

HUMAN RIGHTS Newsletter



A Monthly publication of the National Human Rights Commission, India

Cover story
NHRC, India celebrates
Human Rights Day





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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

Annually, December 10th bears global significance as Human Rights Day. The day is celebrated to commemorate the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the UN General Assembly in 1948. This year marks 75 years of this epoch-making document as a guiding principle endorsing the universal faith in the necessity of protecting human rights. It is pertinent to note that two Indians namely, Hansa Mehta and Laxmi Menon introduced 'gender equality' and 'non-discriminatory' clauses respectively in the UDHR, which represent the ethos of India.

The NHRC, India organized a commemorative event to celebrate Human Rights Day, which was graced by the Vice President of India, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar, as the Chief Guest, who delivered a soul-stirring speech. NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra also addressed the distinguished gathering. Mr Shombi Sharp, UN Resident Coordinator in India, read the message of the UN Secretary General. This event serves as the cover story of this newsletter.

Of many issues that pose serious challenges to human life and rights is the impact of climate change. It exacerbates the already depleting

potable water resources in the world besides the other aspects of the environment. Out of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 11 goals are linked with water. Water conservation, management and judicious use of water including grey water management, has to be everyone's business.

The initiatives such as Dubai NHRI COP28 symposium on climate change and human rights, organized by the Global Alliance of NHRIs (GANHRI) are a way forward to finding a collective solution to such issues. This edition of the newsletter features a brief report on the address by the NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra in a session of this international symposium on empowering those most affected by climate change. A great society or a great nation becomes inevitable when every person contributes in a meaningful way. We have to ensure that no one is left behind and we can leave a better planet Earth for future generations.

Developing sensitivity and responsiveness to the plight of others lends purpose to life. Prince Siddharth, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Nelson Mandela all had one common factor - thinking about others and devoting their entire lives to the betterment of the

people. Prince Siddharth when forced by compassion decided to fight to save the life of an injured pigeon, went on to gain enlightenment and became Lord Buddha. When an advocate named Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi decided to fight injustice and give up every material pleasure and power to improve the lives of poor and deprived, he became Mahatma and earned the sobriquet of the 'father of nation'. When Nelson Mandela chose to give up his life for his ideals to see his country South Africa where equality, justice, liberty and freedom are the norm, and there is no discrimination based on the colour of skin, he defeated the autocratic regime. His efforts ensured freedom and democracy to all South Africans and he was recognized as the Gandhi of South Africa, a larger-than-life persona.

The people, who take up the cause of ordinary citizens for a better tomorrow and make it their life's mission, inspire us. The work of NHRC is all about caring others especially poor, deprived, disadvantaged and all those who feel helpless. NHRC philosophy is to be the conscience keeper of the society.

NHRC's month-long Winter Internship – 2023 started in December,

wherein more than 70 students from all over the country are participating. The programme provides an opportunity to learn about various aspects of human rights and values and imbibe them for the common good. NHRC envisions these interns to become the messengers and champions of human rights at various forums. The month also witnessed the final round of the Commission's annual debate competition for Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), which it organized this year in collaboration with the Railway Protection Force (RPF). The competition aimed to promote human rights and spread awareness among personnel of the Armed Police Forces. We witnessed a very high-quality debate. Indeed, very exciting. One debater very aptly said that right without duty is like a human without a soul.

Police forces are the first defenders of people's lives, their rights and dignity. Civility must be the non-negotiable norm. Their sensitization from a human rights perspective should be part of the periodic training programmes run by their respective academics. The Commission on its part has tailored a week-long residential sensitization programme for them. In December, it held its second run for another batch of the officers of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) and other investigating agencies at its premises.

NHRC, India continues to spearhead initiatives to raise awareness and sensitize diverse segments of society on various aspects of human rights and duties, with plans for further expansion. This edition of the Newsletter, besides the NHRC Chairperson's messages on

Human Rights Defender Day and Human Rights Day, also carries reports on the other engagements and activities of the Commission in December, 2023.

But by the time you get to read about these activities in the forthcoming newsletter, the New Year 2024 has already opened a new vista indicating time to take a pause, look back and redirect your energies to make meaningful contributions to the overall good of self and society in various ways. We must try to bring joy and happiness to everyone's lives. Let's be driven by the Constitutional value of 'fraternity'. I wish and hope everyone has a great new year 2024 ahead.

Bharat Lal

Secretary General &
Chief Executive, NHRC India

Cover story

NHRC, India celebrates Human Rights Day

The National Human Rights Commission, NHRC, India organized a function at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi to celebrate Human Rights Day in commemoration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) on 10th December, 2023. Addressing the gathering as the Chief Guest, the Vice-President of India, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar reflected on India's position as a role model to the world for nurturing human rights for the one-sixth of the global population. Underlining the respect for human rights that is embedded in the nation's civilizational ethos and



The Vice- President of India, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar lighting the ceremonial lamp

Constitution, the Vice-President emphasized that human rights form the very cornerstone of democracy.

He said that India has been treated unfairly by some global entities and asked them to delve deep into the nation's performance on various aspects of human rights and not merely scratch the surface. He wanted such entities including the crony critics setting pernicious and subjective narratives to take note of India's governance model that is free from corruption, favoritism and nepotism. He said that it is guided by transparency, accountability and merit.

Shri Dhankhar exhorted them to look at India's rise reflected on land and sea, in sky and space. India stands for the common good of the common man. India has emerged as a global leader and agenda-setter. This is a day to open the eyes, and see how the one-sixth of the humanity in Bharat is influencing the world at large, and talking about peace, harmony, and growth. He said that India is not seeking external accolades for becoming the voice of the Global South. Rather, we are just urging them not to be prejudicially subjective by clinging to their predetermined thoughts.

The Vice-President emphasized that the government's affirmative



The Vice-President, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar addressing the gathering

implementation of inclusive policies has liberated millions from poverty's grasp. This achievement paved the way for a future enriched with economic opportunities, access to quality healthcare, and a sound education - the pillars upon which a robust human rights edifice rest. He said that providing gas connections, toilets, drinking water, and free ration to more than 80 crore people is a transformative revolution, which gave reprieve from toiling tears in the eyes of our mothers and sisters. He said that the National Education Policy (NEP) and the massive infrastructural growth as quintessential for proliferation and empowerment of human rights.

Talking about the recent upsurge in the politics of freebies, the Vice-President cautioned that this will

lead to distortion of expenditure priority and shall undermine the basic framework of macroeconomic stability. He expressed his desire for the NHRC to catalyze a healthy national debate on the politics of freebies and come out with a paper that can be extremely informative, motivational and inspirational for the people at large and those who are in seats of governance. The aim is to enlighten people to empower human minds and not focus on merely economic gains.

The Vice-President commended the NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Arun Mishra for his dedication towards human rights. He acknowledged the impact and widespread appreciation of Justice Mishra's advocacy for de-stigmatizing mental illness, recognizing it as a global challenge. He highlighted the NHRC Chairperson's active engagement in sensitizing society to treat human rights defenders as their eyes and ears for securing human rights. He emphasized Justice Mishra's support for them and becoming their defender to evolve a system, that is friendly for nurturing human rights. He said that the NHRC deserves to be complimented for encapsulating the essence of human rights in its report on post-poll violence in West Bengal, thereby promoting the principles of the Rule of Law. Addressing the



Audience listening to the Vice-President's address

gathering, NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Arun Mishra expressed hope that in an age marked by rapid technological advances, globalization, and an increasingly interwoven socio-cultural fabric, the shared commitment towards human rights, propels the world towards a tomorrow where the inherent dignity and rights of every person are acknowledged and protected by all. Dramatic rise in inequality and the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution require immediate attention. At the same time, businesses must effectively address human rights concerns.

He said that business enterprises are a major source of investment, innovation, and development. The new digital technologies have transformed the way people live. These can be a significant driver in achieving progress for all and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, the ethical ramifications of advancing technologies are a matter of grave concern. The internet is useful but also has a dark side; infringing on privacy through the spread of hate speech misinformation, undermining democratic processes, and increasing online violence against women and children. When improperly or maliciously used, it can fuel divisions within and between

communities to undermine human rights.

