



HUMAN RIGHTS

Newsletter

A monthly publication of the National Human Rights Commission, India

Consultation

Statutory Full Commission Meeting

Report

NHRC ITEC Executive Capacity Building Programme for NHRIs of the Global South

Open Hearing and Camp Sitting in Gandhinagar, Gujarat



Spotlight

NHRC, India initiatives on Health and Mental Health

Article

Beyond Treatment: Reclaiming Mental Health as a Basic Human Right

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National Human Rights Commission, India

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► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian chairing the Statutory Full Commission Meeting



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian, flanked by the Chairpersons of NHRIs of South Africa, Mr. Andrew Christoffel Nissen and Kenya, Ms. Claris Awuor Ogangah, NHRC, India Members, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani and Secretary General, Shri Piyush Goyal, lighting the ceremonial lamp to start the 5th NHRC ITEC Executive Capacity Building Programme for NHRIs of the Global South

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Monthly Recap

From the desk of the Secretary General and Chief Executive

As the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India marks 33 years of dedicated service, this edition of our monthly newsletter reflects both on our enduring legacy and the dynamic, multifaceted work undertaken in recent months. Over more than three decades, the Commission has consistently strived to protect human dignity, bridge systemic gaps and champion the fundamental rights of every citizen.

Our institutional deliberations remain rooted in statutory mechanisms, as demonstrated at the recent Statutory Full Commission meeting, where key policy interventions, systemic challenges and strategic directions were thoroughly evaluated to strengthen grievance redressal across the nation.

Extending our footprint well beyond domestic borders, the Commission successfully organised the NHRC ITEC Executive Capacity Building Programme for NHRIs of the Global South. This initiative underscores India's commitment to fostering international cooperation, sharing best practices and strengthening human rights frameworks across developing nations, while our active engagement in the international arena reinforces NHRC India's growing role in global human rights advocacy.

Direct engagement at the grassroots level continues to be the cornerstone of our mission. The Open Hearing and Camp Sitting held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat provided a vital platform for on-the-spot grievance redressal, ensuring swift justice and immediate relief to affected individuals.

Furthermore, through proactive measures such as *suo motu* cognizance, spot enquiries and extensive field visits conducted by its Members, Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors, the NHRC actively addresses rights violations, enforces administrative accountability and secures essential relief and compensation for victims.

In this issue, the spotlight is on a vital yet frequently marginalised aspect of human dignity: Health and Mental Health and the Commission's work. Commemorating Mental Health Day, the featured article "*Beyond Treatment: Reclaiming Mental Health as a Basic Human Right*," calls for a fundamental paradigm shift. It emphasises that mental healthcare must extend beyond clinical treatment to be recognised as an intrinsic human right, free from social stigma, discrimination and neglect.

In parallel with our protection mandate, capacity building and community outreach remain essential to cultivating a rights-conscious society. Through our Online Short-Term Internship programmes, collaborative awareness initiatives and exposure visits, we continue to empower students and researchers to develop a deep understanding of human rights principles.

Together with updates from State Human Rights Commissions (SHRCs), news in brief, a review of complaints registered in September 2026 and a preview of forthcoming events, this issue highlights our collective efforts across all levels of governance.

As we reflect on our 33-year journey, the NHRC remains steadfast in its resolve to serve as a beacon of justice, accountability and hope for all. We hope this edition of the newsletter makes for an engaging and insightful read for all our readers.

Piyush Goyal
Secretary General &
Chief Executive Officer

Consultation

Statutory Full Commission Meeting

It is essential to strengthen coordination among statutory and constitutional bodies to ensure a more integrated and effective response to the concerns of vulnerable and marginalised sections of society. With this objective, the NHRC, India convened a Statutory Full Commission meeting on 22nd September 2026, bringing together representatives of the seven deemed members of the Commission to deliberate on areas of common concern, institutional cooperation, sharing of best practices and coordinated approaches to human rights protection.

Chairing the meeting, Justice V. Ramasubramanian, Chairperson, NHRC, India emphasised the importance of collaborative functioning among the Commissions. He said that the Chairpersons of all the National Commissions are ex-officio Members of the NHRC and, therefore, are part of it. Together, these Commissions can undertake meaningful work for promoting and protecting the human rights of various sections of society.

Justice Ramasubramanian suggested appointing a Nodal Officer to coordinate among all the National Commissions. He said that the NHRC may explore extending support to other Commissions if lacking in machinery for investigation of cases. In his concluding remarks, he also shared the concern over the lack of rehabilitation measures for mentally ill women engaged in begging, which requires attention.

He noted that there is a sizeable population of persons with disabilities (PwDs) worldwide and stressed the need to examine policies intended for their welfare and identify gaps. The NHRC, India Chairperson expressed concern over the lack of social security for PwDs and the denial or reluctance in giving them insurance coverage by insurance companies. He also appreciated the suggestion for interfaith dialogue and coordinated research, particularly in overlapping areas.

Earlier, setting the agenda for the meeting, Shri Piyush Goyal, Secretary General, NHRC gave an overview of the country's unique institutional human rights protection framework. He emphasised that interactions among these institutions are useful in forming synergy and cooperation between different Commissions to protect the rights of vulnerable and disadvantaged communities including bonded labourers, older persons and manual scavengers. The interactions can also help in paving the way forward for capacity building and sharing of best practices.

Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary, NHRC summarised the activities undertaken by the Commission over the last year.

The meeting discussed issues including an integrated approach towards protecting the rights of vulnerable and marginalised sections and identification of key areas for collaborative efforts. The participants emphasised the need



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian addressing the Statutory Full Commission Meeting in the presence of Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Secretary General, Shri Piyush Goyal and senior officers

for joint fact-finding efforts, research, awareness campaigns and outreach programmes.

Smt. Vijaya K. Rahatkar, Chairperson, National Commission for Women (NCW) highlighted the work of the NCW towards promoting and protecting women's rights and various programmes, including public hearings organised in different districts to hear their complaints. She said that, besides handling complaints, the NCW also focuses on research, awareness and outreach training programmes for the welfare of women. She added that the NCW has been organising anti-human trafficking campaigns in collaboration with Central Armed Police Forces and holding dialogues with youth on POSH, POCSO and cybercrime-related issues in collaboration with different institutions.

Smt. Kiran Umesh Mahalle, Member, National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC), spoke about the problems faced by people engaged in begging, particularly those suffering from mental health issues. She expressed concern over mentally ill women being left by their families to beg on the roads. She suggested that the National Commissions may consider formulating a policy for their rehabilitation and recommending its implementation to the Government.

Shri S. Govindraj, Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (CPD) said that the CCPD has been focusing on reaching those who have remained unreachable. He stressed the need for research into gaps in welfare measures for persons with disabilities, whom he described as among the most vulnerable populations facing discrimination.

Dr. Sanjeev Sharma, Member Secretary, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) highlighted the NCPCR's work on rescue and rehabilitation of children taken up on a campaign mode. He said that over 8,000 children have been rescued and rehabilitated. He also underscored the need for capacity building and training. He said that the circulation of child sexual abuse material on social media platforms requires immediate attention. He suggested joint investigations and joint bench sittings of Statutory Commission members, besides strengthening State Commissions.

Shri Vivek Kumar Dewangan, Secretary, National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) said that the NCSC has set up an e-grievance monitoring portal, which has resulted in quicker redressal of grievances. He emphasised the need for better coordination among the Statutory Commission members, collaboration on capacity building and awareness in educational institutions, joint studies on socio-economic indicators and joint action plans with measurable objectives.

Shri Suchindra Misra, Secretary, National Commission for Minorities (NCM) highlighted the importance of electronic grievance redressal systems and capacity building with support from the NHRC. He also stressed coordination with States to establish State Minority Commissions, noting that only 18 States have such Commissions so far. He further underscored the significance of coordinated research and complaint redressal, besides holding interfaith dialogues.



► From left to right: Dr. Sanjeev Sharma, Member Secretary, NCPCR, Shri S. Govindraj, CPD, Smt. Kiran Umesh Mahalle, Member, NCBC and Smt. Vijaya K. Rahatkar, Chairperson, NCW

Shri Manohar N. Sukole, Deputy Secretary, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) highlighted the importance of registering *suo motu* cases, besides the need for establishing grievance redressal platforms with real-time tracking provisions and early warning systems to identify recurring issues and overlapping matters requiring a more integrated approach among Statutory Commission Members.

Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Member, NHRC, India said that the endeavour should be to work together to ensure that benefits reach the grassroots level. He said that while the Statutory Commission members work in different fields, their purpose is the same. He observed that SOPs can be effective when implemented properly and emphasised the need for adequate staffing and infrastructure across all the Commissions to achieve their objectives.



► From left to right: Shri Vivek Kumar Dewangan, Secretary, NCSC, Shri Suchindra Misra, Secretary, NCM, Shri Manohar N. Sukole, Deputy Secretary, NCST

Dr. Anupama Nilekar Chandra, Director General (Investigation), NHRC said that the Commission will be organising a training programme for investigation officers on the last Wednesday of each month beginning 30th September 2026. It will be further expanded over the course of time.



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Member and senior officers with the Chairpersons, Members and representatives of the National Commissions and Commissioner, CCPD

The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment to collaborative efforts among the Commissions for the promotion and protection of human rights in India.

