

HUMAN RIGHTS Newsletter



A Monthly publication of the National Human Rights Commission, India



Cover story

The protection of nomadic, semi nomadic and de-notified tribes in India and forward trajectory



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National Human Rights Commission, India

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**Our greatest ability as humans is not to change the world,
but to change ourselves.**

— Mahatma Gandhi

Monthly Recap

From the desk of the Secretary General & Chief Executive

India is committed to improving the quality of life of people, creating opportunities, bringing prosperity and ensuring dignity to all by building modern and futuristic climate-resilient and environment-friendly infrastructure and providing basic amenities. This includes ensuring world-class public service delivery, creating digital public infrastructure, providing transparent and accountable governance, and creating an enabling environment for people especially women to excel and realize their full potential.

The idea is to ensure that 'no one is left out' and the country leapfrogs to the next level of development with a holistic approach while also protecting the human rights of all. It was my privilege to be able to highlight all this, and the rich culture of India wherein women have been placed on a higher pedestal while speaking on 'India Equality Moonshot' in a conversation with Ms. Lalita Taylor, FRSA, Executive Producer, BBC at the World Women Davos Agenda on 18th January, 2024. This was as part of the World Economic Forum from 15th-19th January, 2024 at Davos.

Needless to reiterate, the Indian ethos of ensuring equality also resulted in prompting two Indian women, Dr. Hansal Mehta and Ms

Laxmi Menon to introduce the concept of 'gender equality' and 'non-discrimination', respectively when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was being drafted in 1948. This spirit is also reflected in the Constitution of India which gave equal voting rights to women much before many countries including in Europe and North America.

A fact that needs to be celebrated in India - 46% of elected representatives i.e. 1.4 million are women in rural local bodies. Now, one-third of seats in Parliament and state legislatures have been reserved for them. Women are playing a leading role in India's space missions such as Mission Chandrayaan, Gaganyaan, and Mission Mars. With nearly 43% of STEM graduates being women, the momentum provided by New Education Policy towards women-led development is quite visible. In this endeavour, quality education and skilling are the most critical tools to move forward. Women-led development is a sure-shot leapfrog factor to ensure higher participation of women in economic activities, sustain high economic growth, improve family income and ensure the well-being of future generations.

The NHRC, India recently engaged young professionals as senior and

junior research consultants, majority of them are girls. The Commission would like to utilize the knowledge gained and skills developed in different fields, provide opportunities to excel and develop expertise in their areas of interest.

India has 65% population under 35 years and 50% population below 25 years of age. It means the next 25 years belong to youth. New educational institutions like AIIMS, IITs, NITs, IIITs, and central universities are being built speedily. The idea is to create a launch pad for our youth. Airports, roads, ports, railways, and urban metro are being built with speed to strengthen infrastructure. World-class digital physical infrastructure is being created. As a result, India has become the 5th largest economy and is poised to become 3rd largest in the next 3-4 years. At the National Human Rights Commission, our endeavour is to ensure that no one is left out and development ensure the human rights and dignity of every individual.

In January, 2024, the Commission had an open house discussion on the protection of nomadic, semi nomadic and de-notified tribes in India and forward trajectory. Our cover story is focused on this issue. Another consultation was orga-

nized to discuss the growing concerns surrounding the implementation of the POCSO Act, 2012 and measures for strengthening the same which has been reported in the issue. This edition also carries an article by NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra based on his speech at the International Conference on Behavioural Forensics: Reintegrating expanding contours of criminology and criminalistics at National Forensic Science University, Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

The Commission also decided to sponsor 11 research studies in 10 thematic areas of human rights out

of the total 574 proposals received. The number indicates growing academic interest in various aspects of human rights. Another major event was deciding the winners of its ninth prestigious annual competition for human rights short films in 2023 which has been covered. The 139 entries for this competition in different Indian languages indicate the growing awareness and concern among the citizens of the country for human values, sentiments and the need for the promotion and protection of human rights, which is in fact the core purpose behind this competition instituted by the Commission. Besides this, the edition has all the

other regular features on the activities of the Commission which I hope will make an engaging reading.

Wishing every Indian a very happy 75th Republic Day! Let us celebrate and re-dedicate ourselves to contributing towards a modern developed India where no one lives in poverty and faces deprivation. This can be achieved by internalizing civic sense, republican ethics and constitutional values.

Bharat Lal

Secretary General &
Chief Executive, NHRC India

Cover story

Open house discussion on the protection of nomadic, semi nomadic and de-notified tribes in India and forward trajectory

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India organized an open house discussion on protection of nomadic, semi nomadic and de-notified tribes (NTs, SNTs and DNTs)

in India and forward trajectory at its premises on 19th January, 2024. The NHRC, India Member, Dr. Dnyaneshwar M. Mulay inaugurated the discussion in the presence of the Members, Shri Rajiv Jain, Smt Vijaya

Bharathi Sayani, Joint Secretaries, Smt Anita Sinha and Shri Devendra Kumar Nim as well as different stakeholders.

Dr Mulay said that the right to life, equality, dignity and liberty are the



NHRC, India Member, Dr D.M. Mulay inaugurating the open house discussion in the presence of Members, Shri Rajiv Jain, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani and senior officers

four major pillars of human rights and every citizen, regardless of background, deserves an equal opportunity to thrive and contribute. He said that the de-notified tribes, nomadic tribes and semi-nomadic tribes also require proper means of livelihood.

He said that the colonial mindset about the de-notified tribes having criminal tendencies needs to change to ensure their human rights are not violated. Proper documentation of their identities needs to be speeded up so that they get the benefits of welfare schemes, and their basic needs are fulfilled. He emphasized that the different stakeholders need concerted efforts and discussions to streamline the issues impacting their human rights.

Earlier, in his welcome address, NHRC, Joint Secretary, Shri Devendra Kumar Nim said that the de-notified, nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes remain the most neglected, marginalized and economically and socially deprived communities. He said that one of the most pressing issues for de-notified communities is the lack of citizenship documents, which makes their identity invisible and causes hindrances in obtaining

government benefits, and constitutional and citizenship rights.