Justice Mishra said that terrorism causes grave violations of human rights. Condoning or sympathizing with terror activities and terrorists is a great disservice to the cause of human rights. We must not glorify or sympathize with them.

Lauding the role of the institutions of local self-governance, the Municipal bodies and Panchayats, Justice Mishra said that these institutions are indispensable in implementing constitutional values of Swaraj on the ground. They must effectively and transparently discharge their statutory civic functions enjoined upon them in advancing human rights and promoting the concept of

fraternity, by improving the quality of life ensuring clean water supply, sanitation, public health, and equality for citizens.

He said that both governmental and individual responsibilities are integral to creating a just and equitable society where human rights are valued, protected, and upheld for every individual. He flagged five pertinent issues, which, he said, have huge ramifications on human rights on a vast scale. These are poverty, climate change, harmonizing human rights and business, women empowerment in the workplaces, providing safe and secure cyberspace and strengthening vulnerable groups including transgender, persons with mental illnesses, sex workers, beggars, destitute, elderly, orphaned children, and persons in need. Their human rights violations must be addressed on priority, with sensitivity to their plight. Besides this, he said that the problems of spurious drugs, medicines, food adulteration, and drug addiction, among the young generation must be dealt with stringently and expeditiously.

On the occasion, the United Nations Resident Coordinator to India, Mr Shombi Sharp read out a message from the UN Secretary-General, Mr



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



A section of audience at NHRC, India Human Rights Day function

António Guterres. In his message, UN Secretary General quoted the iconic opening sentence of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - 'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights' is as important today as it was when it was adopted 75 years ago. He called upon the member states to use this 75th anniversary, and the summit of the future next year, to strengthen their commitments to the timeless values of this declaration which is a roadmap, helping to end wars, heal divisions and promote peace and dignity for all.

In his address, Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General, NHRC India, said that observing Human Rights Day in commemoration of the UDHR reminds us that empathy and compassion are a way of life. He highlighted the critical role the

Commission has been playing since its inception towards the promotion and protection of human rights by proactively resolving cases of rights violations, besides issuing several guidelines and advisories to ameliorate the cause of human rights. He

said the NHRC, India in the last 30 years of its existence has dealt with more than 22 lakh cases and recommended over Rs. 230 crore as relief to the victims.

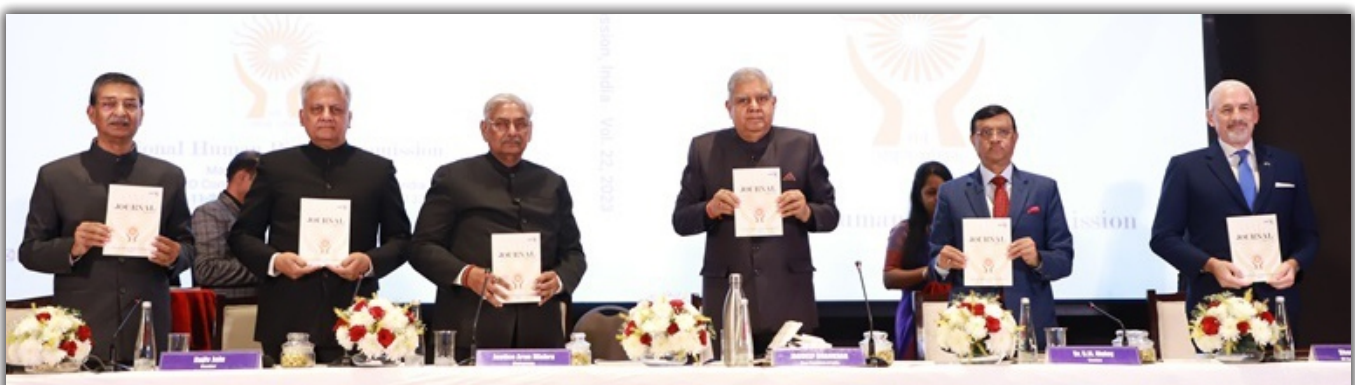
On the occasion, three NHRC publications were also issued. These included Hindi and English journals carrying scholarly articles on human rights issues by the experts, and a book titled 'Forensic Science and Human Rights'. NHRC, India Members, Dr Dnyaneshwar M. Mulay and Shri Rajiv Jain, Members of the Judiciary, the Statutory Commissions, State Human Rights Commissions, Diplomats, Special Rapporteurs, Special Monitors, academicians and members of the civil society, NGOs, human rights defenders, students, specially-abled children, among others, were present.



The UN Resident Coordinator to India, Mr Shompi Sharp reading the message of UN Secretary General



NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal addressing the gathering



The dignitaries on the dias releasing the NHRC, India publications



Messages

Human Rights Day message of NHRC, India Chairperson Justice Arun Mishra

Greetings on the eve of Human Rights Day, which is commemorated on the 10th of every December since 1948 when the UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). It's now 75 years to this epoch-making document that continues to serve as a guiding principle for the promotion and protection of human rights throughout the world. No wonder it is one of the most translated documents in 500 languages.

Its celebration every year sets up the narrative for the protection of human rights and reminds us to continue with the tireless efforts and hard work put in by people and organizations all over the world in

protecting and promoting human rights.

Human rights are inalienable, moral and pre-legal. Every law is required to be compliant with them. Let us resolve to ensure that this enduring reality remains unchanged amidst various challenges facing humanity in an ever-changing world. This need has been very aptly surmised in this year's theme for Human Rights Day- Dignity, Freedom, and Justice for all. This underscores our collective obligation to create a society that is just, inclusive and remains humane for all everywhere.

Thus, every human is entitled to live a life with dignity and enjoy rights in a free atmosphere. The Constitution of India unequivocally imbibes

these values. These also reflect in the motto of the National Human Rights Commission, India - *Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah* i.e. may all be happy. Let us all work towards achieving this noble cause irrespective of caste, creed, sex, language and status.

The Commission, since its inception in 1993, has carved out the path for cherishing the values of equality, freedom, and justice and, in that spirit; it has been striving for the protection of human rights with expeditious redressal to grievances with the cooperation of Centre and State Governments as well as the civil society.

Let our quest for a just and an equitable society never ends.... Jai Hind!!

Message of NHRC, India Chairperson Justice Arun Mishra on 25 years of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders

25 years ago, on 9th December, 1998, the United Nations adopted the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (HRDs). India has a rich legacy of HRDs contributing to advocating and upholding the human rights of all human beings without discrimination. Since its inception, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India has worked closely with such HRDs. I sincerely applaud

their commitment and dedication to promoting and protecting the rights of individuals and communities, particularly of vulnerable groups. Their tireless efforts have not only helped in bringing about positive changes but have also been instrumental in shaping the discourse on human rights.

The Commission treats human rights defenders as their eyes and

ears, and continuously engages with them on various aspects of human rights issues. It is heartening to note that more and more women are coming forward to take up this worthy cause and interact with the Commission at various forums. During the meetings of the Core Group of Human Rights Defenders and other such groups, meeting with the HRDs during the camp sittings, conferences, seminars, etc.



they make meaningful contribution.

I thank all the Human Rights Defenders especially women, who have been playing stellar roles in highlighting and fighting for human rights of all human beings. Human rights of the sex workers, protection of the rights of the children of the sex workers, rights of women belonging to marginalized sections

of society are some important issues, have been taken up by the women HRDs. The Commission always welcomes them and stands by them. We are committed to encouraging women HRDs as they bring sensitivity and responsiveness.

On this day, let us reaffirm our commitment to further promote human rights of all human beings

and continue to empower vulnerable groups. Together, we are building a society rooted in our constitutional values i.e. empathy, equality, justice and fraternity.

Thank you, human rights defenders, for your sustained contributions to the cause of human rights, and I wish you all great success in this collective noble endeavour. ■

Article

Responsible Business Conducts & Human Rights

By Justice Shri Arun Mishra, Chairperson NHRC, India

Business enterprises can profoundly impact the human rights of employees, consumers, and communities wherever they operate. These impacts may be positive, such as increasing access to employment and improving public services, or harmful, such as polluting the environment, underpaying workers, causing risks to public health, or forcibly evicting communities.