Report

NHRC ITEC Executive Capacity Building Programme for NHRIs of the Global South

Human rights challenges are becoming increasingly complex, requiring National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) to continually adapt, learn and strengthen their responses. Cooperation and exchange of experiences among NHRIs provide an important platform for such institutional learning. Against this backdrop, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India, in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, organises the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Executive Capacity Building Programme for NHRIs of the Global South. Drawing on over three decades of experience of the NHRC, India in promoting and protecting human rights, the six-day programme brings together participating NHRIs to share knowledge, experiences and good practices in the field of human rights.

In September 2026, the Commission hosted the 5th ITEC Executive Capacity Building Programme in New Delhi. The programme was further shaped based on the needs of participating NHRIs and feedback received during the four previous editions of this programme.

The programme brought together 38 senior delegates from National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) across 14 Global South nations, including Algeria, Chile, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Oman, Samoa, South Africa, Tajikistan and Zimbabwe.

Inaugurating the programme, NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian highlighted India's longstanding and excellent relations with the participating countries. He said that the programme aims to share knowledge and apply it for the betterment of society. He emphasised that India has a long tradition of promoting and sharing noble thoughts for achieving the common goal of human welfare.

In this context, he referred to the ancient Indian traditions reflected in the Rigveda and Taittiriya Upanishad of the Yajurveda. He also referred to the ancient Greek concept known as *Xenia*, which casts a responsibility on hosts to respect their guests and on guests to share their knowledge.

The Chairperson acknowledged the diverse constitutional frameworks for promoting and protecting human rights in



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian inaugurating the 5th ITEC Executive Capacity Building Programme for NHRIs of the Global South

the participating countries. He expressed hope that the participants would find the programme enriching and meaningful, develop a lasting association with NHRC, India and continue their engagement with the Commission.

Later, addressing the first session after the inauguration, Justice Ramasubramanian said that shifting social values in a rapidly changing world are posing serious challenges to human rights. He observed that over the last 100 years, the

very concept of family has undergone significant change, to the point that questions are now being raised about whether the family means only a man and a woman.

He also highlighted the difficult ethical, legal and human rights questions arising from previously unimaginable technological possibilities. The emerging dimensions of the right to die with dignity, the continued preservation of the body after death and the right to be forgotten or the right to



► A section of participants from the NHRIs of the Global South

erasure, he noted, are being discussed both as challenges and as potential advantages for human life. He emphasised the importance of ensuring that individuals are able to access reliable information and make informed decisions in an increasingly complex digital environment.

The global context of these challenges was also underlined. Referring to the 2025 Global Peace Index of the Sydney-based Institute for Economics and Peace, Justice Ramasubramanian said that 78 countries in the world were engaged in armed conflicts outside their borders. These conflicts, he said, had severe consequences for human civilisation and the global economy, displacing nearly 122 million people as refugees or internally displaced persons and causing an estimated loss of about 20 trillion US dollars to the global economy.

He emphasised that the true meaning and importance of human rights must be understood in this context. Against this backdrop, he said that platforms such as the ITEC Capacity Building Programme on Human Rights take on greater significance.

Before this, in the inaugural session, NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi emphasised the importance of cooperation. He underscored the significance of continuing friendship and cooperation, particularly as the international community is passing through a critical period and reiterated the need to sustain the spirit of peace and dialogue. Welcoming representatives from different countries, he observed that such interactions provide an encouraging platform for greater understanding and cooperation. He called for collective efforts to work together and do better for the world, expressing hope for a more peaceful and harmonious future.

NHRC, India Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani said that the ancient Indian philosophy of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*- the world is one family- provided the ethos binding the participants together. Highlighting India's scale and diversity, she noted that the country, despite its vast population, 22 official languages, diverse religious traditions and varied customs and festivals across its 28 States and eight Union Territories, remains united and stable through its culture of pluralism.

She urged respect for differing viewpoints and emphasised the protection of the vulnerable and the dignity of every individual as enduring civilisational values. She affirmed compassion, accountability and equity as the guiding principles of the Commission in its role as guardian of the rights of every individual.

NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Piyush Goyal highlighted the steady growth of the ITEC initiative for National Human Rights Institutions since its first edition in 2023 and noted that it has continuously evolved based on feedback from previous years to make it more useful for participating institutions. The practical orientation of the programme was reflected in its combination of lectures, thematic



► A session in the ITEC Executive Capacity Building Programme in progress

sessions, interactive discussions, presentations by resource persons and field visits.

The thematic scope of the programme reflected the changing dimensions of the human rights discourse. Eminent persons with domain expertise in capacity building and training served as resource persons. Besides the NHRC, India Chairperson and Secretary General, the different sessions featured a diverse range of speakers, including NHRC, India Director General (Investigation), Smt. Anupama Nilekar Chandra; UN Resident Coordinator, India, Mr. Stefan Priesner; Joint Secretary, Shri Samir Kumar; former Secretary, Government of India, Smt. Bhamathi Balasubramaniam; Prof. (Dr.) Vartika Nanda, Indian prison reformer and Founder, Tinka Tinka Foundation; Prof. (Dr.) Pratap Sharan, Head of Psychiatry Department, AIIMS; Dr. Purva Mittal, NHRC, India Special Monitor and Shri Chandra Mishra, Founder, Beggar Corporation.

Sessions covered the development of the international human rights framework, contemporary human rights issues, human rights and business, the impact of new technology on human rights and sustainable development. Participants also gained insights into NHRC, India's

functioning, including its complaint management and investigation mechanisms. Interactive sessions with leading practitioners and domain experts, thematic discussions, field visits and cultural immersion were woven into the programme. The experiences shared by functionaries of various NHRIs added another important dimension, allowing participants to learn from institutions working in different environments.

The ITEC programme for National Human Rights Institutions has grown steadily since its first edition in 2023. Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary, NHRC noted that participants from 46 countries and nearly 200 representatives from various NHRIs have been part of the initiative. He emphasised the need for a nuanced approach while upholding the universality of human rights and appreciated the participants' active engagement and the valuable exchange of knowledge and experiences throughout the programme.

The expanding participation reflects the programme's continuing role as a platform for engagement among human rights institutions across the Global South. The possibility of taking this cooperation further was also highlighted by Justice Ramasubramanian, who acknowl-



► Senior executives of NHRIs from 14 Global South nations with NHRC, India Chairperson, Members and senior officers

edged the need for stronger cooperation among NHRIs of the Global South and formalising a common platform for collaboration. The value of experience and mutual learning was underscored.

In his closing remarks, Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian expressed his gratitude to all the participants for their camaraderie and positive energy during the programme. He said that Capacity Building Programme goes beyond explaining international human rights instruments, as their practical application varies according to the historical, cultural, social and economic contexts of different countries. Drawing an analogy from science, Justice Ramasubramanian said that NHRIs work in the “laboratory” of human rights, where sharing experi-

ences, addressing challenges and learning from mistakes contribute to institutional learning and improvement.

The programme extended beyond formal sessions and institutional discussions. Participants had an exposure visit to iconic places, including Rashtrapati Bhawan, Red Fort and the Taj Mahal, gaining an immersive experience of India's rich cultural heritage.

The participants lauded NHRC, India and MEA for organising the programme. They appreciated the opportunity to learn about various aspects of human rights and good governance, as well as the Indian ethos of respecting human rights in a democracy with diverse social, cultural, religious and linguistic identities.

Open Hearing and Camp Sitting

Camp Sitzings and Open Hearings are an important part of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India's efforts to make human rights protection more accessible and responsive. By taking its proceedings closer to the people, the Commission provides an opportunity for victims and affected communities to present their grievances and facilitate timely action by the concerned authorities. These sittings since 2007 also enable the Commission to assess systemic concerns and reinforce accountability in the protection of human rights.

From 2nd and 3rd September 2026, the Commission held its two-day Camp Sitting in Gandhinagar, Gujarat and heard 129 cases. These included bonded labour, industrial accidents, custodial deaths and civic negligence, which resulted in the closure of 73 cases, the recommendation and disbursement of over Rs. 5.77 crore as relief and key directives to State authorities on safety, accountability and vulnerable community rights.

On the first day, the Commission, after hearing the concerned parties in 45 cases, closed 27 cases. Proof of payment

of compensation was submitted in many cases, amounting to Rs. 3.5 crore. Various cases of serious human rights violations were taken up. In one case where a woman was allegedly arrested without proper notice, compensation of Rs. 7.5 lakh was recommended. Apart from matters of custodial deaths, civic negligence leading to fatalities and police excesses, tragic cases involving children were also heard. In one case, where a child was taken away by a dog but never recovered, compensation has been recommended for the family.



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian and Members, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan and Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani hearing cases of human rights violations in Gujarat



Cases involving the deaths of workers in factories across Gujarat were also heard. The families of five workers who lost their lives following a major fire and explosion at a chemical factory in Bharuch received compensation. The families of four workers who died after inhaling toxic gases in another tragic incident at a chemical plant in Dahej were compensated with amounts totalling over Rs. 2 crore. Similarly, criminal proceedings have been initiated against those responsible for the death of three workers who died when a large advertising hoarding collapsed in Ahmedabad, though compensation details remain pending. These cases reflect the Commission's firm stance that industrial negligence leading to loss of life must be met with both accountability and meaningful redress for victims' families. The Commission also took up issues of school infrastructure failures and the lack of cremation grounds for Scheduled Caste communities, directing remedial action.

On Day-2, the Chairperson, NHRC heard 27 cases of alleged bonded labour in the State. The Labour Secretary, Gujarat and the District Magistrates of the concerned districts were also present. The Commission heard the submissions of the District Magistrates and the reports received in the cases were considered. He sensitised the authorities to be compassionate while dealing with women and children and to ensure that indicators of bondage are considered while dealing with such complaints.