The discussions were divided into three technical themes as follows:

- To identify challenges faced by the NTs, SNTs and DNTs owing to the stigma imposed by the enactment of the Criminal Tribes Act, 1872 and later by the Habitual Offenders Act, 1952 and figure out a way to modify discriminatory provisions of the latter.
- To discern hurdles endured by the communities in availing basic facilities such as education, employment, health care, and legal documents, among others.
- To suggest measures to mitigate all the uncovered challenges, ensure representation of de-notified tribes in parliament, government institutions and higher education, and determine a way to proceed, especially for women and children.

The issues highlighted by the speakers included the implementation of the Idate Commission report for setting up a permanent

commission for these communities, repeal of the Habitual Offenders Act, 1952 and if not, the appointment of a representative of de-notified tribe community with the nodal officers as stipulated in the act, non-inclusion of DNTs/NTs/SNTs under the SCs/STs/OBCs and formulation of specific policies for the former, among many others.

In his concluding remarks, Dr Mulay said that the Commission will further deliberate on the issues raised in the discussions as well as other inputs received on the problems and challenges being faced by the de-notified tribal communities and then make necessary recommendations to the government to ameliorate the cause of their human rights.

In addition to the senior officers of the Commission, the participants, among others, included senior officers of the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Anthropological Survey of India, National Denotified & Nomadic Tribes Commission, Niti Ayog, De-Notified Nomadic Tribes Development Council, TISS, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, academicians, experts and NGOs.



A section of the participants

Consultation

Core group meeting

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India has constituted several core groups on various thematic issues related to human rights to hold discussions with the domain experts and the concerned senior government functionaries representing different ministries. Based on these discussions, the Commission from time to time holds national seminars to widen the scope of suggestions to ameliorate the cause of human rights by recommending steps for clearing the bottlenecks in the implementation of the related provisions of the existing laws or any amendments therein or for a law. In January, 2024, another core group meeting in hybrid mode was organized to discuss the growing concerns surrounding the implementation of the POCSO Act, 2012 and measures for strengthening the same on 31st January, 2024.



NHRC, India Member, Shri Rajiv Jain chairing the meeting in hybrid mode in presence of Members, Dr D.M. Mulay, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani and senior officers

Shri Rajiv Jain, Member, NHRC, chaired the meeting in the presence of the Members, Dr Dnyaneshwar M. Mulay, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Joint Secretary, Smt Anita Sinha and other stakeholders. He said that attention is needed to streamline and speed up the process of payment of compensation, ensuring swift and effective

support to the victims of sexual abuse under the POCSO Act, 2012.

Earlier, giving an overview of the meeting, NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Smt Anita Sinha said that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the reasons behind the delay in the disposal of cases under the POCSO Act as well as an alarming rise in crimes against children. It is necessary to discuss the way out for a comprehensive compensation scheme and mechanism to expedite case resolutions.

Among other participants, Smt Asha Bajpai, former professor of law and founding dean, Tata Institute of Social Science highlighted various factors such as lack of parental control, migration, and poverty that particularly made children on the streets more vulnerable to sexual offences. The impacts of these crimes extend far



The meeting in progress

beyond the immediate incident, often resulting in unresolved trauma for the victims. Shri Anant Kumar Asthana, Advocate, raised the issue of data transparency, technology and fund allocation in resolving cases timely under the POCSO Act. The discussions covered a range of issues, including awareness and education, role of technology, magnitude of the problem, the optional protocol of UNCRC, legal procedures and justice, impact on survivors and

support, and implementation and enforcement.

Key suggestions included, refining the bail, compensation, delay in medical examination, psychological issues of victims and their family members and investigation procedures under the POCSO Act, 2012, among others. The meeting underscored the importance of addressing overlapping roles among different institutions, including Juvenile Justice (JJ) Boards, Police, Child Welfare

Committees (CWC), and special courts.

In his closing remarks, Shri Jain said that the discussions highlighted some key issues concerning the protection of children from sexual offences. He said that these along with more inputs will be further deliberated upon by the Commission to make necessary recommendations for improving the implementation of the POCSO Act as well as the living conditions of the child victims of sexual offences.



A section of participants in the meeting

Article

Behavioral Forensics: Reintegrating expanding contours of criminology and criminalistics

By Justice Shri Arun Mishra, Chairperson NHRC, India

Forensic science is a powerful tool to prevent human rights violations globally, offering certainty through investigations. Broadening the scope and use of forensic investi-

gations is necessary. Rather than isolating it, forensic science should work in tandem with criminology and the criminal justice system for comprehensive investigation.

Forensic psychologists in India contribute to the administration of justice by offering expert opinions on issues related to mental health and criminal behaviour. The genetic factors and

studying criminal behaviour are essential to predicting and controlling such behaviour. We must evolve post-conviction review mechanisms using DNA evidence to prevent injustice to the innocent. Forensic victimology plays a crucial role in understanding and investigating crimes against children.

Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 ensures technology, forensic science in crime investigations, and provisions for electronic communication in legal processes. With the enactment of new laws, we must effectively use technology and new forensics to eradicate terrorism and prevent crimes including cyberspace. Methods of investigation must be modernized with proper training and know-how.

Dealing with cybercrimes, requires digital forensic development and know-how. It is essential to create cyber forensic software and hardware and original tools. Several legal systems worldwide have already adopted AI technologies to aid investigations and forecast when and where crimes



NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra addressing the conference

are likely to occur. However, bias in AI systems can arise from various sources and such systems should be monitored and evaluated for fairness, especially as they interact with real-world data and user interactions. Establishing workstations for faster and complete digital evidence examinations is required by making provision of more forensic science laboratories.

We need a victim-centric approach, recognizing victims as an integral part of the legal process. The emphasis should be on the reparation of the victim rather than retribution for the

crime. The social reintegration of victims of crime is a critical aspect of criminal justice along with adequate compensation for loss caused by crime. At the same time, any gender-centric mindsets need to change with the changing times in the criminal justice system.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India is regularly organizing training of police trainers to sensitize them towards the protection of human rights in their line of duty. Among several suggestions in this regard, advisory jurisdiction has been used by the Commission for preventing suicides in places of detention, ensuring mental health check-ups, and improving the living conditions of mental hospitals, juvenile justice homes, shelter homes, and drug de-addiction centres.