The constitutional view of development goes beyond mere Gross Domestic Production (GDP) growth. Improvements must occur in the quality of life of the ordinary person; needs in all aspects, tangible and intangible must be met. Development must be human centric and cause upliftment of marginalized sections. Government initiatives apart, corporate governance must also care for the diversity of neo and traditional trade practices, security of employment, migrant workers and the interest of vulnerable groups

and prevent the hire and fire of workers.

In today's era of the global market, the deprivation of a large section of the worldwide community from the fruits of globalization and their financial exploitation by a few large businesses is a serious concern. The products of particular brands are earning unrealistic returns disproportionate to the investment and worth of the product; a strict scrutiny is called for in the apparel industry in this regard.

Growing inequality in income and wealth has been a primary global socio-economic concern in recent times and is a matter of concern. It is attributable mainly to hi-tech intermediation/ aggregation platforms, more than multinationals and other near-monopolies. High-tech intermediation/ aggregation platforms are mere distributors of goods and services but tend to monopolize the global supply chain amidst allegations of

anti-labour practices and dodging of taxes resulting in gross violation of human rights. Hence, e-commerce and social governance require fostering responsible and sustainable practices.

Another concern impacting business and human rights is climate change, which significantly influences poverty, displacement and forced migration. Unfortunately, the adverse impacts of climate change on them were realized too late. Therefore, it is necessary to understand that Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) criteria require businesses to integrate their sustainability metrics with the reporting of their practices and performance.

It is also necessary to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the upliftment of marginalized classes including, women and farmers for the formation of an egalitarian society.



However, the blind race for freebies in elections will ultimately impact the achievement of SDGs, considering the availability of financial resources.

In fact, aligning financial practices with ESG criteria mitigates risks and positions businesses for long-term success. We have to prevent the patenting of natural products and promote business in such products through self-help groups. In this context, respecting the customary rights of Scheduled Tribes while making trade in natural products is also a way forward. Besides, to achieve SDGs, investing in climate adaptation strategies will reduce the risks posed by climate change. At the same time, we have to leverage the opportunities arising due to climate changes, such as the ability to cultivate crops in regions that were previously deemed unsuitable.

Besides the climate, we are also faced with evolving technological transition which require a human rights-oriented approach for the smooth transition through skill development of the workforce. Sustainable circularity and recycling are frameworks for a restorative and regenerative economy, particularly in the automobile recycling industry. While one-third of jobs are to be created in environmentally sustainable sectors, corporate governance must ensure that someone serving in the heydays of life is not left destitute in old age.

The Covid-19 pandemic has shifted the focus on mitigating employee

problems, rights of migrant and informal workers and mental health, for which the NHRC, India issued a series of advisories. For instance, transport is a significant sector of business and in order to ensure the human rights and economic welfare of the truck drivers, the Commission issued a comprehensive advisory. Among other informal sector workers, the labourers working in stone quarries suffer from silicosis. The Commission had asked the various State Governments to frame a policy framework under which compensation is provided, including family pension and other social security benefits.

Development should be sustainable and must care for intergenerational equity. Over-exploitation of minerals and other non-renewable natural resources results in inter-generational inequities, causing the exhaustion of resources of future generations. We, therefore, need to consider mandatory internalization of the total costs of exploitation of minerals and other non-renewable natural resources.

Business must be responsible. The Bhopal Gas Tragedy is an example of how, despite decades passing, people continue to suffer, and the owners have barely given any compensation. The debris has still not been addressed. The evolution of a mechanism that can bring accountability to the Multi-National Companies (MNCs) has to be worked out through serious discussions among all the stakeholders. Hazardous business

activity must be strictly liable to human lives and biodiversity, and the efforts of MNCs contracting out the same are opposed to the law and public policy.

A substantial part of hazardous waste generated by business houses in developed countries is transported to under-developed and developing countries for disposal under the guise of reuse. We have to think about cooperation in this field to prevent environmental degradation, global warming and consequent violation of human rights. Air and water pollution are becoming a menace.

The polluters pay principle needs to be expanded and provided statutorily. Central Pollution Control Board and the State Control Board must vigilantly enforce a provision of environmental statutes and take punitive measures against the polluters. It ensures the closure of polluting industries and compliance with norms. Industries with the potential to cause injuries should be operated appropriately.

We must ensure that the impact of globalization and any adverse effects of implementing trade and economic policies and programmes are reduced to the minimum for various sectors, including the marginalized class, women, children, farmers, and small and medium-scale industries.

(Based on his address on Embracing ESG in India organized by the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs at India Habitat Centre in Delhi on 15th December, 2023) ■

Consultation

National seminar on the 'Concept of Human Rights in Indian Art, Culture & Languages'

The National Human Rights Commission, NHRC, India organized the two-day national conference in Hindi on the concept of human rights in Indian art, culture & languages in collaboration with the University of Calicut, Kerala on 19th December, 2023. Inaugurating it as the Chief Guest, Dr Dnyaneshwar M. Mulay, Member, NHRC said that the Indian ethos and human rights are intertwined in many ways. India has a rich culture and philosophical heritage that has influenced its approach to human rights. India's ethos is rooted in its diversity with a multitude of cultures, languages and religions coexisting. This diversity has led to an emphasis on tolerance and respect for different beliefs, which are integral to the concept of human rights.

Dr Mulay said that the Indian Constitution guarantees freedom of speech and expression as a fundamental human right. Indian ethos and human rights are connected through a historical and cultural

context that values diversity, non-violence and social justice.

The Indian view of human rights is not for human beings alone but for the entire world, planet and the universe. This may be used as a fulcrum for building a roadmap for human rights all over the world. He said that democracy is nothing, but the practice of human rights and India is the best ground for practicing human rights given its long traditions of values reflected in art,

culture and philosophy. He said that awareness needs to be built about them for sustaining humanity as most Indians don't understand the rich Indian heritage of respecting human rights.

Prof. (Dr) M. K. Jayaraj, Vice Chancellor, Calicut University said that the University has been organizing this event in collaboration with NHRC in line with its long tradition of such seminars. The Indian languages are a treasure house of information on Indian art and culture. He said that Indian art and literature from ancient times have very beautifully depicted cultural traditions through various regional languages. In fact, through these well-documented traditions, the commonality of Indian ethos for respecting human rights is visible with which people living in different parts of the country identify.

NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Smt Anita Sinha gave an overview of the seminar and said that the Commis-



NHRC, India Member, Dr D.M. Mulay inaugurating the seminar



NHRC, India Member, Dr D.M. Mulay addressing the participants



NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Smt Anita Sinha addressing the gathering

sion, during discussions, has felt that human rights transcends the boundaries and hence the discussion on various aspects of human rights should expand to include different sections of the society and to ensure their participation. This

seminar being organized in collaboration with Calicut University is part of such endeavours. She said that the Commission is committed to organizing such discourse to help create a narrative for the well-being of the people and the promotion

and protection of their rights. The seminar was spread into three thematic sessions: concept of human rights in Indian art and culture, contribution of hindi and regional languages in promotion of human rights and concept of human rights in Indian literature, chaired by the NHRC, India Member, Dr Dnyaneshwar M. Mulay, Joint Secretary, Smt Anita Sinha, and noted scholar, Dr Damodar Khadse. Several eminent speakers of the seminar included, Prof. (Dr) P. P Pradhumnann, Member, Syndicate, Calicut University, Dr Vasumathi, Member, Syndicate, Calicut University and Prof. (Dr) M. K. Jayaraj, Vice Chancellor, Calicut University. NHRC, India Director, Lt Col. Virender Singh, U and AD (OL) Smt Anjali Saklani also participated. ■



Participants of the seminar

NHRC interventions

NHRC intervention ensures cleaning of massive solid waste along the Railway tracks in Delhi

The National Human Rights Commission, NHRC, India expanded the scope of its hearing of the Delhi air pollution matter to various other measures taken and to be taken by the state

governments for ensuring the overall cleanliness of environment in a holistic manner. In this connection, the Commission while hearing the representatives of the governments of NCT of Delhi had directed that it

would like to have a joint inspection of the condition of the Azadpur to Narela Railway line stretch with the concerned authorities on 3rd October, 2023 to inspect whether the garbage and plastic waste was removed.