The Division Bench comprising Members, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi and Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani heard 57 cases, including compliance matters and other complaints alleging violations of human rights and closed 46 cases after hearing the parties and reviewing compliance reports along with proof of payment of Rs. 27 lakh in compensation to the next of kin of the deceased. Further reports were sought from the authorities in the remaining cases.

The Commission interacted with representatives of NGOs, civil society organisations and human rights defenders. Important issues such as better implementation of the National Food Security Act, 2013; justice for POCSO survivors; institutional care for younger girls; single-window clearance system and issues regarding

the implementation of the POSH Act, 2013 in the unorganised sector were discussed. The NHRC Chairperson acknowledged the need for better coordination between stakeholders and the NHRC.

Thereafter, a meeting with senior officers of the State government was held during which important issues such as non-submission of reports, the need to sensitise concerned authorities on bonded labour, violations of human rights by the police, the need for proper implementation of prohibition laws, among others, were discussed. Justice Ramasubramanian appreciated the authorities' cooperation in providing relief to the victims of human rights violations. The Open Hearing and Camp Sitting concluded with a media briefing.



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian. Members, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Secretary General, Shri Piyush Goyal and Director General (Inv.), Dr. Anupama Nilekar Chandra interacting with NGOs, CSOs and HRDs

Spotlight

NHRC, India initiatives on Health and Mental Health

The National Human Rights Commission has consistently emphasised that access to healthcare and mental well-being are integral components of the right to life and dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. The Commission has undertaken a number of initiatives aimed at strengthening the protection of the right to health and mental health through advisories, research, inspections, consultations and direct interventions.

One of the significant interventions of the Commission in this domain was the issuance of the Advisory on Identification, Treatment, Rehabilitation and Elimination of Discrimination of Persons Affected by Leprosy (2022). The advisory sought to address the long-standing stigma and discrimination faced by persons affected by leprosy and recommended measures relating to early detection, rehabilitation, social inclusion and repeal of discriminatory legal provisions. Following this initiative, several states and high courts reviewed and amended or repealed laws containing discriminatory provisions against persons affected by leprosy, thereby advancing the rights and dignity of affected individuals.

The Commission has also issued an Advisory on Mental Health (2023), emphasising the need to strengthen mental healthcare infrastructure, improve access to counselling services, enhance community-based mental health support and ensure proper implementation of the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017. In a similar effort to address emerging public health concerns, the Commission issued an Advisory to Prevent, Minimise and Mitigate Ocular Trauma, recognising that a significant proportion of eye injuries are preventable but often lead to permanent disability if timely treatment is not provided. The advisory recommended preventive safety measures in workplaces and public spaces, improved trauma care facilities and greater awareness among healthcare professionals and the general public.

Beyond policy advisories, the Commission has intervened in specific cases where the rights of individuals with mental illness were at risk. In one such instance, the NHRC intervened when two patients discharged from a psychiatric hospital were not accepted by their families in Patna and Bihar, leaving them vulnerable to neglect and abandonment. The Commission directed the concerned authorities to ensure appropriate rehabilitation measures and safeguard the dignity and rights of the affected individuals. Such

interventions highlight the Commission's role in addressing both systemic and individual violations of health-related human rights.

The Commission has also recommended introducing telemedicine facilities in prisons to ensure timely medical consultations and specialist care for inmates, who often face barriers in accessing healthcare services due to logistical and security constraints. This recommendation aims to bridge the gap between prison healthcare facilities and specialised medical services, while upholding the right to health of incarcerated individuals.

NHRC has also undertaken significant monitoring and documentation initiatives in the field of mental health. A landmark exercise undertaken by the Commission involved visiting and examining the conditions of all 46 mental health institutions in the country, with the objective of assessing living conditions, treatment practices and protection of the rights of persons with mental illness. The findings from these visits have influenced several recommendations aimed at improving infrastructure, staffing, treatment standards and safeguards for patients. After the visits to mental health institutions, NHRC reported its findings in the publication titled 'Status of Implementation of Mental Healthcare Act, 2017'. Complementing these efforts, the Commission has also played an important role in knowledge generation and dissemination by publishing research reports and books on emerging human rights concerns in healthcare.

In addition to these measures, the Commission regularly sponsors research projects on emerging human rights concerns in healthcare. One such ongoing research project is titled '*Caring about the Rights of Healers – Analysing Human Rights Violations related to Frontline Doctors in India*,' which examines the challenges and rights violations faced by healthcare professionals themselves, particularly in high-pressure and resource-constrained environments.

To facilitate informed dialogue and policy engagement, the Commission has established a dedicated Core Group on Health and Mental Health, comprising subject-matter experts, policymakers and practitioners. Through periodic Core Group meetings, national conferences and open-house discussions, the Commission provides a platform for multi-stakeholder consultations on pressing public health issues. These forums enable experts, regulators, civil society organisations and government representatives to deliberate

on systemic gaps and identify practical policy solutions. The recommendations emerging from these discussions often inform the Commission's advisories and interventions.

The Commission also continues to take *suo motu* cognizance of cases related to health and mental health reported from different parts of the country, thereby ensuring accountability and prompting corrective action by authorities where violations occur.

The experience gained from these initiatives has highlighted several best practices, including the importance of rights-based healthcare governance, strengthening community-based mental health services, improving institutional monitoring, promoting preventive healthcare

measures and fostering collaboration among health authorities, civil society and regulatory bodies.

Moving forward, the NHRC intends to build upon these efforts by strengthening follow-up mechanisms for its advisories, expanding research and documentation on emerging health concerns, undertaking thematic inspections of healthcare institutions and promoting greater awareness of health-related human rights. Through sustained engagement with governments, experts and civil society, the Commission aims to ensure that healthcare systems in India are not only accessible and efficient but also humane, inclusive and respectful of the dignity and rights of every individual.

Article

Beyond Treatment: Reclaiming Mental Health as a Basic Human Right

Dr. Rajesh Sagar

Professor, Department of Psychiatry, AIIMS, New Delhi



A diagnosis can change a person's health. It can never alter a person's rights. 10th October marks World Mental Health Day - an opportunity to reflect on mental health not merely as a clinical issue, but as a fundamental human rights issue. A society's commitment to human rights lies in how it treats its most vulnerable people and more importantly individuals living with mental health conditions. Their needs have often been framed through the lens of illness and medical treatment only. Core issues of their dignity, equality, autonomy and social inclusion have received far less attention.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the Constitution of the World Health Organization (WHO) state that all persons are entitled to the highest attainable standard of health, including mental health. Mental health is intrinsically linked to the right to health, as well as the rights to live with dignity, equality and privacy. A diagnosis does not diminish these rights.

In the global context, the overall burden of mental health disorders has been increasing in recent decades.¹ Contemporary landscape introduces new pressures that extend beyond traditional clinical settings. Youth struggle with educational and professional expectations, social norms, shifting social norms, loneliness and complex digital environments. According to the WHO, approximately 1 in 7 adolescents aged 10–19 globally experiences a mental health condition, yet stigma and systemic barriers continue to hinder timely intervention. While digital platforms offer opportu-

nities for community, learning and peer connection, exposure to harmful online content presents challenges to youth well-being. Addressing digital stress requires supportive family structures, safe educational environments, digital literacy and accessible counselling rather than simply viewing technology as harmful.

Workplaces require similar systemic attention. Psychosocial risks frequently stem from excessive workloads, low job control, discrimination, harassment, employment insecurity and poor working conditions. Joint policy frameworks from the WHO and the International Labour Organization (ILO) emphasise that work-related mental health risks are preventable through proactive employer and government action.² Mental health must therefore be integrated directly into broader discussions regarding safe schools, healthy digital environments and decent work standards.

Stigma and discrimination remain

major obstacles to effective care, driving social isolation and the infringement of basic rights.³ Stigma is not merely a matter of negative public perception; it is frequently internalised by individuals, resulting in shame, diminished self-esteem and reluctance to disclose difficulties or seek support. However, discrimination within healthcare systems is particularly troubling. Financial, geographical and social barriers may disproportionately impact disadvantaged groups. Individuals seeking help often encounter dismissive attitudes and institutional practices that undermine their dignity and personal autonomy.

In India, the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 explicitly guarantees the right to equality and non-discrimination, legally mandating that healthcare services for mental illness be provided on equal terms with physical illness.⁴ The Act addresses healthcare disparities by establishing a legal right to affordable, high-quality, geographically accessible and non-discriminatory care. It emphasises integrating mental healthcare into primary health infrastructure and prioritising community-based services, particularly for children and older adults. However, the challenge remains in translating these rights into accessible services, trained staff, sufficient funding, appropriate monitoring and rights-based practice in the healthcare system.

Special attention is required towards people who become vulnerable due to adverse social circumstances. Children and adolescents need age-appropriate, accessible and supportive environments; women and survivors of violence depend on

confidential, trauma-informed support systems; older adults often face bereavement, loneliness and social isolation; and persons with disabilities as well as institutionalised individuals face heightened barriers to exercising their fundamental rights and accessing appropriate care. Adverse life circumstances such as poverty, violence, disability, systemic discrimination and isolation heighten the risk of mental health conditions while simultaneously creating obstacles to care. Mental healthcare can be realised as a human right only when it reaches the most vulnerable in a dignified manner, without requiring them to travel beyond their financial or social means.