(Based on his address at the 44th All India Criminology Conference on 'Behavioral forensics: Reintegrating expanding contours of criminology and criminalistics' at NFSU, Gandhinagar, Gujarat on 23rd January, 2024.)



A section of participants in the conference

NHRC interventions

On the NHRC recommendations, the Rajasthan Government agrees to pay ₹ 30 lakh as relief in a case of electrocution of bus passengers

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India set aside the no negligence contention of the Rajasthan government and recommended that it pay ₹ 5 lakh each to the Next of Kin (NoK) of the six passengers, who died due to electrocution when their bus came into contact with an unguarded high voltage wire in the Jalore district on 16th January, 2021. The State Government has accepted it and is paying the relief to the Next of Kin (NoK) of the deceased victims.

The Commission had taken cognizance of the incident based on a complaint and called for the reports from the electricity department of the government of Rajasthan. Based on the material on record, it concluded that there was negligence on the part of the electricity department in fixing the electricity poles on the road. There was the

absence of guarding the 11 KV electricity connection which was in contravention to Section 73 of Central Electricity Regulation 2010.

In response to the Commission's notice to show cause why relief of ₹ 5 lakh each to the NoK of the victims should not be recommended to be paid, the state government had maintained that there was no negligence on the part of its electricity department and hence, the question of relief did not arise. Citing, various reasons among others, it said that the incident did not happen due to the breakage of wire and absence of guarding but because of tampering with the electrical system by the conductor while guiding the bus from a point where there was not much movement of vehicles. That is why there was no guarding of the 11 KV electricity connection below the said line. It was also stated that

even the FIR lodged with the Jalore Police Station on 16.1.2021 ended up in the final report and was also accepted by the court. Hence, they were not liable for providing any compensation in the matter.

However, the Commission vide proceedings dated 3.10.2023 held that the electrical department could not forego its liability given in section 73 of Central Electricity Authority Regulation 2010, which categorically states that the authority shall specify safety requirements for construction operation and maintenance of electrical plants and electric lines. Accordingly, it reiterated the recommendation for the payment of relief to the NoK of the six deceased and called for a compliance report along with proof of payment which the State Government is complying with.

Consultation

Suo motu cognizance

The media reports have been a very useful instrument for the National Human Rights Commission to know about the incidents of human rights violations. Over the years, it has taken suo motu cognizance of many such issues and brought succour to the

victims of human rights violations. During January, 2024, the Commission took *suo motu* cognizance in three 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:

Lady police officials dragging a girl student by her hair

[Case No. 37/36/9/2024]

On 29th January, 2024, the media reported that a protesting student



was dragged by her hair by lady police officials in the Ranga Reddy district of Telangana during an agitation by some students of the Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University (PJTSAU). Reportedly, the video of the incident went viral on social media. Accordingly, the Commission has issued notices to the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police, Telangana calling for a detailed report.

Child atrocities in an orphanage

[Case No. 81/12/21/2024]

On 19th January, 2024 the media reported that the children aged between four and fourteen years were being subjected to torture at an orphanage in Indore, Madhya Pradesh and the police had regis-

tered an FIR in the matter on a complaint by the Child Welfare Committee. Reportedly, apart from Indore, the orphanage has its branches in Jodhpur, Surat, Kolkata and Bengaluru in the four states of Rajasthan, Gujarat, West Bengal and Karnataka. The Commission has issued notices to the Chief Secretaries and the Directors General of Police of these states calling for an action taken report after conducting an enquiry/inspection of the branches of the orphanage. The report is expected to include the status of the action taken against the accused as well.

Suicide of engineering student at her college

[Case No. 11/36/26/2024]

On 6th January, 2024, the media reported that an engineering girl

student committed suicide by jumping from the fifth floor of her college in Rangareddy district, Telangana. Reportedly, the victim had joined the college just three months ago and was commuting daily by the college bus from her residence in Kukatpally. The Commission has issued notices to the Chief Secretary and Director General of Police of the government of Telangana calling for a detailed report. The report should include the outcome of the police investigation and inquiry conducted by the college administration, the action taken against the persons found responsible for the incident, and steps taken or proposed to be taken to ensure that such painful incidents do not recur.

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 such cases and gives directions and

recommendations to the concerned authorities for relief to the victims. In January, 2024, besides the number of cases taken up daily by the Member Benches, 38 cases by the Double Member Bench-I. Monetary relief of more than ₹ 58.60 lakh was recommended for the victims or their Next of Kin

(NoK) in the 12 cases, wherein it was found that public servants had either violated human rights or 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.	File No	Inc. Name	Amount (₹ in lakhs)	State
1.	2090/1/21/2020-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Andhra Pradesh
2.	660/33/4/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Chhattisgarh
3.	2073/7/1/2019-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Haryana



S. No.	File No	Inc. Name	Amount (₹ in lakhs)	State
4.	432/13/16/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Maharashtra
5.	464/18/10/2021-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Odisha
6.	1594/36/10/2020-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Telangana
7.	738/34/6/2019-AD	Death in judicial custody	12.50	Jharkhand
8.	38102/24/40/2021	Custodial torture	04.50	Uttar Pradesh
9.	2517/24/43/2022	Police motivated incidents	03.00	Uttar Pradesh
10.	33774/24/19/2022	Matrimonial disputes	00.10	Uttar Pradesh
11.	40172/24/32/2021	Educational institutions/ technical institutions (govt./ pvt.)	02.50	Uttar Pradesh
12.	2156/25/11/2023-WC	Indignity of women	06.00	West Bengal

Payment of relief to the victims

The Commission closed 25 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 ₹ 131.4 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 No.	Incident	Amounts (₹ In lakhs)	Authorities
1.	5584/30/6/2019-JCD	Death in judicial custody	04.00	Delhi
2.	699/18/3/2021-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Odisha
3.	2905/22/31/2021-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Tamil Nadu
4.	11458/24/56/2016-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Uttar Pradesh
5.	2725/24/31/2021-JCD	Death in judicial custody	04.00	Uttar Pradesh
6.	5863/24/53/2019-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Uttar Pradesh
7.	1937/25/18/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	West Bengal
8.	338/25/26/2021-JCD	Death in judicial custody	07.00	West Bengal
9.	703/25/14/2021-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	West Bengal