After the first joint inspection, the Commission observed that it provided valuable insights into the complexities surrounding waste management and cleanliness along the Azadpur to Narela Railway stretch. It highlighted the necessity for collaborative efforts between stakeholders, including the Delhi Government, Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), Railways, Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB), and Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC), Azadpur to address the root causes of waste accumulation, improve access, and implement effective waste removal strategies. These findings underscored the importance of coordinated actions and regular assessments to achieve the desired standards of cleanliness and waste management in the area.

Since then, three joint inspections have been held to oversee the progress in the removal of municipal solid waste on 105 km of railway tracks. The joint inspections and efforts by the NHRC officers along with railways and MCD have ensured that the work continued on removing the waste on the railway tracks in the national capital. So far, about 37,577 MT of waste has been removed. The key observations

after the sustained efforts are as follows:

- i.) Almost, the garbage has been lifted from the entire stretch except in a few places nearby Azadpur Railway Station adjacent to flyover.
- ii.) The Azadpur (Subzi Mandi) stretch was heavily encroached upon by habitants of slums on both sides, hindering cleaning efforts. Although, substantial amount of garbage has been lifted by the MCD, a large quantity of household waste was still present in the Azadpur belt, posing a potential danger to both passengers and the habitants of these slums.
- iii.) The Adarsh Nagar section has been largely cleared, except a small portion just before the Max Hospital, where a fewer number of encroachers was still present. However, fresh waste was found in the Subzi Mandi stretch, Shalimar Bagh area and Bhagat Singh Park.
- iv.) Access to the MCD officials to Keshavpuram Railway Station area has been duly provided by the railways to enable them to dispose the garbage. However,

the MCD has informed that there are some areas where access cannot be provided for machineries, and in these areas garbage is being lifted and disposed by deploying mules.

- v.) It has been observed that all field staff have been appropriately sensitized to ensure that cleaning the garbage is not undertaken without the use of protective gear and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits.
- vi.) There was no evidence of manual scavenging, and the task of cleaning garbage was being efficiently performed by the JCB machinery.

The Commission has observed that the waste lying on the railway tracks need to be removed on a regular basis. It has also asked the MCD, Railways and other stakeholders to continue with the cleaning work of waste in the railway tracks and as done earlier, a joint inspection of NHRC along with Railways, MCD and other stakeholders will be conducted again. The NHRC, India team included Shri Vikram Harimohan Meena, SSP, Shri K. K. Shrivastava, DR (Law), Shri Lal Bahar, Dy SP, Shri Aman Kumar Burnawal, LRC, and Smt Ekta Jain, LRC. ■

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 December 2023, the Commission took *suo motu* cognizance in six cases of alleged human rights violations reported by the media and issued notices to the concerned authorities for reports. Summaries of some cases are as follows:

Epilepsy drug Sodium Valproate fails quality test

(Case No. 5515/30/3/2023)

On 29th December, 2023, the media reported that a medicine Sodium Valproate, recommended for treatment of epilepsy in Delhi



government-run hospitals and Mohalla Clinics, was found to be not meeting the requisite standards as per a report issued by the Regional Drug Testing Laboratory (RDTL), Chandigarh. Reportedly, another medicine prescribed by the doctors for the treatment of epilepsy was also found to be inadequate. The Commission has issued notices to the Delhi Chief Secretary, Police Commissioner and Drugs Controller General of India calling for a detailed report on the matter.

Death of a patient due to non-availability of oxygen at a PHC

[Case No. 4702/4/22/2023]

On 28th December, 2023, the media reported that a heart patient lost life due to the non-availability of oxygen cylinders at the Primary Health Centre (PHC) in Munger

district, Bihar. The Commission has issued notices to the Chief Secretary, Government of Bihar seeking detailed reports. The report is expected to include the status of the action taken against the accused as well as relief and rehabilitation provided to the Next of Kin of the deceased.

Stripping and beating of a woman in Belagavi district

[Case No. 1033/10/2/2023-WC]

On 11th December, 2023, the media reported that a 42-year-old woman was stripped, paraded naked, tied to an electric pole and assaulted at Hosa Vantamuri village, Belagavi district, Karnataka after her son eloped with a girl from the same village. Considering this as a serious violation of human rights, the Commission has issued notices to

the Chief Secretary and Director General of Police of the Government of Karnataka calling for a detailed report on the matter.

Killing of 13 persons in a gun fight in the Tengenoupal district

[Case No. 84/14/17/2023]

On 5th December, 2023, the media reported that at least 13 people were killed in a gun fight in Leithao village near Saibol in the Tengenoupal district, Manipur. Reportedly, the incident indicated lapse on the part of the law enforcing agencies and the forces deployed to ensure peace, law and order in the state. The Commission has issued notices to the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police, Manipur calling for a detailed report on the matter. ■

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 con-

cerned authorities for relief to the victims. In December, 2023, besides the number of cases taken up daily by the Member Benches, 50 cases were heard by the Full Commission and 40 cases by the Double Member Bench-I. Monetary relief of more than ₹ 159.7 lakh was recommended for the victims or their Next of Kin (NoK) in the 34 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	Case No.	Nature of Complaint	Amount (₹ in lakhs)	State
1.	1004/1/20/2017-JCD	Death in judicial custody	03.00	Andhra Pradesh
2.	1360/4/1/2020-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Bihar
3.	121/33/9/2021-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Chhattisgarh
4.	79/33/13/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Chhattisgarh



S.No	Case No.	Nature of Complaint	Amount (₹ in lakhs)	State
5.	193/7/15/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Haryana
6.	393/34/16/2021-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Jharkhand
7.	8/34/10/2019-JCD	Death in judicial custody	07.00	Jharkhand
8.	1715/13/14/2020-JCD	Death in judicial custody	07.50	Maharashtra
9.	640/13/24/2020-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Maharashtra
10.	2041/20/11/2019-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Rajasthan
11.	10150/24/4/2020-JCD	Death in judicial custody	07.50	Uttar Pradesh
12.	11901/24/42/2019-JCD	Death in judicial custody	03.00	Uttar Pradesh
13.	35143/24/30/2016-JCD	Death in judicial custody	04.00	Uttar Pradesh
14.	4655/24/13/2020-JCD	Death in judicial custody	03.00	Uttar Pradesh
15.	636/25/17/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	West Bengal
16.	1132/34/23/2019-PCD	Death in police custody	05.00	Jharkhand
17.	18850/24/23/2020-AD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Uttar Pradesh
18.	36589/24/35/2018-AD	Death in judicial custody in judicial custody	03.00	Uttar Pradesh
19.	1516/18/14/2023	Custodial torture	00.25	Odisha
20.	5089/4/9/2022	Death due to electrocution	05.00	Bihar
21.	1206/18/20/2022	Death due to electrocution	10.00	Odisha
22.	3191/18/6/2022	Death due to electrocution	03.00	Odisha
23.	228/20/16/2021	Death due to electrocution	30.00	Rajasthan
24.	7271/30/2/2022-WC	Rape	00.50	Delhi
25.	14636/24/3/2020-WC	Attempt to rape	03.00	Uttar Pradesh
26.	520/20/29/2022	Child rape	00.50	Rajasthan
27.	2716/1/29/2022	Children	03.00	Andhra Pradesh
28.	2564/18/20/2022	Children	07.00	Odisha
29.	1127/35/4/2022	Children	03.00	Uttarakhand
30.	2637/22/47/2021	Medical negligence	00.25	Tamil Nadu
31.	944/10/15/2021	Atrocities on human rights defenders	05.00	Karnataka
32.	34/23/1/2022	Abuse of power	00.50	Tripura
33.	2914/18/19/2022	Corproal punishment in schools/ other education institutions	00.25	Odisha
34.	1379/19/21/2022	Trouble by anti-social elements	00.50	Punjab