Healthcare systems cannot safeguard mental health in isolation. Families serve as a primary source of emotional support, identifying distress early and aiding recovery. Caregivers require access to information, counselling and practical relief- needs recognised by the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 through provisions for family support and home-based rehabilitation. Educational institutions must cultivate environments where students discuss mental health concerns openly without fear of ridicule or discrimination. Employers should be made responsible for mitigating workplace hazards, preserving confidentiality and enabling staff to seek assistance without threatening their job security or professional standing. Civil society and the media can play a key role in tackling harmful stereotypes and promoting informed public dialogue, while human rights bodies must monitor statutory compliance, detect systemic discrimination and support rights-based reforms.

Combating stigma cannot be accomplished through standalone awareness campaigns. It demands continuous mental health literacy programmes, responsible and conscientious media reporting, protections for patient confidentiality, anti-discrimination measures and meaningful participation of individuals with lived experience in shaping policies. As highlighted by the World Federation for Mental Health for World Mental Health Day 2026 - under the theme "Lived experiences heard: real voices, real change"- people who have experienced mental health conditions must be involved in shaping policies and services rather than merely being consulted after decisions are made.⁵

Measures have been taken in terms of a legal framework and supportive policies resulting in some perceptible changes in mindsets. However, a more consistent approach involving all stakeholders is required for adopting person-centred, community-based and rights-based approaches supported by legal frameworks, responsive policies and a well-prepared health system.

World Mental Health Day invites a rethinking of our collective approach. Progress cannot be measured solely by constructing more institutional facilities or increasing prescriptions and specialist numbers. A rights-based mental health system must actively uphold dignity, autonomy, equality, privacy and social inclusion. Above all, the experiences of those living with mental illnesses must directly guide the design of policies and services that govern their lives, driving the transformation necessary to make mental health a reality for all.

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Suo motu cognizance

Media reports have long served as an important source of information for the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India in identifying incidents of alleged human rights violations. Over the years, the Commission has taken *suo motu* cognizance of numerous such cases, providing timely relief and support to victims. In September 2026, the Commission took *suo motu* cognizance of five cases reported in the media and issued notices to the concerned authorities, seeking detailed action taken reports. Brief summaries of some of these cases are as follows:

School children forced to cross a river to reach school

(Case No. 359/33/25/2026)

On 3rd September 2026, the media reported that dozens of children from Khambhatha and nearby settlements in the Mainpur Block area of Gariyaband district in Chhattisgarh are compelled to climb a narrow and slippery iron ladder, attached to an unfinished bridge, to cross the Pairi River to reach their schools. Reportedly, the monsoon turns the shallow river into a torrent. The Commission has issued a notice to the Chief Secretary, Government of Chhattisgarh, calling for a detailed report on the matter. Reportedly, a roughly 300-metre-long bridge between Deharguda and Khambhatha in Mainpur Block has been under construction for nearly six years despite the villagers having been assured of its completion in six months by the concerned authorities about a year ago.

Assault and public humiliation of a woman

(Case No. 1727/20/3/2026-WC)

On 4th September 2026, the media reported that a woman was beaten with sticks and paraded semi-nude after forcibly cutting her hair by her husband and other relatives in Banswara, Rajasthan on 1st September 2026. Reportedly, they were accusing her of leaving home with another man. Accordingly, notices have been issued to the Chief Secretary, Government of Rajasthan and Superintendent of Police, Banswara, calling for a detailed report on the matter. The report is expected to include the status of the investigation and compensation, if any, paid to the victim. Reportedly, the matter came to light after a video of the incident surfaced on social media. Reportedly, the woman was subjected to cruelty and inhuman treatment in full public view.

Death of two workers in a septic tank

(Case No. 1960/4/23/2026)

On 15th September 2026, the media reported that two workers died due to asphyxiation inside a septic tank in Muzaffarpur, Bihar. Reportedly, the incident occurred in the area of Sikandarpur Police Station on 14th September 2026. The Commission has issued notices to the State Chief Secretary, District Magistrate and Senior Superintendent of Police, Muzaffarpur, calling for detailed reports on the matter. It is expected to include the status of the investigation in the matter and compensation, if any, provided to the Next of Kin (NoK) of the deceased workers. Reportedly, the workers were removing shuttering from the septic tank when the incident happened. The matter was being investigated to determine whether there was any breach of safety protocols.

Death of a girl after falling into an uncovered manhole

(Case No. 1364/7/22/2026)

On 16th September 2026, the media reported that a four-year-old girl died after falling into an uncovered manhole while playing near her house in Palwal, Haryana on 14th September 2026. Reportedly, despite several complaints by the local residents to the concerned authorities, the manhole remained uncovered.

The Commission has issued notices to the Deputy Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police, Palwal, calling for a detailed report on the matter. The report is expected to include the status of the investigation and compensation, if any, paid to the next of kin of the deceased. Reportedly, the victim girl's family and local residents found her inside the uncovered manhole and took her in critical condition to the District Civil Hospital, where the doctors declared her dead.

Suicide of a woman

(Case No. 10957/24/40/2026-WC)

On 23rd September 2026, the media reported that a 19-year-old woman committed suicide after being gang-raped by six people, including three minors. Reportedly, the woman went to a cattle barn for some work when the six accused allegedly caught and gang-raped her. The Commission has issued notices to the District Magistrate and Senior Superintendent of Police, Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, calling for a detailed

report on the matter. The report is expected to include the status of the investigation and compensation, if any, paid to the next of kin of the deceased. Reportedly, the victim was distressed by the threats to circulate the video and consumed poison.

Recommendations for relief

One of the primary responsibilities of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India is to address cases of violation of human rights, listen to the grievances of victims and recommend appropriate relief in such instances. It regularly takes up various cases and gives directions and recommendations to the concerned authorities for relief to the victims. In September 2026, an amount of Rs. 76 lakh was recommended for the victims or their next of kin (NoK) in 13 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 NHRC, India website by logging the case number given in the table below:

S. No	Case Number	Nature of complaint	Amount (Rs. in lakh)	Authority
1	3514/30/0/2023-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of NCT of Delhi
2	5463/30/9/2023-JCD	Death in judicial custody	10.00	Govt. of NCT of Delhi
3	2813/24/76/2024-AD	Death in police custody	5.00	Govt. of Uttar Pradesh
4	1154/22/53/2017-AD	Death in police custody	5.00	Govt. of Tamil Nadu
5	3684/13/30/2022-	Death in police custody	5.00	Govt. of Maharashtra
6	1397/13/9/2024-PCD	Death in police custody	5.00	Govt. of Maharashtra
7	5386/25/3/2022-PCD	Death in police custody	10.00	Govt. of West Bengal
8	141/7/18/2024	Death in police custody	7.50	Govt. of Haryana
9	152/3/14/2024-ED	Death in police encounter	5.00	Govt. of Assam
10	21/6/2/2025	Outraging a woman's modesty by police	7.50	Govt. of Gujarat
11	1811/1/26/2025	Unlawful detention	0.50	Govt. of Andhra Pradesh
12	4655/30/7/2024	MCD inaction on a complaint resulting in dog bite	0.50	Govt. of NCT of Delhi
13	689/18/32/2026	Negligence of school authorities resulting in death of students due to Malaria	10.00	Govt. of Odisha

Payment of relief to the victims

During September 2026, the Commission closed 7 cases, either upon receipt of compliance reports and proof of payment from public authorities or by issuing other observations/ directions. An amount of more than Rs. 33.75 lakh was paid to the victims or their next of kin (NoK) on the recommendations of the Commission in seven cases. The specific details of these cases can be downloaded from NHRC, India website by logging in with the case number given in the table below:

S. No	Case Number	Nature of complaint	Amount (Rs. in lakh)	Authority
I	3502/30/0/2014	Alleged police atrocities	0.25	Govt. of NCT of Delhi

S. No	Case Number	Nature of complaint	Amount (Rs. in lakh)	Authority
2	1039/6/10/2023-PCD	Death in police custody	5.00	Govt. of Gujarat
3	321/6/21/2024-PCD	Death in police custody	10.00	Govt. of Gujarat
4	320/6/26/2024-PCD	Death in police custody	7.00	Govt. of Gujarat
5	312/6/23/2020-AD	Death in police custody	5.00	Govt. of Gujarat
6	462/33/5/2025	Corporal punishment in schools/ educational institutions	0.50	Govt. of Chhattisgarh
7	252/30/8/2014	Racial prejudice against the African nationals	6.00	Govt. of NCT of Delhi

Case studies

In many cases, the Commission found that, contrary to the claims of the State authorities, human rights of the victims were violated due to their unlawful action, inaction or omission. Therefore, on a case-to-case basis, the Commission issued notices to them to show cause why monetary relief should not be recommended to be paid to these victims or their next of kin and why action should not be taken against the erring/ negligent officials. The merits of the states' approach to responding to show-cause notices prompted the Commission to recommend monetary relief to the victims of human rights violations or their NoK. The Commission also received reports of compliance with recommendations by the respective State authorities. Summaries of such cases are as under:

Assault by school principal

(Case No. 462/33/5/2025)

The matter pertained to the assault on a 3.5-year-old girl by the Principal of her school when she greeted with a cultural salutation 'Radhe Radhe' in Durg district, Chhattisgarh in 2025. The child was reportedly beaten and her mouth was taped which led to her being traumatised. Based on the reports received in response to its notices, the Commission found the allegations correct and held that the State was vicariously liable to pay relief to the victim for violation of her human rights. Accordingly, it recommended that the State pay Rs. 50,000 as relief to the victim, which was paid.

resulting in broken teeth while in police custody of PS Kamalnagar, Bidar, Karnataka in 2022. Based on the reports received in response to its notices, the Commission noted that the police denied the allegation of assault but failed to establish that the victim's teeth had been broken prior to arrest. The Commission's Investigation team found that the victim was not medically examined to ascertain the cause and an approximate time of the broken teeth. Therefore, holding the State vicariously responsible for the torture of a man in custody of its officials, the Commission recommended that it pay Rs. 50,000 as relief to the victim, which was complied with.