S. No.	Case No.	Incident	Amounts (₹ In lakhs)	Authorities
10.	753/34/10/2021-PCD	Death in police custody	05.00	Jharkhand
11.	21274/24/35/2021-PCD	Death in police custody	05.00	Uttar Pradesh
12.	308/34/11/2019-DH	Custodial death in juvenile home	05.00	Jharkhand
13.	4289/30/9/2021	Death in police custody	07.00	Delhi
14.	3266/7/5/2021-AD	Death in police custody	05.00	Haryana
15.	335/12/32/2023	Death due to electrocution	02.00	Madhya Pradesh
16.	2310/18/4/2021	Death due to electrocution	01.00	Odisha
17.	3223/18/18/2022	Death due to electrocution	04.00	Odisha
18.	4270/18/19/2022	Death due to electrocution	12.00	Odisha
19.	5015/25/15/2022	Death due to electrocution	05.00	West Bengal
20.	862/33/16/2022	Lack of proper medical facilities in the state	00.40	Chhattisgarh
21.	27626/24/39/2019	Irregularities in Govt. hospitals/ primary health centres	05.00	Uttar Pradesh
22.	38367/24/28/2021	Medical negligence	03.00	Uttar Pradesh
23.	10103/24/7/2020	Neo natal death	20.00	Uttar Pradesh
24.	20775/24/59/2022	Children	02.00	Uttar Pradesh
25.	14727/24/21/2020	Abuse of power	05.00	Uttar Pradesh

Case studies

In many cases, the Commission received compliance report from the respective state authorities. Summaries of some of these cases are as under:

Death of newborn babies in hospital

(Case No. 862/33/16/2022)

The matter pertained to the death of four newborns, who were admitted into SCNU unit of Ambikapur Medical College,

Sarguja, Chhattisgarh in 2022 due to failure of electricity supply. Based on reports received from the concerned state authorities, in response to its notices, it was found that the death was due to medical reasons as the ventilators were found to be functioning and there was no failure of an electrical supply in the ICU. The Commission held that there was lapse on the part of the hospital administration. The Commission recommended that the Government of Chhattisgarh

pay ₹ 40,000 as relief to the Next of Kin (NoK) victims, which was paid.

Death of a child due to electrocution

(Case No. 4270/18/19/2022)

The matter pertained to the death of three members of a family due to electrocution in Boudh district, Odisha in 2022. Reportedly, one of the victims was drying her clothes on Galvanized Iron (GI) wire outside the wall of her house. Due to



insulation failure, GI wire got charged and she got electrocuted. The other victims were also electrocuted when they came to her rescue. Based on the material on record, the Commission found that incident occurred due to mishandling of electrical equipment, mainly the GI wire and mild steel rod and the electricity department did not provide earthing terminal to the house while installing the single-phase domestic supply under Kutir Jyoti Scheme. Thus, they failed to adhere to the norms as prescribed in CEA Regulation 2010. Accordingly, it recommended that the Government of Odisha pay ₹ 4 lakh as a relief to the Next of Kin (NoK) of all three deceased victim, which was paid.

Medical negligence

(Case No.10103/24/7/2020)

The matter pertained to the death of four newborns at PHC Islamnagar, Badaun, Uttar Pradesh due to the negligence of the PHC staff. Based on the material on record, the Commission found that the newborn babies died on account of medical negligence at the Govt. Hospital. A challan was charged in Court against two of the para medical officials posted at PHC Islampur. Accordingly, it recommended that the Government of Uttar Pradesh pay ₹ 5 lakh as a relief to the Next of Kin (NoK) of the victim, which was paid.

Custodial death

(Case No-3037/22/15/2019-PCD)

The matter pertained to the custodial death of a person in 2019 in Avaniyapuram Police Station, Madurai District, Tamil Nadu. Based on the material on the record, the Commission found that the victim died due to the torture by the police personnel. Action was taken against the erring police officers who indulged in the destruction of the evidence. Accordingly, the Commission recommended that the Government of Tamil Nadu pay a relief of ₹ 7.5 lakh as relief to the NoK of the deceased, which was paid.

Field visits

Visits of Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India, has appointed 15 Special Rapporteurs to keep watch on the human rights situations in different geographical zones in the country. They visit shelter homes, prisons,

observation homes, etc. and submit reports to the Commission on their observations and suggestions for further course of action. Besides this, the Commission has also appointed 18 Special Monitors who have been assigned thematic issues

of human rights to keep a watch on the related development in the country and report to the Commission accordingly. During January, 2024, several places were visited by the Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors.

Special Rapporteurs

From 16th – 20th January and on 22nd January, 2024, Smt. Suchitra Sinha visited various institutions situated at Ranchi, Bundu and Tamar in the state of Jharkhand to make an assessment of the human rights situation.

From 17th – 22nd January, 2024, Shri Umesh Kumar visited Goalpara Jail, to make an assessment of the condition of the inmates and the facilities available to them in the Jail.

From 24th – 25th January, 2024 and 27th – 30th January, 2024, Shri Mahesh Kumar Singla visited children care homes in Delhi and District Jail Palwal, Haryana. He had an interaction with the authorities concerned and had an assessment of the living condition of the inmates and the facilities available to them.

Special Monitor

From 23rd – 25th January, 2024, Shri Balkrishan Goel visited several places, including, among others, old age homes, child care institutions, observation homes & anganwadi centres etc. in the state of Punjab.



Research projects

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India promotes research studies and sponsors them on various aspects of human rights for building awareness and solutions to problems. The Commission invited an expression of interest in the year 2023 to conduct research in 13 thematic/ subject areas. It received 574 proposals. These were scrutinized by the two committees, shortlisting 55 for consideration by the Commission. On 9th January 2024, Justice Shri Arun Mishra, Chairperson chaired the Full Commission meeting to discuss these research proposals in the presence of Members, Dr. Dnyaneshwar M. Mulay, Shri Rajiv Jain and Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani and senior officers.