Payment of relief to the victims

The Commission closed 23 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 ₹ 69.25 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 No.	Nature of Complaint	Amount (₹ in lakhs)	State
1.	2727/4/9/2020-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Bihar
2.	2659/30/0/2018-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Delhi
3.	193/7/15/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Haryana
4.	1980/7/1/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Haryana
5.	1693/24/39/2018-JCD	Death in judicial custody	07.00	Uttar Pradesh
6.	1088/34/14/2019-DH	Death of child staying with female prisoner in judicial custody	00.50	Jharkhand
7.	1516/18/14/2023	Custodial torture	00.25	Odisha
8.	8/27/0/2022-WC	Dowry death or their attempt	01.00	Chandigarh
9.	7271/30/2/2022-WC	Rape	00.50	Delhi
10.	2842/7/3/2022	Death due to electrocution	04.00	Haryana
11.	1791/18/7/2023	Death due to electrocution	04.00	Odisha
12.	947/18/1/2023	Death due to electrocution	05.00	Odisha
13.	4684/25/5/2022	Death due to electrocution	03.00	West Bengal
14.	7513/30/6/2022	Failure in taking lawful action	00.50	Delhi
15.	1462/7/0/2022	Inaction by the state government	05.00	Delhi
16.	2073/24/68/2021	Police motivated incidents	05.00	Uttar Pradesh
17.	21196/24/43/2023	Non-payment of pension/ compensation	01.00	Uttar Pradesh
18.	36077/24/64/2022	Non-payment of pension/ compensation	00.50	Uttar Pradesh
19.	29727/24/52/2022	Intimidation/ threatening/ extortion by anti social elements	00.50	Uttar Pradesh
20.	1461/4/23/2017	Malfunctioning of medical professionals	09.00	Bihar
21.	4712/20/6/2022	Medical negligence	02.00	Rajasthan
22.	2328/36/2/2022	Pollution affecting surroundings	05.00	Telangana
23.	1479/25/9/2022	Trouble by anti-social elements	00.25	West Bengal



Case studies

Death of a woman after rape by police personnel

(Case No. 944/10/15/2021)

The matter pertained to the death of a Human Rights Defender in Mysore under suspicious circumstances after she was raped by a local police officer in 2021. Reportedly, the victim was in a relationship with the accused and he promised to marry her. An FIR was lodged but the victim died after she was admitted to a hospital. On the basis of reports received from the concerned state authorities, in response to its notices, the Commission held that the human rights of the victim were violated by the police officer. The Commission recommended that the Government of Karnataka pay ₹ 5 lakh as relief to the Next of Kin (NoK) victim, which was complied with.

Death of a child due to electrocution

(Case No. 2564/18/20/2022)

The matter pertained to the death of an 8-year-old child after he sustained serious injuries while he came in contact with 11 KV wires hanging over an under construction building in Baradanali village, Odisha in 2022. Reportedly, the victim was playing on the roof of one under construction building with his friends and came in contact with live wires hanging at a very low

height and got severe burn injuries. Based on the material on record, it was found that the sagging between the two old PCC poles was the reason why the 11KV line was lowered. The Commission found that the incident happened due to electricity department's negligence in failing to do regular patrolling and maintenance of the 11 KV line conductors. Accordingly, it recommended that the Government of Odisha pay ₹ 7 lakh as a relief to the Next of Kin (NoK) of deceased victim, which was paid.

Corporal punishment on a student

(Case No. 2914/18/19/2022)

The matter pertained to the corporal punishment inflicted upon a student by a teacher as the victim student had failed to write a poem in Odisha in 2022. An FIR was lodged against the accused following the incident. Based on the material on record, the Commission held that the human rights of the students were violated by the teacher and recommended that the Government of Odisha pay Rs. 1 lakh as relief to the victim. After considering the Secretary's submissions from the Department of School and Mass Education, Odisha, the Commission reviewed its recommendation and decided to reduce the compensation amount to ₹ 25,000/- which was paid to the victim. ■

Spot enquiry

Case No. 1033/10/2/2023

From 17th-20th December, 2023, a four-member NHRC team led by Shri Sunil Kumar Meena, DIG, conducted a spot enquiry into the reported incident of stripping and beating of a woman in Belagavi district, Karnataka.

Case No. 623/7/4/2023

From 18th – 22nd December 2023, the NHRC team conducted a spot enquiry into the reported allegation of third degree torture and inhuman/barbaric treatment by the Railway Police officials of Jakhal, Fatehbad, Punjab leading to serious injuries to his private parts.



NHRC team led by Shri Sunil Kumar Meena, DIG, conducting a spot enquiry

Field visits

Visits of NHRC Chairperson, Members and Senior Officers

The Chairperson, Members and Senior Officers of the National Human Rights Commission, NHRC, India visit various places in the country from time to time to make an assessment of human rights situation and the

status of the implementation of the Commission's advisories, guidelines and recommendations by the respective state governments and their concerned authorities. They also visit shelter homes, prisons, observation homes, etc. and

sensitize the government functionaries to make necessary efforts towards ameliorating the cause of human rights. Submission of timely reports by the state authorities to help the Commission in timely disposal of cases of human rights violations is also emphasized. ■

NHRC, India Dr Dnyaneshwar M. Mulay visits Maharashtra

On 21st December, 2023, NHRC, India Member, Dr Dnyaneshwar M. Mulay visited Pune in Maharashtra and held a meeting with the Divisional Commissioner to discuss the pending cases pertaining to the Pune Division Commissionerate. IG Police, Kolhapur and Pune DIG Prisons, District Collector, Police Commissioner, and officers from

the Civic, Police and Prison departments were present. District Collectors and SPs from the districts under the Pune Division participated virtually.

He briefed them about the need of the holding such periodic review to ensure delivery of speedy justice in the complaints received in the Commission. He emphasized that

it can be possible only with prompt action by the concerned authorities within the prescribed time frame as recommended by the Commission. He pointed out that during visits to jails/ mental institutions/ elderly care home, often a lack of coordination between the judicial system, administration, police system and prison/ mental institution has



NHRC, India Member, Dr D.M Mulay addressing the officers of the Pune Division

been observed in particular on the issues regarding delay in providing timely escorts/ medical assistance to the inmates, delay in justice delivery to under trial prisoners despite persistent directions by the Supreme Court to take effective measures through the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) to help such detainees. A request was made to all the District Collectors and Senior Police Officials to visit such institutions, once every six months, as that would help in the improvement of the existing situations.

Dr Mulay also briefed about various advisories issued by the Commission in the recent past, particularly on mental health, transgender, protection of rights of

children against production, distribution and consumption of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), truck drivers, suicide attempts by inmates, electrocu-

tion death. The authorities were asked to be more sensitive for the very reason that good governance encompasses the steps to be taken up in protecting human rights of vulnerable people.

The NHRC, India Member also pointed out about direct uploading of the reports on NHRC net portal through Login IDs created by the Commission to avoid delay in submission. The authorities were sensitized to latest changes in HRC net portal. The authorities informed that at district levels, FSL facilities are not as advanced as in Pune, which delays the requisite reports as per SOP framed by the Commission. ■



The meeting with the Pune Division officers in progress

Visits of Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors

The National Human Rights Commission, 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 December 2023, several places were visited by the Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors.

Special Rapporteurs

On 1st–2nd, 6th–7th and on 8th–9th December, 2023, Smt. Suchitra Sinha, Special Rapporteur visited various institutions in Koderma, Ramgarh, Jamshedpur, Saraikela and Ranchi in Jharkhand to observe the human rights condition and human rights situation.



On 4th–9th December, 2023, Shri Ranjan Dwivedi, Special Rapporteur visited children's correctional home in Prayag Raj and Barabanki Jail in Uttar Pradesh to make an assessment of cases related to HIV infected. Besides the inmates, he also interacted with the officials.

On 12th–13th December, 2023, Shri Mahesh Kumar Singla visited Gurugram District Jail, Haryana. He had an interaction with the authorities concerned and observed the condition in the jail.

On 12th–14th December, 2023, Shri Akhil Kumar Shukla visited Itanagar District Jail in Arunachal Pradesh. He made an assessment of the living condition of the inmates and the facilities available to them.

On 13th–18th December, 2023, Shri Umesh Kumar visited Home and Centre under the Dept of Women & Child Development, Assam and Women Helpline Centre, Beltola, Guwahati to assess their conditions and human rights situation.