Custodial death

(Case No. 1039/6/10/2023-PCD)

The matter pertained to the death of a man in police custody in Gandhinagar district, Gujarat in 2023. Based on the reports received in response to its notices, the Commission found that the Police failed to provide proper medical treatment to the victim. Therefore, holding the State vicariously responsible for the negligence of its employees, the Commission recommended that it pay Rs. 5 lakh as relief to the NoK of the victim, which was paid.

Death due to suicide in prison

(Case No. 207/7/6/2023-JCD)

The matter pertained to the suicide of a man while in the custody of Central Jail, Hisar, Haryana in 2023. He committed suicide by hanging himself on a wooden nail fitted in the wall with a towel-type cloth. Based on the reports received in response to its notices as well as Investigation team, the Commission found that there was no foul play involved in the incident on part of the prison authorities. However, since the prisoner was in their care and custody, it was their responsibility to ensure that he did not inflict harm on himself. Therefore, holding the State vicariously responsible for the negligence of its employees, the Commission recommended that it pay Rs. 5 lakh to the NoK of the victim, which was paid.

Torture in police custody

(Case No. 340/10/4/2022)

The matter pertained to the alleged brutal assault of a man

Spot enquiries

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India deposes its own team of Investigation Officers from time to time to conduct spot enquiries into cases of human rights violations.

Case No. 3036/22/15/2023

From 14th to 17th September 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation that an under-trial prisoner was being subjected to harassment and torture in Madurai Central Prison in Tamil Nadu. He was not being provided proper medical treatment by the jail authorities.

Case No. 168/9/7/2023

From 14th to 18th September 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation regarding illegal detention by police and brutal assault in custody in Kathua, Jammu & Kashmir on 13th August 2023.

Case No. 1939/34/1/2022-PF

From 22nd to 25th September 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation that four persons died and two were seriously injured in a clash between CISF personnel and certain private individuals, who were alleged to be thieves in Bokaro, Jharkhand.

Case No. 23458/24/31/2025

From 21st to 25th September 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted into the police inaction in a case of assault on the complainant, his father and brother by the accused persons for refusing extortion demands. The victims allegedly sustained serious head injuries. Despite complaints, PCR calls and submission of CCTV footage, no action was allegedly taken by the police.

Case No. 3237/30/6/2023-PCD

From 15th to 18th September 2026, a spot enquiry was

conducted into the allegation regarding the death of a 36-year-old man in police custody in Delhi on 23rd July 2023.

Case No. 2152/20/2/2023-JCD

From 21st to 25th September 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation regarding the death of a man in custody of Jaipur Central Jail, Rajasthan.

Case No. 3034/30/10/2024

From 14th to 19th September 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted into allegations about a woman being threatened and undressed in police custody at Lajpat Nagar Police Station in Delhi on 22nd April 2024.

Case No. 523/18/3/2026-AD

From 14th to 18th September 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation that a man suffered brain stroke in police custody on 24th September 2025 due to alleged mental torture and custodial negligence in connection with a land dispute in Cuttack, Odisha. It is further alleged that the police failed to provide timely medical treatment despite his health condition.

Case No. 103/13/23/2025

From 21st to 23rd September 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation that the Crime Branch of police from Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh failed to provide the information regarding the arrest of a man on 7th January 2025 in Pune Maharashtra to his family. Despite approaching the SP, Srikakulam, no assistance was provided to the concerned family.

Field visits

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 assess the human rights situation and status of implementation of the Commission's advisories, guidelines and recommendations by state governments and their concerned authorities. They also visit shelters, prisons and

observation homes to raise awareness among government officials and encourage them to take necessary actions to improve human rights conditions. During these visits, the importance of state authorities submitting timely reports is also highlighted to officials, as this helps the Commission promptly resolve cases of human rights violations.

Visits by NHRC, India Member

On 22nd September 2026, NHRC, India Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani visited Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh to conduct spot inspections of public institutions. She also visited Ramakuppam in connection with a POCSO-related matter concerning a minor girl. The Member met the victim and her family, listened to their grievances and facilitated the formal submission of their complaint to local police for strict legal action. She also interacted with local residents and took note of their representations for consideration and appropriate follow-up.

Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India has designated 15 Special Rapporteurs to monitor human rights conditions across various regions of the country. They conduct visits to shelter homes, prisons, observation homes and similar institutions and write reports for the Commission that detail their observations, besides suggestions for future action. Additionally, the Commission has appointed 18 Special Monitors to oversee specific thematic human rights issues and report their findings to the Commission.

Special Rapporteur

From 15th to 19th September 2026, NHRC Special Rapporteur, Shri S.K. Satapathy visited Jagatsinghpur, Odisha to assess various facilities and human rights situation at the District Jail and custodial institutions, besides shelter homes for women and child care homes. He also visited habitations of people belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities, Primary Schools and Primary Health Centres. He also interacted with NGOs/ voluntary organisations in the presence of district administration officials.



From 20th to 27th September 2026, NHRC Special Rapporteur, Shri Sayeed Ahmed Baba visited Saitual and Champhai districts in Mizoram and assessed various facilities and human rights situation at District Jail, District Hospital, Child Care Institutions, Old Age Homes and Mental Health Care Institutions. He also held meetings with the District



Magistrate, Superintendent of Police and other officials of the district administration.

From 21st to 26th September 2026, NHRC Special Rapporteur, Smt. Suchitra Sinha visited various villages in Ranchi District, Jharkhand to assess issues relating to land acquisition, displacement, compensation, rehabilitation, road acquisition, mining-related displacement, livelihood and reservoir-related acquisition. She visited Kute in Ormanjhi Block, Sohdag in Namkum Block, Binja and Churugarha in Burmu Block, Karanji in Bero Block and Hethdahu in Namkum Block and interacted with affected people and concerned local authorities.

From 27th to 30th September, NHRC Special Rapporteur, Shri Devendra Kumar Nim visited Kamareddy, Nizamabad and Rangareddy districts of Telangana to assess human rights situation. He visited EMR School and Community Health Centre at Gandhari and the Primary Health Centre at Devunipally in Kamareddy district; EMR School at Indalwai in Nizamabad district; Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya and Primary Health Centre at Nizamsagar in Kamareddy district; and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya at Gachibowli, HCU Campus, in Ranga Reddy district to assess various facilities. He also held meetings with the District Collectors of Kamareddy and Nizamabad and concerned officers of the Tribal Affairs, Health and Education Departments, as well as the concerned authorities of Education and Tribal Affairs, National Education Society for Tribal Students.

Special Monitor

From 1st to 9th September 2026, NHRC Special Monitor, Shri Gopi Shankar Madurai visited Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala and held introductory and review meetings with senior officials of the State Government and concerned institutions. He also conducted sensitisation and capacity building programmes for police personnel and undertook field visits to Juvenile Correction Homes and places of safety to assess the living conditions, safety and dignity of children in conflict with law and children in need of care and protection.

From 7th to 10th September 2026, NHRC Special Monitor, Dr. Poonam Malakondaiah visited Tiruchirappalli district, Tamil Nadu. She visited Elementary Schools and Anganwadi Centres, interacted with students, parents and teachers and held meetings with the Collector and District Magistrate, Child Development Project Officer, Sub-Divisional Magistrate, District Education Officer and other concerned officers.

From 7th to 11th September 2026, NHRC Special Monitor, Dr. Animesh Bhattacharya visited Patna, Buxar and Bhojpur districts, Bihar. He visited Primary Health Centres/Additional Primary Health Central to examine the detection, recording, treatment and follow-up of arsenicosis patients, training of medical officers and ASHA workers, disease surveillance and implementation of relevant guidelines. He also reviewed the status of safe drinking water coverage and held meetings with officers of the Public Health Engineering Department, Panchayati Raj Department, District Administration, Civil Surgeon, District Surveillance Officer, District Programme Officer, District Education Officer and other concerned authorities.

From 16th to 24th September 2026, NHRC Special Monitor, Shri Balkrishan Goel visited Patiala and Ludhiana districts, Punjab and assessed human rights situation at Central/ District Jails, Public Distribution System (PDS) Points, Police Stations, District Hospitals/ Community Health Centres/ Primary Health Centres, Child Care Institutions, Places of Safety, Specialised Adoption Agencies, Old Age Homes, Government/ Residential Schools, Observation Homes, One Stop Centres and Anganwadi Centres. He also held meetings with the Deputy Commissioners and other concerned district authorities.

From 20th to 27th September 2026, NHRC Special Monitor, Shri Umakant visited Ranchi, Jharkhand and assessed various facilities at Gram Sabhas, Village Panchayats, Block Panchayats and Zila Parishads in different districts of the State. He also interacted with Panchayati Raj Institution functionaries and local rural and urban people and held meetings with officials of State Government, State Human Rights Commission, State Election Commission and State

Finance Commission to understand their perspectives on the implementation of the Constitutional provisions relating to Panchayati Raj Institutions and associated human rights aspects.