The Commission has approved 11 research studies under 10 themes which are as follows:

Theme 1:

Access to employment by persons with disabilities: Status, identification of barriers, associated factors and required affirmative actions

- 'Skilling for enhancing access to labour market and employment among women with disabilities, particularly migrant households' by Principal Investigator Nikhil Raj from NGO Deshkal.
- 'Access to employment by persons with disabilities: Status, identification of barriers and associated factors' by Principal Investigator Prof(Dr.) Jayanti Pujari, Dean, faculty of Rehabilitation Sciences and Director, Amity Institute of Rehabilitation Sciences.

Theme 2:

Human rights abuse in sports: Safe and effective remedial mechanism

'A study on the mechanisms adopted by the sports bodies to combat human rights abuse and an examination of the legal policy framework along with the status of implementation in Kerala' by Principal Investigator Dr. Ajith Mohan. K.R. from Cochin University of Science and Technology, Kerala.

Theme 3:

Dimensions of organized begging by children and transgender persons: A study to be conducted in Delhi, Mumbai & Kolkata

'Children in the shadows: Unveiling dimensions of organized begging in Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata' by Mr



Varun Dev S, Assistant Professor and Research Officer, Kerala Law Academy, Peroorkada, Thiruvananthapuram'.

Theme 4:

Rights of LGBTQI Persons with special reference to the right to property and inheritance

'The Third Gender+: The quest for recognition and equality of their property rights and inheritance' by Professor Vandana, Faculty of Law, Campus Law Centre, University of Delhi.

Theme 5:

Problems related to adoption under the Juvenile Justice Act and personal law reforms required

'A study of the socio-legal aspects of the adoption process in India with special reference to Delhi-NCR' by Principal Investigator Dr. Deepika Prakash, Assistant Professor, Amity Law School, Noida.

Theme 6:

Access to safe drinking water-ground reality, challenges and the way forward

'Review of drinking water situation in India vis-à-vis government policy & action-round reality, challenges and way forward' by Prof. C. N. Pandey, Prof. Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar.

Theme 7:

Violation of human rights of doctors: An empirical study with reference to their safety

'Caring about the rights of healers – Analysing human rights violations related to frontline doctors in India' by Dr Abhay Shukla Sr Consultant and Scientist, SATHI, Kothrud, Pune.

Theme 8:

Substance abuse among children and youth in India: A study of extent, nature and effectiveness of the government response

'Study to understand the reasons for the rising number of cases among the CCL and undertrials in observation homes and under trial/convicts under the NDPS Act lodged/ languishing in CCI/ observations homes and prisons and exploring the existing legislative policy and schematic response in sample states i.e. Delhi, Rajasthan,

Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh' by Dr. Vikram Srivastava, Founder, Independent Thought.

Theme 9:

Right to education for children of sex workers in India: Identifying the challenges and affording solutions

'Social barriers that children of women engaged in inter-generational prostitution face in access to education' by Dr. Veerendra Mishra, Director Samvedna, RACE Lab, C-8, Surendra Garden Bagmugaliya, Bagsewania, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

Theme 10:

Restoring balance between the right to a healthy environment and urbanization

'Comparative study of solid waste, waste water management and building regulations across Indian cities to analyze the impact of urbanization for sustainability and healthy environment' by Shri Vimal Mishra, Professor, Civil Engg. and Earth Sciences, IIT, Gandhinagar.

Training

NHRC engages young professionals as Research Consultants

NHRC India has been giving further push to research and empirical studies for evidence-based decision making of the Commission. To assist the commission in this task, The NHRC India has engaged 21 young

professionals as Junior Research Consultants and another two accomplished women research professionals as Senior Research Consultants. All these researchers are from different fields and diverse background. On 31st January, 2024,

Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal had an interactive session which was also attended by the Joint Secretary, Shri D.K. Nim and other officers. The purpose of the session was to have a meaningful discussion on the focus areas preferred by

them to work on the various themes related to human rights. He said that the Commission would like to utilize the knowledge and skills of these young professionals in different fields, provide opportuni-

ties to excel and develop expertise in their areas of interest.

Shri Lal encouraged them to contribute in a meaningful manner towards fulfilling the mandate of the Commission for the promotion

and protection of human rights including high-quality research, building partnerships with different stakeholders, working together to impact people's lives and creating a just and equitable society.



NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal addressing the Research Consultants



Month long winter internship concludes

The NHRC, India's month-long winter internship for university students concluded on 16th January, 2024. 79 students from various parts of the country attended. NHRC, India Member, Shri Rajiv Jain addressed the valedictory session in the presence of Joint Secretary, Shri D. K. Nim, Presenting Officer, Shri Arvind Nashier and other senior officers.

Shri Jain expressed the hope that the students will make the best use of the exposure to various aspects of human rights and the functioning of the Commission in about 50 sessions during the internship. Apart from the various sessions by senior officers and experts, the interns were also taken for field

visits to the NGO Asha Kiran, Hauz Khas and Defence Colony police stations, Tihar Central Jail, National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) to understand their functioning. They were

also shown some NHRC award-winning human rights short films for sensitization, and guided in preparing research project reviews, besides participation in declamation and book reviews.



NHRC, India Member, Shri Rajiv Jain addressing the valedictory session



The interns with NHRC Member, Shri Rajiv Jain, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal, Registrar (Law), Shri Surajit Dey, Joint Secretary, Shri D.K. Nim and other senior officers

Workshops

Besides this flagship winter internship programme held during January, 2024, the Commission also supported two collaborative human rights awareness workshops, which were held by Good News Welfare Society's Arts & Commerce College, Kalaghatgi, Karnataka on 29th January, 2024. It was divided into

four thematic sessions: 'Introduction on Human Rights', 'Human Rights Institutions in India', 'Rights of Women & Children' and 'Rights of other vulnerable groups'.

On the same day, another workshop was held in collaboration with the Universe Vision, an Odisha-based NGO. It was focused on the

'Rights of Children' including the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act & Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, constitutional provisions, UNCRC, UDHR, PHRA and the functioning of the Commission. Each workshop had about 100 participants.



Moot Court

On 19th January, 2024, the National Human Rights Commission, NHRC, India organized a moot court Competition inaugurated by NHRC, India Member, Shri Rajiv Jain. The event was organized in collaboration with the University School of Law & Legal Studies, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, New Delhi. The theme for the competition was 'Human rights issues pertaining to refugees, asylum seekers & illegal cross border migrants'. About 40 institutional teams from across the country participated.