On 18th–20th December, 2023 Shri Hari Sena Verma visited Govt. Mental Health Institution at Kuthiravattam, Kerala to make an assessment of the condition of inmates and human rights situation.

Special Monitor

On 17th–19th December, 2023, Shri Balkrishan Goel visited several places, including, among others, observation home/ Children Care Institutions (CCI), place of safety, Government School, Anganwadis, Old Age Home, Central & District Jail and District Hospital.

Awards

28th Annual NHRC debate competition for Central Armed Police Forces

The National Human Rights Commission, NHRC, India organizes an annual debate competition for the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) on a subject of human rights in Hindi and English. The debate was initially conducted at 8 zonal levels, followed by the semi-final and final rounds. The competition aims to promote human rights and spread awareness among the personnel of the Armed Police Forces. It is organized in collaboration with one of the CAPFs on rotation basis and this year for the 28th edition, the Railway Protection Force partnered. The topic of the debate competition was 'Human Rights are independent of duties.'

The final round of the debate competition was held in New Delhi on 15th December, 2023 with the participation of 16 teams debating for and against the motion. Before



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

this, 8 zonal rounds were held in different parts of the country, wherein the debating teams of 8 CAPFs participated. In the semi-final round, 32 teams participated.

The CISF lifted the overall best team rolling trophy. Among the individual honours, the first prize for debate in Hindi went to Sub Inspector D. P.

Tiwari, CISF and in English jointly to Rifleshooters, Ruthi Mandeihniang and Aparna Mahato, Assam Rifles. The second prize in Hindi went to Sub Inspector, D. K. Thakur, CISF and in English to Rifleshooters, Hringni Tongsin, Assam Rifles. The third prize in Hindi went to Lady Sub Inspector, Dheeraj Rathore, RPF and in English it went to Assistant Commandant, Om Prakash Pal, CISF. Besides the certificates and a memento, the first, second, and third prize winners were also given cash awards of Rs. 12,000/-, Rs. 10,000/- and Rs. 8,000/- each respectively.

Congratulating the winners, the NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra, as the Chief Guest, said that no rights come without duties and these go hand in hand. He said that the armed forces play a very important role in protecting the security and integrity of the nation and



NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra presenting the rolling trophy to the CISF team



A section of senior officers and participants at the debate competition

providing safety to the citizens braving adverse situations.

The winners were decided by a jury comprising NHRC, India Member, Shri Rajiv Jain, former DGP, Jharkhand, Shri Kamal Nayan Choubey, former Vice Chancellor, National Law University, Delhi, Prof.

Ranbir Singh and Additional Member, Railway Board, Ms. Roopa Srinivasan.

Shri Jain said that sensitivity is imperative for police personnel and is in fact of paramount importance in line with their duty so that human rights are not violated. He also

appreciated the high quality of debate which was echoed by all the members of the jury.

During his address, Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General, NHRC said that sensitivity with responsiveness is necessary to lead a meaningful life. The police personnel are the first in line of defence to protect human rights of people. He appreciated the thoughts of one of the debaters that right without duty is like a human without a soul.

In his welcome address, Shri Manoj Yadava, Director General, RPF lauded the efforts of the Commission in holding the debate competition for CAPF for nearly three decades. He said that this provides an opportunity for self-introspection and sensitization of the police forces. Shri Sunil Kumar Meena, DIG, NHRC, delivered the vote of thanks. ■

Training

2nd one-week residential Training of Trainers programme

The National Human Rights Commission, NHRC, India organized its second one-week residential Training of Trainers programme for officers of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and various Central Investigation Agencies on 11th -15th December, 2023. The aim of the programme is to sensitize the police personnel on respecting human rights in line with their duty so that they evolve as trainers to further train their colleagues.



NHRC, India Member, Shri Rajiv Jain inaugurating the Training of Trainers programme



NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal addressing the participants

NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal said that Police forces are the first defenders of people's lives, their rights and dignity. Civility must be the non-negotiable norm. The Commission is making efforts to expand human rights literacy among different organs of policing including State Police organizations, central armed police forces and investigation agencies. He said that this time, besides the CAPFs, the officers of Intelligence Agencies including CBI, DRI, C & IT were also included in the training of trainer's programme, so that they further spread awareness about human rights.

The training was attended by 25 officers. They were exposed to various aspects of human rights, various laws, policing, interrogation and investigations as well as the jurisdiction of the Commission by senior officers and experts.

Inaugurating the training, NHRC, India Member, Shri Rajiv Jain said that the State is the prime custodian of human rights. All laws are geared to protect order in society and the rights of different individuals in society. He highlighted the vital legal powers of the enforcement agencies, which include the registration of FIR, search, seizure and arrest. He also said that while exercising all these powers, the conduct of the

forces and enforcement officers should be such that the rights of victims are protected. Later, while addressing the valedictory session, he expressed hope that the participants would make the best use of the exposure to various aspects of human rights in connection with their policing duties and share the information with their colleagues for sensitization.



NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra, Members Dr D. M. Mulay, Shri Rajiv Jain, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal and senior officers with the participants of the training programme

NHRC Winter Internship Programme

On 18th December, 2023, NHRC, India Member, Shri Rajiv Jain inaugurated month-long on-site/ physical mode winter internship for university-level students in the presence of the Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal, Registrar (Law), Shri Surajit Dey, Joint Secretary, Shri Devendra Kumar Nim and other senior officers. 70 students from all over the country are attending it.

Shri Jain expressed the hope that the interns would make the best use of this rare opportunity to equip themselves with knowledge about the various aspects of human rights in their interaction with senior officers and experts.

Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal said that this exposure will help the interns to develop better under-



NHRC, India Member, Shri Rajiv Jain inaugurating the winter internship programme

standing of human rights and values, which they can internalize these values, and bring change in people's lives. Besides the interactive sessions on various aspects human rights by

the NHRC, India Members, senior officers and experts, the interns will also go for the field visits to understand the functioning of prisons, NGOs and other institutions. ■

Other training initiatives

I.) Collaborative Training Programmes

a.) IIT, Jodhpur in Collaboration with NHRC conducted the basic training program on 9th December, 2023 aimed at fostering understanding and awareness of human rights among participants providing valuable insights and knowledge to the participants.

b.) One-day training program on 'Women Rights' sponsored by National Human Rights Commission was conducted on 6th December, 2023 by Vivekanandha College of Arts & Sci. for Women, Tamil Nadu. During the training program, various aspects related to constitutional provisions, Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, Interna-

tional Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, Protection of Human Rights Act 1993, various practices like Devdasi system, child marriages, widowhood, Optional Protocols, CEDAW were covered.

c.) The Department of Business Administration, P.V.P. Siddhartha Institute of Technology, Kanuru, Andhra Pradesh organized One Day

Basic training program on Human Rights on 2nd December 2023 in collaboration with National Human Rights Commission. In the four sessions, emphasis was laid on regulatory frame works of human rights in India, SDGs, UDHR 1948, Article 21, importance of Human Rights organizations, religious minorities, liberty and genesis of National Human Rights Commission. The main objective of the training program was to promote an understanding of universality of human rights among the faculty and students.



Karnataka conducted one-day basic training programme in collaboration with National Human Rights Commission on 2nd December, 2024 on the theme of Human Rights Awareness and Education. The

faculty explained in detail the formation and functioning of NHRCs and SHRCs and highlighted the role of these Commissions in promoting and protecting the human rights.

- d.) S. S. Arts College and T. P. Science Institute, Sankeshwar,

ii.) Visit of Students and Faculty to NHRC

- a.) Thirty Law students and four faculties from Sinhgad Law College, Pune, Maharashtra visited NHRC on 4th December, 2023. They were explained about structure and functions

of the NHRC. Officers from Law, Investigation and IT divisions interacted with the students and explained them about working of NHRC.

- b.) One hundred and eighteen students and one faculty

member from Law College, Durgapur, West Bengal visited NHRC on 6th December, 2023. They were given an orientation on various aspects of human rights and the functioning of the Commission by the senior officers of NHRC.



- c) A batch of 11 trainee officers and faculty members from National Forensic Science University, Delhi visited NHRC on 27th December, 2023. They were briefed about the functioning of the Commission by the senior officer.