From 21st to 27th September 2026, NHRC Special Monitor, Shri R. Hemant Kumar visited Dudhwa, Katarniaghat, Bahraich, Shravasti and Balrampur areas of Uttar Pradesh to study the governance, rights, development and human development framework relating to tribal communities, particularly the Tharu tribal population. He held meetings with the Chief Secretary, Additional Chief Secretary (Forests), Additional Chief Secretary/ Principal Secretary (Tribal Welfare), Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Head of Forest Force and other senior officers. He also undertook field visits to Dudhwa, the Dudhwa Tharu Landscape, Katarniaghat, Bahraich, Shravasti and Balrampur and interacted with Tharu households, traditional leaders, women, youth, elders, artisans, health workers, NGOs and forest-dependent communities.

He examined issues relating to land ownership and implementation of the Forest Rights Act, housing, drinking water, education, maternal and child health, nutrition, PDS and social security coverage, livelihoods, migration, human-wildlife conflict and compensation, access to forest resources, conservation-related restrictions, cultural heritage and identity, livelihood diversification and community participation in conservation and governance. He also held district-level meetings with concerned officers of the District Administration, Tribal Welfare/ Social Welfare, Forest, Health, Education, Women & Child Development, Rural Development/ Panchayati Raj and Police/ Border authorities.

From 22nd to 27th September 2026, NHRC Special Monitor, Shri Vidya Bhushan Kumar visited Ranchi, Dhanbad, Hazaribag, Ramgarh, Palamu and Lohardaga, Jharkhand. He held meetings with senior State authorities, reviewed coal-mining-related injuries at Jharia and Dhanbad, industrial, crusher and open-cast mining-related degradation in Ramgarh and Hazaribagh and drinking-water distress in Palamu and Lohardaga.

He also visited the Jharia coalfield to examine issues relating to seam fires, subsidence and abandoned underground workings and interacted with the District Collector, Dhanbad, Jharia Rehabilitation and Development Authority, Chairman-cum-Managing Director, Bharat Coking Coal Limited, Regional Officer, Pollution Control Board, Municipal Commissioner Dhanbad and Civil Surgeon. In Palamu and Lohardaga, he held discussions with the concerned district and departmental authorities, civil society organisations, HINDALCO, Divisional Forest Officer and Jharkhand State Pollution Control Board.

Shri Kumar also visited the North Karanpura open-cast belt of Central Coalfields Limited and mined rehabilitation areas and open-cast bauxite mining areas in Lohardaga to assess impacts on topsoil, water-holding capacity and springs feeding agricultural fields and hamlets, including the situation of Scheduled Tribe households and Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) communities.

From 25th to 30th September 2026, NHRC Special Monitor, Dr. Purva Mittal held meetings with the Chief Secretary, Government of NCT of Delhi, Secretary, Department of Social Welfare and Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor, Delhi on women and disability-related issues. She also met the District Magistrate, North-West Delhi and Deputy Commissioner of Police, Rohini, along with concerned SHOs and visited Bhagwan Mahavir Hospital, Delhi Women's Disability Hostel, One Stop Centre, North District and the District Court. She held consultations with NGOs/civil society organisations to have an assessment of human rights situation.

From 27th to 30th September 2026, NHRC Special Monitor, Prof. Kanhaiya Tripathi, visited Bhopal, Sanchi, Ujjain, Indore and Mhow in Madhya Pradesh. He visited PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalaya Atal Bihari Vajpayee Hindi Vishwavidyalaya, Barkatullah University and Tribal Research and Development Institute in Bhopal; SBBGAV in Sanchi; and Hamidia Institute of Technology, Maulana Azad National Institute of Technology, AIIMS and Regional

Institute of Education in Bhopal to assess various facilities. He also visited PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalaya, IIT and IIM in Indore, and held meetings with the heads and officials of Madhya Pradesh State Open University and Vikram University in Ujjain. During these visits, he interacted with Vice-Chancellors, Directors, institutional leadership, officials, faculty members, students and scholars, inspected hostels and held discussions with the University Gender Sensitisation Committee and other existing committees to assess institutional facilities and related issues.

From 28th to 30th September 2026, NHRC Special Monitor, Dr. Pradepta Kumar Nayak visited Haridwar and Dehradun, Uttarakhand for an assessment of the implementation of programmes relating to leprosy, disability and mental health. He held meetings with the District Magistrates/Collectors of Haridwar and Dehradun, State and District Health and Leprosy authorities, Mental Health, Social Welfare, Social Security, Education, Livelihood/ Aajeevika, Women & Child Development and other concerned Departments. He also visited hospitals, Community Health Centres, Urban Primary Health Centres, Primary Health Centres, communities and leprosy colonies and interacted with affected persons to assess the coverage, inclusion and delivery of health and welfare services and benefits, review inter-departmental convergence and coordination, undertake field verification of records and assess compliance with the Commission's Advisory on Leprosy and other relevant advisories.

Capacity Building

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India is mandated to promote, protect and build awareness about human rights. For this purpose, besides the internship programmes, it has been organising various capacity-building programmes and activities in collaboration with different institutions, including exposure visits, moot court competitions to expand its outreach and human rights sensitisation, particularly among university-level students.

Online Short-Term Internship Programme

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India's for university students organised its two-week Online Short-Term Internship Programme (OSTI) from 14th – 25th September 2026 at Manav Adhikar Bhawan, New Delhi. NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian inaugurated the programme in the presence of NHRC, India Members, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi and Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Secretary General Shri Piyush Goyal, Joint Secretary, Smt. Saidingpuii Chhakchhuak and Deputy Secretary, Smt. Vineetha Ottapurakkal Kallada. A total of 95 students from diverse academic backgrounds, selected from over 1,000 applicants, completed the programme.

Addressing the interns, Justice V. Ramasubramanian urged them to reflect on the purpose behind joining the internship to make the best use of its learning opportunities. He said that the programme would achieve its purpose if the interns learnt to look at society through a human rights lens. Observing that the same news can have different interpretations, he emphasised the importance of knowledge and awareness which helps in informed understanding of situations to make meaningful contribution to society.

NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi said that understanding the essence of human rights is necessary to help the interns in life. He said while the interns possess knowledge, gaining experience is essential to applying human rights values meaningfully at every stage of life.

NHRC, India Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani emphasised that every individual has the right to live with dignity. She urged the interns to go beyond the theoretical understanding of law and observe, listen, question, analyse and act with sensitivity at the grassroots level. Justice, equality, liberty and fraternity, she said, should become lived values and not remain merely words in the Preamble of the Constitution. She also encouraged the interns to learn both from law and from people.

NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Piyush Goyal described human rights as a broad and nuanced domain and urged the interns to understand its diverse dimensions, work collectively and contribute towards strengthening human dignity. He wished them a successful and fulfilling internship.

NHRC, India Joint Secretary, Smt. Saidingpuii Chhakchhuak gave an overview of the two-week programme which, besides the interactive sessions with subject experts, also includes virtual field visits to places such as police station and Tihar Prison to understand their functioning and challenges.

Later, on 25th September 2026, chairing the valedictory session, NHRC Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi congratulated the interns on

successful completion of the programme. He emphasised that the two-week training programme was not merely a journey but a valuable learning experience. Urging the interns to ensure that their efforts do not go in vain, he highlighted the importance of 'Preach, Practice and Perform,' stressing that learning about human rights should continue throughout life and that the knowledge gained must be practised and shared with others.

Calling upon the interns to demonstrate human rights values in their everyday conduct, Justice Sarangi urged them to be compassionate towards others, including senior citizens and persons with disabilities and to extend appropriate consideration to their needs. He said that as young people, the interns carried great expectations for the development of the country and society.

Addressing the interns in the valedictory session, NHRC Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani said that the conclusion of the internship marked not an end but the beginning of a new responsibility. She urged them to carry forward a commitment to human rights, the Constitution and the nation, stressing that human rights are about dignity, justice, compassion and responsibility towards one another and should become a way of life.

Emphasising that human rights and patriotism complement each other, Smt. Sayani urged the interns to respect the Constitution, protect human dignity, serve the vulnerable and stand for justice. Drawing on *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* and *Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah*, she called upon them to become human rights ambassadors in their communities and highlighted "knowledge, compassion and service" as guiding principles for contributing to a stronger, more just and humane India.

In his address, NHRC Secretary General, Shri Piyush Goyal congratulated



► NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian inaugurating the OSTI



► NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi addressing the valedictory session of the OSTI

lated the interns and emphasised the importance of developing sensitivity towards human dignity in everyday life. He said that academic learning is meaningful when translated into practice. Highlighting the value of teamwork and communication skills, he said that the team activities helped inculcate team spirit and interpersonal skills. He urged the interns to become torchbearers of human rights by creating greater awareness of its practical dimensions in society.

Before this, NHRC Joint Secretary, Shri Samir Kumar presented an overview of the internship programme, highlighting the opportunity provided to the interns to interact with NHRC Members, senior NHRC officers, eminent experts, academicians, Core Group members and representatives of civil society organisations. He also

announced the winners of competitions, including book review, group

research project presentation and declamation.



► A section of interns

Collaborative Awareness Initiatives

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India is mandated to promote, protect and build awareness about human rights. For this purpose, besides the internship programmes, it has been organising various capacity building programmes and activities in collaboration with different institutions, including exposure visits, moot court competitions to expand its outreach and human rights sensitisation, particularly among university-level students.