NHRC, India Member, Shri Rajiv Jain inaugurating the moot court competition

Other trainings

Besides the moot court, NHRC, India Registrar (Law), Shri Surajit Dey delivered a lecture on the vertical interaction course on public order and Human Rights at International Security

Academy, CRPF, Mount Abu on 8th January, 2024.

Shri Ketan Baliram Patil, NHRC SSP briefed the officers of CAPF and State Police Forces at the CRPF

Academy, Gurugram on aspects of human rights violations during policing and ethical dilemmas and the way forward on 19th January, 2024.



Awards

NHRC Short film competition, 2023



NHRC Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra chairing the full Commission jury meeting

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India announced the winners of its ninth prestigious annual competition for human rights short films in 2023. The film 'Kiran-A ray of hope' was chosen for the first prize of ₹ 2 lakh. The film by Shri Bhushan Arun Mehare from Delhi highlights and raises concerns on LGBTQI+ rights, including among others, the right to equal opportunities with dignity to earn a livelihood. The subtitles are available in both Hindi and English.

'Mukhagni-The Cremation' by Shri Bibhujjal Raj Kashyap from Assam was selected for the second prize of ₹ 1.5 lakh. Inspired by a true story, the film raises various issues including untouchability, caste discrimination, social dogmas, overbearing diktat of caste panchayat and right of dignity to the dead. It is in Assamese language with subtitles in English.

'Right to freedom' by Shri Nitin Sonkar from Uttar Pradesh has

been selected for the third prize of ₹ 1 lakh. The film symbolically advocates equal opportunities for the children of slum dwellers and highlights that there should be no cap on dreaming and achieving big in life through the story of a young boy living in a slum.

The Commission has also decided to give a cash award of ₹ 50,000/- each to the four short films selected for the certificate of special mention. These are:



The full Commission jury viewing the films

- i.) 'Glass of Humanity' by Ms Abdullah Alfazeena from Tamil Nadu. This silent film utilizes cinematic expressions to highlight issues of denial of rights due to corruption, discrimination and unlawful practices.
- ii.) 'Harassment of Deepshikha' by Ms Supriti Ghosh from Tripura is a Bengali movie with English subtitles. Inspired by a true story, the film highlights and raises concerns on the issue of body shaming and denial of the right to life with dignity and equal opportunities.
- iii.) 'Naragam – Hell' is a Tamil movie by Shri M. Baskar from Tamil Nadu with subtitles in

English. Inspired by a true story, the film highlights how citizens' initiatives can protect violations of human rights.

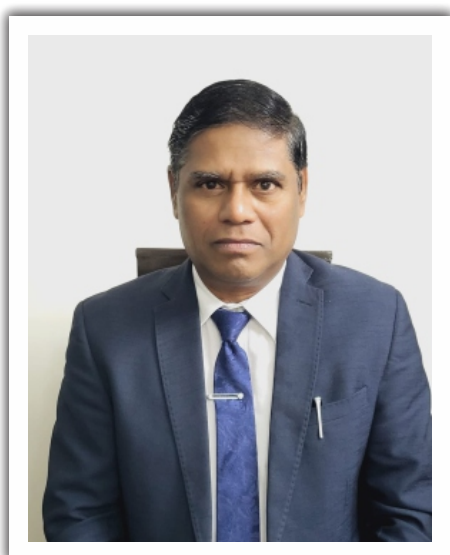
- iv.) 'Rahas' is a silent film by Shri Rashid Usman Nimbalkar from Maharashtra. The film highlights the challenges of nomadic tribes in realizing their rights to lead a life with dignity by earning a living through their folk arts.

The full Commission Jury, chaired by the NHRC Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra comprised Members, Dr. Dnyaneshwar M. Mulay, Shri Rajiv Jain, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal and two external experts, former DG, Doordarshan,

Shri Leela Dhar Mandloi and Prof. Rachna Sharma of IIMC.

The senior officers who were part of the initial process of shortlisting the films were also present during the screening for the full Commission Jury. The aim of the NHRC short film award scheme since 2015 has been to encourage and acknowledge cinematic and creative efforts of the citizens towards the promotion and protection of human rights. For the ninth edition of this competition in 2023, a total of 114 short films were in the fray for the awards after scrutiny of 139 entries received in different Indian languages from various parts of the country. The awards presentation ceremony will be organized later.

Shri Isam Singh, DySP, NHRC chosen for the President's police medal for meritorious services



Shri Isam Singh, Deputy Superintendent of Police posted in the Investigation Division of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India has been chosen for the Police Medal for Meritorious Services on the occasion of Republic Day, 2024.

He has been part of several spot enquiry teams of the Commission in the cases of human rights violations including, among others, the post-poll violence in West Bengal and has analyzed several case files relating

to custodial and encounter deaths. He has received appreciation and commendation letters from the senior officers and the Commission for his valuable contribution.

Prior to joining the Commission as an Inspector on deputation in 2007, Shri Singh had served at various public sector undertakings including Refineries, Port Trusts etc. as a security officer in the rank of a Sub-Inspector. He was absorbed into the Commission in 2013 and promoted to DySP in 2015.

NHRC in international arena

World Woman Davos Agenda 2024

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal attended World Economic Forum 2024 in Davos on 17th – 18th January, 2024. He addressed the World Woman Davos Agenda 2024 and spoke at a fireside chat titled 'India Equality Moonshot', hosted by Ms Lalita Taylor, Executive Producer, BBC. He emphasized India's cultural ethos of women empowerment, the government's approach to women-led development, and enhancing the quality of their lives by providing basic amenities and creating an enabling environment for them to realize their full potential.

Shri Lal said that 43% of STEM graduates in India are girls, with women scientists leading technological advancements. The safety and security of women are being ensured to increase their participation in the workforce. He emphasized that when women enter the workforce, family incomes rise, and significant economic growth becomes evident. He mentioned

that NHRC, India collaborates with the government, NGOs, and HRDs to safeguard their interests, making India a role model in protecting people's rights.