Gender sensitization programme

On 6th December, 2023 NHRC, India organized a gender sensitization programme for its officers and staff as part of the prevention of sexual harassment at workplace week. Inaugurating it, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal said that women have been accorded a high place in Indian society. He said that we have

to ensure that they work in a place where their dignity is respected. They should feel secure and comfortable.

Prof. Ritu Gupta, National Law University, Delhi, as the guest expert, held an interactive session on 'Towards making the workplace a safer place: A training session on

POSH Act.' She gave an overview of the laws associated with sexual harassment at workplace. She said that there is a need to change the mindsets and efforts must be made to stop gender discrimination and create awareness about the rights of women.



From left to right: NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Smt Anita Sinha, Prof. Ritu Gupta, National Law University, Delhi, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal, Joint Secretary, Shri D.K. Nim and DIG, Shri S.K. Meena

New member

Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani joins as a Member of NHRC, India

Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani joined as a Member of the National Human Rights Commission, NHRC, India on 28th December, 2023. Prior to this, she was practicing as an advocate in the Telangana High Court. Besides handling civil and criminal matters, she is widely known for dealing with cases of women harassment and dowry, and providing pro bono legal aid to those belonging to the economically weaker sections of society.

She has served several professional and social organizations in various capacities including, Anjani Matha Seva Trust, Samvardhinee Nyas, and Pragna Bharati, NGOs, among others focusing on holistic and

multi-dimensional empowerment of women. She has conducted more than 100 workshops for female students in various colleges to build awareness about various issues and rights and has won several awards

from different organizations for her work in the field of women's welfare. She has written over 200 articles related to women's issues in various Telugu weeklies and newspapers. ■



The new Member, Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani meeting the NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra

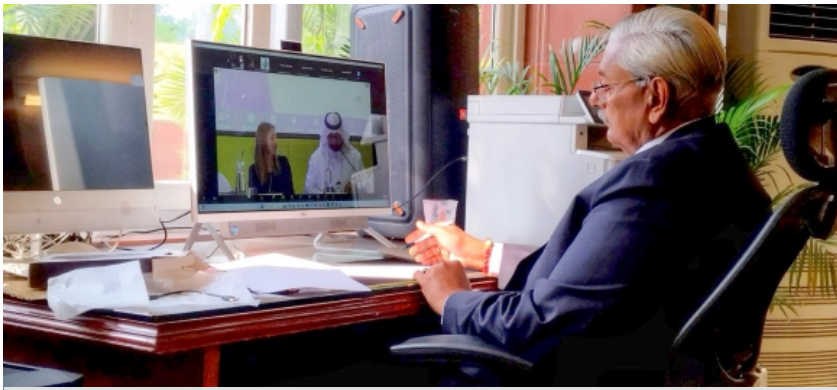
NHRC in international arena

NHRI COP28 symposium on climate change and human rights in Dubai

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) India was represented by the Chairperson, Justice Arun Mishra at NHRI COP28 symposium on 'Climate change and Human Rights: the role of National Human Rights Institutions' organized by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) in Dubai. On 5th December, 2023 addressing online a session on 'Empowering



NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra addressing the NHRI COP28 symposium online



NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra participating in the NHRI COP28 symposium

those most affected by Climate Change' in the symposium, Justice Mishra said that a safeguards information system for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation is necessary to minimize the negative impact of climate change and capacity building programmes by training. He said that climate change impacts human rights in a big way; with melting polar ice, rising sea levels, increased drought, high-density rainfalls, cyclones, floods, landslides, and forest fires, the poorest of the poor suffer the most.

Justice Mishra said that besides the other stakeholders, the NHRIs have to work to protect the environment and address the needs of the people impacted by climate change induced displacements resulting in violation of human rights including the rights to shelter, livelihood, education, and health, among others.

Referring to the UN report relating to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, he said that the energy resources need a careful transition. Otherwise, the loss of money from the energy industry could cause destabilization internally, regionally and even internationally. The International Labour Organization (ILO) report highlighted that approximately one-third of jobs in G20 nations directly depend on

effective environment management and sustainability.

Besides the war, Justice Mishra said, climate change is one of the leading causes of migration. Transition to climate-resilient infrastructure and mitigation measures are essential for the survival of humanity. Air and water pollution are reducing human life span. He said that vanishing water bodies due to large scale construction, depleting water levels, and contaminated groundwater are also issues of serious concern. Industrial hazards like gas leakage have now become commonplace incidents. Plastic has seriously threatened environmental pollution on the earth and the seas endangering biodiversity. The plastic patch in the ocean reportedly is 20 times larger than the size of France. Therefore, plastic recycling is required.

He said that the business must respect human rights. In India, the concept of corporate social responsibility has been inserted in Section 135 of the Companies Act, requiring big business houses and industries to spend 2% of their net profit protecting the environment and persons affected.

Justice Mishra said that the NHRC, India proactively addresses the environment-related issues and ensures justice by recommending payment of compensation. It has

decided on 8,916 cases relating to environmental degradation on complaints as well as on a *suo motu* basis. Several cases relating to contamination of groundwater, protection and restoration of water bodies, and providing potable drinking water have been taken up by the Commission and directions have been issued to the concerned authorities. The closure of several polluting industries has been secured through Pollution Control Boards to ensure compliance with safety norms.

The Commission has set up a Core Group on Environment and has been holding discussions on various aspects relating to climate and the environment. An Advisory on environment pollution emphasizing the expeditious punishment of polluters and violators of environmental laws, prevention and minimization of vehicular pollution, and strengthening and capacity building of local bodies to deal with environmental issues have been issued. Requests have been made to all states to grow trees in every district.

The Commission is also hearing in its *suo motu* proceedings the Centre and States on the reported high air pollution impacting life expectancy in the country and how to reduce various types of pollution to ensure a healthy life and an ambient atmosphere.

The NHRC, India Chairperson said that citizens must change their mindset and adopt an eco-friendly approach to their day-to-day lifestyle. The need of the hour is to conserve natural resources and biodiversity, restore degraded resources, reduce waste and pollution, and Green House Gases (GHGs) emissions, build resilience to climate change, replicate best practices, and make them region-specific for a visible impact. ■

Latest NHRC publications

Book on 'Forensic Science and Human Rights'



In the area of criminal justice, forensic science plays a pivotal role in upholding the fundamental principles of fairness and impartiality. It provides an objective and scientific basis for investigating crimes, identifying perpetrators and ensuring that justice is served. NHRC, India recognizes the crucial importance of forensic science in

safeguarding human rights and upholding the rule of law.

Forensic Science and Human Rights is a comprehensive study into the dynamic methodologies, cutting-edge technologies, and the moral and ethical considerations underpinning contemporary forensic investigations. As the challenges of crime surpass human capabilities, this book assumes the role of a guide, empowering readers to align with the bold stance required in the pursuit of justice.

The 15 chapters written by experts in the field, confronts the need for a seamless integration of theory and practice. It emphasizes the importance of equipping professionals with multi-domain knowledge. Rather than circumventing limitations, this narrative

confronts them head-on. By fostering knowledge that advocates truth and justice, the book advances the stance of legal and human rights institutions by dispelling shadows of doubt and malfeasance over evidentiary accounts.

This also addresses the pressing need to comprehend the core principles of human rights investigations. By showcasing the potential of forensic science to contribute to the prevention and redress of human rights violations, the book emerges as a reliable resource for a diverse spectrum of professionals and also makes an interesting reading for the discerning common readers with its simple language describing a technical subject. It is available on the website of the Commission. ■

NHRC Journal



The annual English journal of the National Human Rights Commission is being published since 2002 as part of the Commission's statutory responsibility to spread human rights literacy and awareness under the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993. It has been a treasure trove of knowledge on various human rights issues.