In the month of September 2026, the following collaborative training programmes were organised:

- On 9th September 2026, Institute of Legal Studies, Chaudhary Charan Singh University, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh organised a one-day Training Programme on 'Human Rights.' Shri Anjanee Anuj, Presenting Officer, NHRC graced the inaugural session as the Chief Guest.
- On 10th September 2026, SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Chengalpattu, Tamil Nadu organised a one-day Training Programme on 'Human Rights, Language and Psychological Well-being of Juvenile Delinquents: Awareness and Rehabilitation.' Shri Anjanee Anuj, Presenting Officer, NHRC addressed the inaugural session as the Chief Guest.
- On 11th September 2026, Swami Rama Himalayan University, Dehradun, Uttarakhand organised a one-day seminar on 'Right to Water and Sanitation: Engaging Youth for Sujlam and Sustainable Water Governance in the Himalayan Region.' Dr. Anupama Nilekar Chandra, Director General (Investigation), NHRC addressed the inaugural session online as the Chief Guest.
- From 25th - 26th September 2026, J.M.J College for Women (Autonomous) organised two-day Seminar on 'Ensuring Mental Health of Women as a Human Right: Challenges and Interventions.' NHRC Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian



addressed the valedictory session online as the Chief Guest.

- On 30th September 2026, St. Xavier's Institute of Education, Autonomous, Mumbai, Maharashtra organised one-day training programme on 'Human Rights: Connecting to Our Everyday Life.' Smt. Sainingpuii Chhakchhuak, Joint Secretary, NHRC addressed the inaugural session of the programme as the Chief Guest.
- On 30th September 2026, Annamalai University, Cuddalore, Tamil Nadu organised one-day training programme on 'Human Rights - Introduction to Human Rights: Concepts and Evolution, Constitutional Provisions and Human Rights in India (Gender Equality and Women and Child Rights and Protection Mechanisms, Human Rights and Digital Privacy.' Smt. Neeru Kamboj, Presenting Officer, NHRC addressed the inaugural session as the Chief Guest.



Exposure visits

To promote human rights awareness among college-level students and their faculties, the NHRC, India invites them to visit the Commission to have an exposure to the human rights protection mechanism and its functioning in accordance with the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993. They are briefed by senior officers. The following institutions visited the NHRC in the month of September 2026.



- NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian and Deputy Secretary, Smt. Vineetha Ottapurakkal Kallada with a batch of 4 IRPFS probationers from JJR RPF Academy

- A batch of 28 Students and 2 faculty members from IILM University, Greater Noida.



- A batch of 8 DANIPS officers.
- A batch of 40 Students and 7 faculty members from Integrated School of Law, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh.



- A batch of 150 Students and 7 faculty members from Shree Ramakrishna Vivekananda Mission College of Juridical Studies, Howrah, West Bengal.
- A batch of 45 Students and 3 faculty members from IMS Law College, Noida.

Other trainings

- On 9th September 2026, the Commission organised a training programme on 'Beyond the Checklist: POSH in practice' during a gender sensitisation programme for the officers and staff. Ms. Purva G Mittal, Special Monitor on Women and Disability, NHRC addressed the session.



- On 29th September 2026, the Commission organised a training programme on 'Manual of the Office Procedures' for the officers and staff of the Commission. Shri Arun Gaur, Former Joint Secretary, UPSC delivered the lecture.



NHRC, India in the International arena

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India continues to actively engage with a range of international programmes and initiatives to promote the exchange of ideas and best practices on diverse aspects of human rights. As part of these efforts, institutional delegations from different countries regularly visit the Commission and interact with its Chairperson, Members and senior officers to gain insights into its mandate, functioning and initiatives for the promotion and protection of human rights. The Commission's Chairperson, Members and senior officers also participate in various international forums and engagements to share the Commission's experiences and achievements, strengthen cooperation with other National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and deliberate on emerging human rights challenges in an increasingly fast-evolving global landscape.

Online engagements

From 31st August to 2nd September 2026, Ms. Varsha Apte, Senior Research Consultant and Ms. Vaidehi Rastogi Research Consultant, NHRC attended online Open-ended intergovernmental working group on an optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the rights to early childhood education, free pre-primary education and free secondary education.

On 9th September 2026, Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary and Ms. Prerna Hasija, Research Consultant, NHRC attended the GANHRI Working Group on Business and Human Rights.

News from the State Human Rights Commissions

Given the ever-expanding dimensions of human life and the evolving challenges associated with them, the promotion and protection of human rights remain a continuous and dynamic process. In India, democratically elected governments remain committed to ensuring the welfare of the people and safeguarding their rights through an extensive executive framework. This commitment is further reinforced by robust democratic institutions, including the legislature and the judiciary, along with a vibrant and vigilant media.

The National Human Rights Commission and the State Human Rights Commissions (SHRCs) play a vital role in protecting

and promoting human rights across the country. In addition, several national commissions, supported by corresponding state-level bodies, work at the regional level to safeguard the rights and welfare of different sections of society. Together, these institutions function as important watchdogs, ensuring accountability, justice and inclusive welfare measures. This column seeks to spotlight the significant initiatives undertaken by various SHRCs to advance the cause of human rights and strengthen the culture of dignity, justice and equality in society.

Punjab State and Chandigarh (U.T) Human Rights Commission

On 9th September 2026, a high-level delegation from Kenya's Ministry of Education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training Curriculum Development, Assessment and Certification Council (TVET CDACC) visited Punjab State and Chandigarh (U.T) Human Rights Commission (PSHRC) to understand India's experience in linking human rights with education, youth skilling, technology and capacity building. Led by Prof. Kisilu Kitainege, CEO, TVET CDACC, the delegation comprised senior officials from research, assessment and certification, finance and planning. Ms. Disha Rana Jaswal, Director –Africa Projects, upGrad Education Pvt. Ltd. also accompanied the delegation.

The interaction covered a human-rights-based approach to vocational education, equal opportunities, digital inclusion and responsible use of AI. PSHRC briefed the delegation on its mandate, including complaints, research, training, human rights education, awareness and institutional outreach.

Chairperson, Justice Sant Parkash stressed equality, dignity and non-discrimination in education and skilling, referring to PSHRC interventions regarding NEET fee issues and the schools for visually impaired students. He emphasised that equality also requires removing barriers faced by disadvantaged persons and cautioned against technology and AI



creating a new digital divide. Member, Justice Gurbir Singh discussed fairness, accountability, human oversight, transparency and privacy in AI and automated decision-making. Member, Padma Shri Jitender Singh Shunty highlighted grassroots human rights awareness, youth participation, empathy, social responsibility and responsible digital citizenship.

On 22nd September 2026, 40 students from the Department of Human Rights and Duties, Panjab University, Chandigarh visited PSHRC. They were briefed on the Commission's role, responsibilities and procedures for addressing human rights violations. Justice Sant Parkash interacted with the students, shared his experiences and encouraged them to contribute actively to the field of human rights.

Madhya Pradesh State Human Rights Commission

On 7th September 2026, Madhya Pradesh State Human Rights Commission (PSHRC) Acting Chairperson, Dr. Awadhesh Pratap Singh visited District Hospital Datia. He inspected ICU, OT, SNCU, reviewed medical facilities and hygiene, among others. He emphasised that dignity and healthcare are fundamental rights. He urged officials to ensure timely treatment and publicise schemes.

On 13th September 2026, the Commission celebrated its 32nd Foundation Day in Bhopal. Chief Minister, Dr. Mohan Yadav attended as Chief Guest. Shri Kunwar Vijay Shah, Minister, Tribal Affairs Department was also present. The event focused on protecting the human rights of Scheduled Tribes and ensuring scheme accessibility. Mission



Karmayogi awards were given to top-performing personnel.

Students preparing for competitive exams under Pratigya Samaj Seva Kalyan Samiti visited the Commission on 23rd September 2026. Senior officers sensitised them about various aspects of human rights and the functioning of the Commission.

The MPSHRC recommended Rs. 5 lakh each as relief to NoK in three custodial death cases in Central Jail Indore and PS Mandhata and called for CCTV monitoring and psychological care in jails. More than Rs. 2 crore relief was recommended by the Commission in 30 cases of human rights violations.

Haryana State Human Rights Commission

The Haryana Human Rights Commission (HSHRC) addressed several human rights concerns during September 2026, including inadequate classroom space, ventilation, playground and sports facilities at Government Senior Secondary School, Gohana, Sonipat and the death of a 16-year-old 11th standard student who allegedly fell from the third-floor terrace of a school in Faridabad, amid allegations of corporal punishment and mental harassment by the school administration.

The Commission also assessed the operation of illegal paying guest accommodations and guest houses in Gurugram, recurring waterlogging and traffic disruption and denial of public water supply to nearly 500 families in Faridabad for over 20 years.

It also sought a report on overloaded vehicles, wrong-side driving and traffic congestion on NH-48 in Dharuhera, Rewari.

The Commission examined the deaths of a woman and her newborn at PHC Dharuhera due to medical negligence. It urged disciplinary action against the staff, ordered

compensation for the family and asked the Health Department to create an appeal system for medical board decisions.

The HSHRC also participated in human rights awareness initiatives, a debate on protecting human rights during crises, child protection training under Mission Vatsalya and programmes on prevention and redressal of sexual harassment at workplace.