Shri Lal also said that education of children and a peaceful home serve as the primary driving forces for Indian women. Thus, keeping this in mind, the government focuses on universal education. Government partnerships with both national

and international educational institutions are encouraged under the new education policy. During the last 9-10 years, there has been an increase in the number of educational institutions, he noted.

He also said that India reached a \$3 trillion economy by 2019. The goal of becoming a \$30 trillion economy in the next 25 years can be achieved by investing in women. The participation of women in the workforce increased from 18% in 2014 to over 24% today. To leapfrog, India has focused on creating enabling environments for women to join the workforce through initiatives like assured basic amenities, assured public service delivery, extended maternity leave, safety and security measures, and financial services including easy loans for women-led enterprises.

Shri Lal outlined various steps taken to create a supportive environment like providing clean tap water to 140 million households, constructing



NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal at World Economic Forum in Davos



NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal addressing the World Woman Davos Agenda 2024



A section of the audience

110 million toilets, and offering 95 million cooking gas connections, among others. He underscored the importance of financial inclusion, stating that 460 million small loans have been sanctioned, with 63% going to women. He emphasized the government's commitment to creating a conducive environment for women to start their own enterprises.

He also urged to have a broader perspective on women's issues, emphasizing that women's empowerment is a collective responsibility. He encouraged greater male involvement and emphasized the

importance of women occupying their rightful positions worldwide.

In discussing India's contribution to the digital revolution, Shri Lal underscored the absence of discrimination and the government's commitment to providing equal opportunity to all. He highlighted India's digital public infrastructure as among the best globally, with its effort to include women and girls in this transformative journey.

World Woman Foundation and World Woman Davos Agenda also honoured Shri Bharat Lal with the Global Voice Award 2024 for his

contributions to improving the quality of life of people in India. Rupa Dash, CEO of the World Woman Foundation, and Dr. Mukesh Aghi, President and Chief Executive Officer of USISPF, presented the award to Shri Bharat Lal. He was also appreciated for his proactive response to crisis, such as establishing the Water and Sanitation Management Organization post-earthquake in Gujarat, his role in national and international policymaking and his contributions to managing the Covid-19 pandemic. He was also commended for his notable contribution as the founding Mission Director of Jal Jeevan Mission and, particularly for his efforts in ensuring clean tap water which has now reached 114 million households. More than 400 international delegates primarily women leaders from different parts of world attended the session.

The video link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2gvMxYOWME>

or scan the QR Code



World Woman Foundation and World Woman Davos Agenda honouring NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal with the Global Voice Award 2024

News in brief

On 1st January, 2024, NHRC, India joined the global fraternity in celebrating the New Year, in line with its motto 'Let there be happiness for all.' Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra also addressed the Members, senior officers and staff of the Commission on the occasion and conveyed his greetings.



On 3rd January, 2024, NHRC, India Member, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani visited the Government children home and observation home for girls, Nimboliadda, and Government children home for boys, Jail Garden, Saidabad, Telangana.



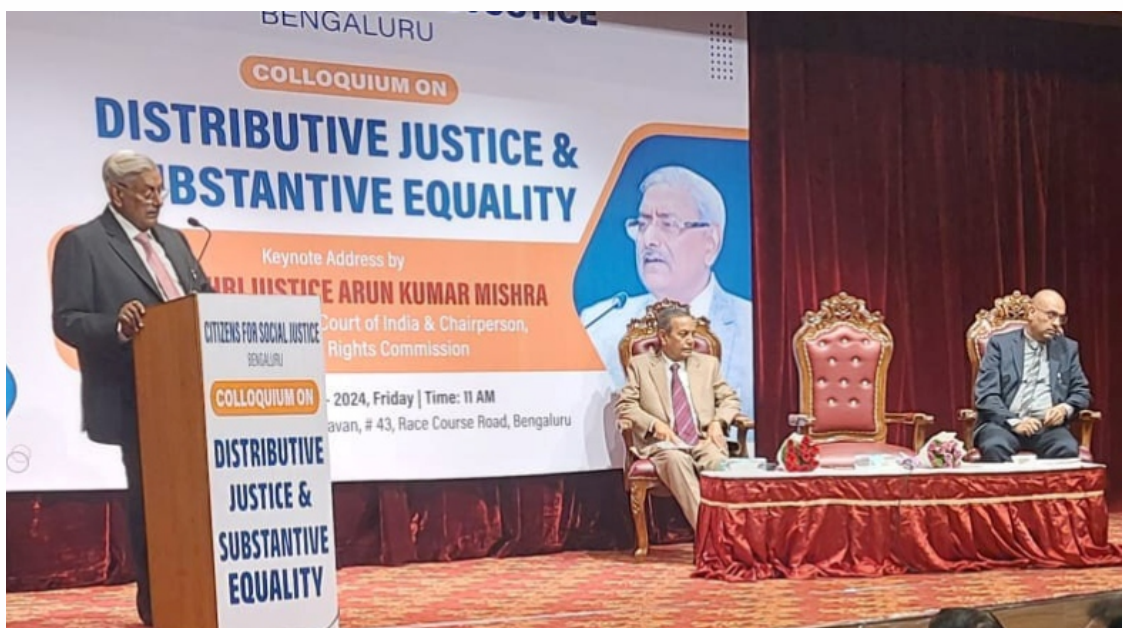
On 7th January, 2024, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Member, NHRC participated in a programme organized by Samvardhinee Nyas at Dr. Hedgewar Smarak Samiti Smruti Mandir, Reshambagh, Nagpur, Maharashtra.



On 9th January, 2024, NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra, Member, Shri Rajiv Jain and Joint Secretary, Shri D. K. Nim attended an inter-ministerial workshop on Responsible Business Conduct organized by the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. The workshop aimed to discuss the alignment of Ministries on convergence of various national standards, policies and laws as well as the latest developments in the international regime in the context of responsible business conduct.



From 11th-12th January, 2024, NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Arun Mishra, attended the colloquium on distributive justice & substantive equality organized by citizens for social justice in Bengaluru, Karnataka.



On 12th January, 2024 NHRC, India Member, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, attended a seminar on enabling self-reliance among youth with disabilities organized by the MANSA Institute of Child Health & Disability Studies, Hyderabad.



