has always been at the forefront of protecting and promoting the human rights of the weak & vulnerable sections including women by engaging with different stakeholders to ensure that women's rights are not violated. NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Smt Anita Sinha delivered the keynote address in the symposium jointly organized by the Commission with Devi Ahilya University.



- On 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2024, Dr Manish Kumath, Professor, Dept of Forensic Medicine, Safdarjung Hospital, New Delhi gave an orientation to the officers of the Investigation and Law Division of the Commission on the 'Role of Inquest/Post Mortem Report.'
- From 18th – 20th June, 2024, Shri Joginder Singh, Registrar (Designate), NHRC attended a regional learning workshop on 'Using Legal Advocacy to Achieve the Global 10-10-10 HIV Targets' organized by the UNDP at Bangkok, Thailand.
- On 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2024, NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Shri Devendra Kumar Nim attended a cultural event to mark the World Refugee Day 2024 at Shah Auditorium, Ludlow Castle, Civil Lines, New Delhi.
- On 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2024, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal addressed a National Conference on Climate Change Awareness, Health, and Hygiene in schools organized by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) and United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) across 11 districts in Uttar Pradesh. He said that potable water is a very basic



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necessity that shapes the life and future of our children. Water, sanitation and hygiene are critical in ensuring children's right to health and their development.

Shri Lal said that the UNOPS-led capacity-building efforts supported by Denmark have benefited the people of the state, particularly in the drought-prone regions of Bundelkhand, Vindhya, and other districts. He said that the Jal Jeevan Mission started in 2019 aimed at providing potable piped water to all households and schools, Anganwadi Centers & Ashramshalas. Provisions have also been made for hand washing, running water in urinals and toilets, rainwater harvesting & the reuse of grey water.

As a result of this initiative, Shri Lal said that more than 9.28 lakh schools (89%) and 9.71 lakh Anganwadi centers (85%) now have access to clean tap water. We must continue to prioritize investment to ensure that every person, especially children, has access to improved water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services.

- On 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2024, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal interacted with 120 senior members from the defence forces & civil services, including 39 senior officers from 37 friendly countries on various dimensions of human rights at the National Defence College, New Delhi. His session was part of the 47-week course on National Security and Strategic Studies. He spoke about the evolution of human rights in India, constitutional values and the robust framework of human rights protection mechanisms at national and state levels.

Shri Lal also highlighted the formulation of UDHR and the role of Indian values in its making, the working of UNHRC, Paris Principles, Universal Periodic Review, GANHRI, India's culture of providing shelter to persecuted people coming from various countries as refugees, etc.

He highlighted the working of NHRC, India; its complaints management, investigation, suo motu cases, role of Special Rapporteurs & Monitors,

Core Groups, Human Rights Defenders, and partnership with civil society. He also discussed the evolving situation of human rights and India's handholding of the Global South in line with its inherent value system of standing by humanity beyond borders. The interactive session concluded with a highly insightful Q&A session.

- On 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 2024, NHRC, India Acting Chairperson, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani addressed as Special Guest, a function on the eve of International Day of Widows organized by Guild for Service at IIC. She said that NHRC is committed to protecting & promoting the rights of women and widows and drew attention towards several steps taken in this regard. The Commission has a core group on women and recently issued an advisory on the protection of the human rights of widows.
- On 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2024, NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Smt Anita Sinha addressed the 'National Pride Community Consultation 2024 on 'LGBTQ+ voices and dialogues: Building inclusive futures in India'' organized by UNDP, UNAIDS, Hamsafar Trust, NNTP at UN House, New Delhi. She said that NHRC has undertaken a study on transgender persons' mental health and issued an advisory for the welfare of transgender persons recently.
- On 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2024, NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Smt Anita Sinha attended the meeting on India's National Report on Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.



## Forthcoming events

**On 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2024**

NHRC, India will organize a core group meeting on bonded labour in hybrid mode at its premises.

**On 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2024**

the Commission will organize the valedictory function of the Summer Internship Programme.

**On 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2024**

the Commission will organize a core group meeting on business and human rights in hybrid mode.

**On 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2024**

NHRC, India will organize a core group meeting on Human Rights Defenders and NGOs in hybrid mode at its premises.

## NHRC, India invites proposals for collaborative conferences

**T**he National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India is mandated to 'spread human rights literacy among various sections of society and promote awareness of the safeguards available for the protection of these rights through publications, the media, seminars and other available means'. In the pursuance to this mandate, the Commission invites proposals from reputed institutions, universities, national law schools, civil society organizations, autonomous bodies, etc. for organizing international & national conferences, seminars and workshops on pressing human rights issues, with the aim to identify challenges, discuss new perspectives and propose recommendations for effectively addressing the gaps. Detailed guidelines can be found at 'What's New' on the NHRC, India website: [www.nhrc.nic.in](http://www.nhrc.nic.in) or in the link: <https://nhrc.nic.in/document/invites-proposalscollaborate-organizing-conferences-seminars-and-workshops-issued-relating>.

Proposals in the prescribed format (attached with the guidelines) can be submitted at [srotrg.nhrc@nic.in](mailto:srotrg.nhrc@nic.in) before 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2024.



## Complaints in June, 2024

|                                       |       |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| New complaints received               | 6,872 |
| Disposed off including old cases      | 4,897 |
| Under consideration of the Commission | 7,156 |



# Human rights and NHRC in news



सर्वे  
भवन्तु सुखिनः

# National Human Rights Commission

### Important telephone numbers of the NHRC for filing complaints

**Toll Free No.:** 14433 (Facilitation Centers) • **Fax No.:** 011-2465 1332

**For Filing online complaints:** [www.nhrc.nic.in](http://www.nhrc.nic.in), [hrcnet.nic.in](http://hrcnet.nic.in), Common Service Centres

**Email:** [complaint.nhrc@nic.in](mailto:complaint.nhrc@nic.in) (For complaints), [cr.nhrc@nic.in](mailto:cr.nhrc@nic.in) (For general queries/ correspondence)

## Focal point for Human Rights Defenders:

**Indrajeet Kumar, Deputy Registrar (Law)**

Mobile No. +91 99993 93570 • Fax No. 011-2465 1334 • E-mail: [hrd-nhrc@nic.in](mailto:hrd-nhrc@nic.in)

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