The 22nd edition of this journal carries 13 research-based articles by eminent scholars, domain experts, former civil servants, and others

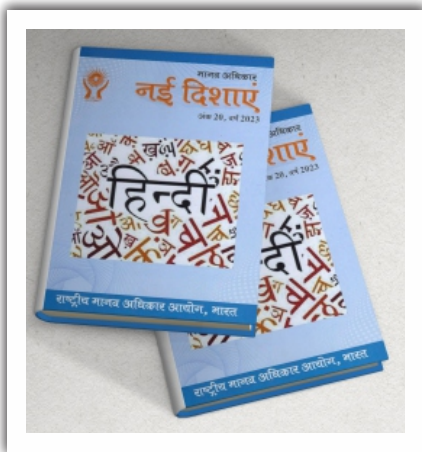
providing insights on numerous human rights issues like Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), adoption, the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions, environmental justice, the future of human rights, artificial intelligence. The contributors, include Shri D. P. Verma (Member, Law Commission of India), Prof (Dr) Sudhir Krishnaswamy (Vice Chancellor, NLSIU), Prof. (Dr.) S. Surya Prakash (Vice Chancellor, NLU Bhopal), Smt. Geeta Narayan (Former Joint Secretary, Department

of Health Research in Ministry of Health and Family Welfare), among others. The language and the layout of the content of the book make an interesting reading for subject

experts working in the field as well as those interested in studying various aspects of human rights. It is a priced publication. The 22nd Edition of NHRC's annual English journal is an

indispensable source of knowledge to the readers. I hope that the articles in this journal will help contribute to the existing discourse on human rights in our country. ■

Manav Adhikar – Nayi Dishayein



The annual Hindi journal of the National Human Rights Commis-

sion is being published since 2004 as part of the Commission's statutory responsibility to spread human rights literacy and awareness under the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993. Every issue of this priced publication has a theme and this year it is based on the international dimensions of human rights. Therefore, the 31 research-based articles focus on various aspects which have international dimensions like water crisis, war and violence, climate and the ill-effects of climate change on human rights, among others.

This publication like the English journal not only carries articles from various aspects of human rights but also poems, stories, book reviews on the issues of human rights. This journal also includes an interview of Dr. Rajendra Singh, Chairman, Tarun Bharat Sangh, an eminent person who has devoted his life to the field of water conservation. This edition also carries some papers presented in the national seminars organized in Hindi in collaboration with North Eastern Hill University, Shillong. ■

News in brief

On 9th December, 2023, NHRC, India Member, Dr Dnyaneshwar M. Mulay inaugurated the two-day seminar on the Human Rights Day celebrations organized by the Indian Society of International Law in New Delhi. He gave an overview of Indian cultural values, the adoption of the Constitution, the PHR Act, and the establishment of the NHRC, India. He highlighted the work done by the Commission for the promotion and protection of human rights since its inception in 1993. Dr Mulay said that India is doing fairly well, and further attention needs to be paid to various aspects relating to economic, civil, and environmental rights due to climate change.



On 10th December, 2023 NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Shri Devendra Kumar Nim attended the final round of the 2nd National Gaura Devi Debate Competition on Human Rights Day, organised by Vatsalya and Valley of Words in collaboration with the NHRC, India and Doon University, Dehradun, Uttarakhand. The event started in November, 2023 in an online format. The topic of the debate was Nation State is the best guarantor of human rights, sparked compelling discussions among the participants, who brought diverse perspectives to the table. Shri Nim, appreciated various gamut of human rights as vigorously enunciated by the debaters. He also spoke about various facets of the functioning of the NHRC, India for the promotion and protection of human rights including collaborative human rights awareness programmes like workshops, moot court and debate competitions by various educational institutions.

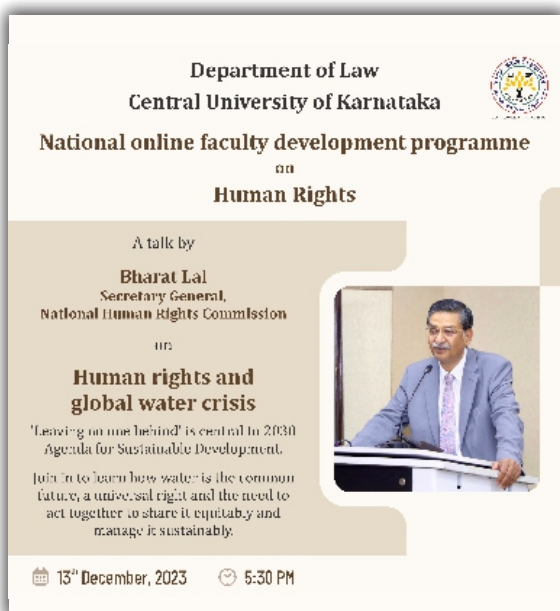


On 11th December, 2023, a meeting of the NHRC, India Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors was held to review work and identify focus areas in the next six months. NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra, Members, Dr Dnyaneshwar M. Mulay, Shri Rajiv Jain, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal and senior officers participated in the discussions to further streamline the mechanism of Special Monitors and Special Rapporteurs of the Commission for the promotion and protection of the human rights in the country.



On 12th December, 2023, NHRC Member, Shri Rajiv Jain chaired a meeting in the Commission in hybrid mode to discuss the regulatory shortcomings in governing generic medicines in the country. The participants included, Shri Prashant Reddy T and Shri Dinesh Thakur, the authors of the book -The Truth Pill and other articles highlighting the lack of regulatory reforms in the pharmaceutical industry, NHRC Special Monitor, Dr Manohar Agnani, Special Rapporteurs, Shri Mahesh Singla and senior officers attended.

On 13th December, 2023, NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal spoke on human rights & global water crisis in hybrid mode at Dept of Law, Central University of Karnataka.



On 14th December, 2023, NHRC, India Member, Shri Rajiv Jain chaired a programme organized by the Mewar Group of institutions to celebrate Human Rights Day at the Mewar Law Institute, Vasundhra, Ghaziabad. He gave an overview of the various aspects of human rights and the functioning of the Commission.



On 15th December, 2023, Smt Anita Sinha, Joint Secretary, NHRC, India, delivered a lecture on the rights of children at Chanakya National Law University, Nyaya-Nagar, Mithapur, Patna, Bihar.



On 19th December, 2023, NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra attended the 24th Rashtra Katha Shivir organized by Shri Vedic Mission at Pransla, Upleta, Rajkot District, Gujarat. This annual event aims to provide a platform for students from different parts of the country to enhance their understanding of national values, cultural heritage, and social responsibilities. Addressing them, Justice Mishra said that the present concept of globalization was rooted in Indian culture thousands of years ago. Quoting from ancient Indian scriptures including the Vedas, he highlighted the rich contours of Indian cultural and traditional heritage, knowledge and practices that not only valued human rights but also all that exists in the universe including ecology, flora-fauna, biodiversity, environment which is all useful for human life. He said it is necessary to understand these values and take them forward for the overall well-being of humanity and the country.



On 22nd December, 2023, NHRC, India Registrar (Law), Shri Surajit Dey visited one stop Centre at Ambala, Haryana and also discussed human trafficking & related issues with the SP. He also discussed child labour, trafficking & issues related to children with the Assistant Labour Commissioner, District Programme Officer and Member, Child Welfare Committee.



Forthcoming events

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| <p>i.) The National Human Rights Commission, NHRC, India will be organizing an open house discussion in hybrid mode on the protection of nomadic, semi-nomadic and de-notified</p> | <p>tribes in India and forward trajectory on 19th January 2023.</p> <p>ii.) Good News Welfare Society's Arts and Commerce First Grade College, Kalghatgi District</p> | <p>Dharwad, Karnataka will conduct one-day Basic Training Programme on "Human Rights Awareness and Education" in collaboration with NHRC on 29th January 2024.</p> |
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iii.) Universe Vision NGO Bhubaneswar Odisha will conduct one day basic training in collaboration with NHRC on Human Rights on 28 Jan 2024.

iv.) School of Law & Legal Studies, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University will conduct NHRC sponsored Moot Court Competition from 19-21 Jan, 2024 at

New Delhi. The theme of the said Moot Court competition will be 'Human Rights issues pertaining to refugees, asylum seekers & illegal cross border migrants'. ■

Human rights and NHRC in news



Complaint management in December, 2023



Complaints received	4,996
Disposed off	5,124
Under consideration of the Commission	7,375

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:

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