On 12th January, 2024, NHRC, India Member, Shri Rajiv Jain visited Goa and Mumbai to participate in the International Roundtable in collaboration with the British High Commission and UK Home Office at the Fortune Miramar, Panaji. He delivered a talk on Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation & Rape and Sexual Assault: A Victim Centric approach at Panaji, Goa.



From 18th-21st January, 2024, DR (Law), Indrajeet Kumar visited Jharkhand SHRC to identify the duplicity of pending cases in the state.

On 20th January, 2024, NHRC, India Member Shri Rajiv Jain delivered a talk on 'National Security v/s Human Rights: Striking a Balance' at a conclave organized by the Business World. He said the national security relates to large issues affecting national sovereignty and integrity. However, it is ultimately predicated on protecting human rights of individuals here and now. Leaders of security organisations have to be sensitive to human rights of people.

Shri Jain said that private security companies employ a large number of people and have the responsibility to protect their rights as per various laws, including sexual harassment at workplace, maternity benefit leave, reasonable work hours, gender pay parity, and child labour.



On 24th January, 2024, NHRC, India Member, Shri Rajiv Jain delivered a talk on 'Human Rights in Criminal Justice System' at NFSU Conference in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.



On 25th January, 2024, NHRC, India Member, Shri Rajiv Jain delivered a talk on 'NHRC and its crucial role in a flourishing democracy like India' to the participants including law students and officers of IRS undergoing MTCP course at XLRI- Xavier School of Management, Aurangpur, Dadri Toye, Jhajjar, Haryana.



On 25th January, 2024 NHRC, India Member, Dr Dnyaneshwar M. Mulay visited Apna Ghar in Goa to assess the facilities, living conditions and how the human rights of the inmates are being ensured. The facility houses all the institutions under the JJ Act in one campus including observation homes, shelter home and special home for boys and girls. He also visited the Asylum of Majorda under the Government of Goa to assess the living conditions of older as well as the mental health cured people.



On 26th January, 2024, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal unfurled the flag on Republic Day at Manav Adhikar Bhavan. He also addressed the security personnel and stressed on the duties and responsibilities assigned to every individual. He asserted that one must always stand with poor and helpless.



On 27th January, 2024, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal addressed a session on 'Harnessing youth strength for a Viksit Bharat' at GSFC University, Vadodara, Gujarat. He emphasized the significance of focus as a pre-requisite for performance in pursuit of perfection and for continuous improvement in life. He also shared some practical tips and real-life anecdotes to guide the youth to actively contribute to the vision of a Viksit Bharat.



Expanding the contours of a developed India, he said that the next 25 years belong to the youth of the country. He said that they have to identify challenges & opportunities, work with speed & scale, and bring transformation. He said that we need to build on the contributions of previous generations to make India a developed country in next 25 years to become a role model for the world and be recognized as a nation that is prosperous, sensitive to environment with empathy for vulnerable and marginalized.



From 27th-28th January, 2024, NHRC, India Member, Dr D. M. Mulay visited Mumbai for a meeting with the Minister and Officers of Department of Culture, Government of Maharashtra that was organizing a conference on culture and human rights.

On 31st January, 2024, NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Smt Anita Sinha attended the Foundation Day programme of National Commission for Women at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.



On 31st January, 2024, NHRC, India Sr. Superintendent of Police, Shri Hari Lal Chouhan visited Srinagar (J&K) in connection with the preparations of the proposed NHRC camp sitting in J&K.

Forthcoming events

- On 2nd February, 2024, NHRC, India will conduct a day-long human rights awareness workshop in collaboration with AVVM Sri Pushpam College, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu.
- On 2nd February, 2024, NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Smt Anita Sinha will inaugurate the one-day conference on 'Dimensions of female labour force participation,' held in collaboration with TISS Hyderabad.
- On 2nd February, 2024, law students and faculties from DES Navalmal Firodia Law College, Pune will visit NHRC.
- On 5th February, 2024, the Commission will begin its online short-term internship.
- On 5th February, 2024, a batch of 25 students and 10 faculties from Siddharth College of Law, Mumbai & 30 students and 9 faculties from DY Patil College of Law will visit NHRC.
- On 6th February, 2024, NHRC, India Director, Lt Col Virender Singh will inaugurate the two-day human rights workshop on the 'Rights of Child' at Arya Kanya Degree College, Prayagraj, Allahabad.
- On 6th February, 2024, Shri Bharat Lal will inaugurate the 'Aahvaan: NGO - CSR Conclave 2024' organized by Vishwa Yuvak Kendra Campus, New Delhi.
- On 6th February, 2024, a batch of 50 students and 3 faculty members from Mulund College of Commerce, Mumbai will visit the Commission.
- On 7th February, 2024, a batch of 45 students and 5 faculty members from Chembur Karnataka College of Law, Mumbai will visit the Commission.
- On 7th February, 2024, NHRC interns will be taken for a virtual visit to the Asha Kiran shelter home, which works for orphans, underprivileged, and neglected children.
- On 8th February, 2024, the Commission will hold a two-day awareness workshop on 'Women and Human Rights' in collaboration with Patrician College of Arts and Science, Adayar, Chennai.
- On 11th February, 2024, NHRC, India Member, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani will address about 1,150 women including lecturers, teachers, advocates, educationalists, and social workers at Mahila Shakti Sammelan at Nirmal, Telangana.
- On 12th February, 2024, NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Shri D.K. Nim will attend the valedictory ceremony of the moot court



- competition held in collaboration with the Maharashtra National Law University, Nagpur.
- On 13th February, 2024, NHRC, India Member, Smt Vijaya

Bharathi Sayani will visit Tripuraram, Nalgonda District, Telangana to make an assessment of the facilities and human rights situation at Govt Children's Home & Kasturi Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya.

- On 14th February, 2024, the officers from National Forensic Sciences University's 18th course on Human Rights will visit NHRC.

Human rights and NHRC in news



Complaint management in January, 2024



Complaints received	4,139
Disposed off	3,773
Under consideration of the Commission	7,688

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, hrcnet.nic.in, Common Service Centres

Email: jrlawnhrc@nic.in (For complaints), cr.nhrc@nic.in (For general queries/ correspondence)

Focal point for Human Rights Defenders:

Indrajeet Kumar, Deputy Registrar (Law)

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