Telangana State Human Rights Commission

In September 2026, the Telangana State Human Rights Commission (TSHRC) took *suo motu* cognizance of alleged rat-bite marks on a dead body at Warangal Government Area Hospital, physical torture of an elderly woman on superstition grounds in Bhadradi Kothagudem and the death of three newborns in a fire at RIMS, Adilabad. The Commission also sought reports on the alleged assault of a woman by a home guard near Hafeezpet Railway Station and the alleged assault of a young man by Prohibition and Excise personnel in Nalgonda. It also recommended Rs. 5 lakh as relief to the parents of a child killed in a stray dog attack in Medak.

Himachal Pradesh State Human Rights Commission

In September 2026, the Himachal Pradesh State Human Rights Commission (HPSHRC) registered 37 cases of human rights violations, disposed of 48 cases and recommended Rs. 4 lakh as relief to the victims or their NoK.

News in brief

- From 14th to 28th September 2026, NHRC, India celebrated Hindi Fortnight and organised several competitions for its employees to promote use of Hindi as the official language in their day-to-day functioning.
- On 20th September 2026, the NHRC Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi addressed as the Chief Guest at an event organised by the Purnima Foundation to commemorate Engineers' Day in remembrance of Bharat Ratna Sir M. Visvesvaraya, a renowned engineer, administrator, statesman and architect of modern India in Cuttack, Odisha. He also attended the programme organised by Purnima Foundation at the Odisha State Maritime Museum, Jobra to observe Engineers' Day in remembrance of Bharat Ratna Sir M. Visvesvaraya.

He encouraged young engineers to remain curious and urged them not to be afraid to examine established

methods and explore better solutions. He emphasised that an engineer of the present generation cannot be defined solely by technical competence. He said that technical expertise must be accompanied by integrity, responsibility, discipline and an understanding of the social consequences of professional decisions.

Justice Sarangi emphasised the need for innovative approaches to sustainable development, water management, energy security, urbanisation, transportation, environmental protection and digital transformation. He further observed that the country needs technologies that are not only advanced but also affordable, accessible and appropriate to people's needs.

- On 23rd September 2026, NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian attended the Sixth Convocation of ASBM University, Bhubaneswar as the



Chief Guest. He congratulated the students on the successful completion of their studies and urged them to make the best use of their knowledge for the betterment of society.

- On 23rd September 2026, NHRC, India Member Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani addressed as Special Guest the International Day of Democracy Programme, organised by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Advocates Association at Chennai, Tamil Nadu. She said that India's democracy is rooted in the constitutional values of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. She recalled the teachings of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar who said that political democracy must be supported by social democracy. She reiterated that the judiciary is playing a vital role in safeguarding constitutional rights in democracy.

The Member said that NHRC function as a guardian, protector, monitor, advisor and educator in protecting life, liberty, equality and human dignity of the vulnera-



ble and marginalised sections of society. She emphasised that constitutional morality, tolerance, pluralism and respect for others' rights are essential to strengthen democracy.

- On 26th September 2026, NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi addressed as the Chief Guest the valedictory ceremony of the 1st IILM Trial Advocacy Competition at IILM University Campus, Gurugram, Haryana. He spoke about the importance of Trial Advocacy in developing advocacy skills, legal reasoning, courtroom etiquette and professional competence among budding lawyers. He also deliberated upon the theme of the competition, 'Domestic Violence and Abetment of Suicide: Intersection of Criminal Liability, Victim Protection and Constitutional Safeguards' and highlighted the need to balance criminal liability, protection of victims and the constitutional safeguards guaranteed to every individual.

Forthcoming events

On 19th and 20th November 2026

The NHRC, India will organise its two-day Open Hearing and Camp Sitting in Karnataka.

Complaints in September 2026

Number of fresh complaints received	6,411
Number of cases disposed of including old cases	5,121
Number of cases under consideration of the Commission	40,399

A Snapshot at 33 years of NHRC, India



The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India will be celebrating its 33rd Foundation Day at Vigyan Bhawan on 12th October 2026. During the 33-year journey since its inception on 12th October 1993, the NHRC, India has been recommending necessary policy reforms, people-centric governance and implementation and regular monitoring on the ground to ensure fairness, transparency and accountability in law enforcement, investigations and welfare schemes/ programmes.

The Commission promotes police accountability, prison reforms, protection of the rights of the accused and victims through research, policy advocacy and public awareness. It continues to collaborate with central and state governments, parastatal organisations, academic institutions, NGOs and human rights defenders to protect and promote human rights of all segments of society, particularly the most vulnerable.

The NHRC, India has issued 35 Advisories so far. These include Ensuring the Welfare of Transgender Persons (2.0), Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), Rights of the Widows, People Involved in Begging, Right to Food, Right to Health and Mental Health, Rights of the Informal Workers, Upholding the Dignity of the Dead, Rights of Truck Drivers, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Advisory for Ensuring the Welfare of Transgender Persons, Advisory to mitigate Deliberate Self Harm and Suicide Attempts by Prisoners and Advisory to Prevent, Minimise and Mitigate Ocular Trauma. Other important interventions by the Commission include recommending amendments to 97 laws that discriminate against persons with Hansen's disease.

In the last 33 years, the Commission has handled 24,33,716 cases including 3,100 cases of *suo motu* cognizance. It has recommended monetary relief of more than Rs. 274 crore in 9,085 cases to victims of human rights violations. These cases include 54,673 complaints and 119 *suo motu* registered during the last year w.e.f. 1st October 2025 to 30th September 2026. During this period, the Commission conducted 80 spot enquiries; disposed of 53,733 cases and recommended more than Rs. 9.7 crore as monetary relief in 157 cases to victims of human rights violations.

The Commission also held two 'Open Hearings and Camp Sitzings' in Gujarat and

Bihar, respectively. The Camp Sitzings serve as a platform to hear cases of alleged human rights violations and to expedite justice and ensure speedy redressal for victims. It also serves as a platform to sensitise senior state government officials about the importance of timely submission of reports to the Commission for ensuring expeditious relief to victims. They also facilitated interaction with local NGOs, civil society organisations and human rights defenders.

The 18 Special Rapporteurs and 15 Special Monitors mechanism of the Commission helps it assess human rights conditions across various regions of the country. They conduct visits to shelter homes, prisons, observation homes and similar institutions, compiling reports for the Commission that detail their observations and suggestions for future action.

As part of its continued effort to strengthen the human rights mechanism in the country through collaborative efforts, the Commission organised a Statutory Full Commission Meeting of seven deemed members of the NHRC, including six National Commissions and the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities. It also organised a Conference of State Human Rights Commissions along with Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors last year.

Multi-stakeholder consultations are intrinsic to the Commission's functioning. In the last year, it organised two National Conferences including 'Ensuring Everyday Essentials: Public Services and Dignity for All' and 'Human Rights of Prison Inmates.' The NHRC, India has 12 Core Groups comprising experts, NGOs and senior government functionaries on various human rights-related themes to discuss and help evaluate government schemes and make recommendations

for their improvement.

Four core group meetings were organised last year. These were on 'Human Rights Violations Emerging from Re-verification and Re-assessment of Certificates of Government Employees with Disabilities,' 'Tackling Food Adulteration in India: Understanding the Scale, Challenges and Reforms,' 'Protecting Migrant Workers' Rights: Shared Responsibility of Government and the Private Sector' and 'Heat Waves and its Mitigation in Urban Areas.'

Further, four 'Open House Discussions' were held on 'Rethinking Beggary: Bridging Gaps between Policy, Practice and Dignity,' 'Access to Social Media by Children,' 'Measures to Curb Spurious Medicines in India' and 'Safeguarding Human Rights Against Digital Arrest Scams.'

The Commission is actively promoting research on diverse aspects of human rights. In the last one year, six research studies were completed. These studies cover a range of topics including Forest rights, condition of Old Age Homes, adoption process, human trafficking, education for persons with disabilities and commercialisation of non-timber forest product.

Last year, six new research studies were commissioned. These are focused on the rights and welfare of children of imprisoned parents; sanitation, human security and human rights; the legal, economic and social barriers to the realisation of human rights for sex workers; violence against elderly women; heat wave vulnerability of urban slum settlements and the rehabilitation needs of trafficked foreigners in need of international protection.

As part of the capacity building efforts, the Commission is partnering with various national academies of All India Services (AIS) in developing customised training modules. Through such initiatives, the Commission sensitises young officers at a cutting-edge level about human rights and its various dimensions. Thus, the NHRC seeks to strengthen human rights awareness and sensitivity among officers in the initial phase of service for a lasting impact.

The NHRC has also collaborated with various institutions to conduct human rights awareness programmes. During the last one year, it organised 66 collaborative conferences, workshops and training programmes and 10 moot court competitions with financial support of over Rs. 136 lakh to various institutions. Additionally, the Commission also organised its on-site winter and summer internships and 06 Online Short Term Internships (OSTIs) providing human rights orientation to 687 students.

The OSTIs have trained hundreds of university-level students from far-flung areas remotely to become human rights ambassadors. The Commission also encourages exposure visits by college students and faculty to its premises, providing them with firsthand insight into its role in promoting and protecting human rights. Last year, 55 institutions with 2,263 students, faculties and officers participated in such visits. Six special human rights training sessions were also organised for officers of different services, including IRPFS, DANIPS and civil servants from Sri Lanka. Besides, the Commission, as part of its annual calendar of activities for human rights sensitisation of security personnel, has been organising annual debate competition for the Central Armed Police Forces.

The NHRC, India has also been playing an active role at international human rights forums, including the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, among others, through the participation of its Chairperson, Members and senior officers. It is working tirelessly to build human rights capacities internationally. It has received a remarkable response to its ITEC Capacity Building and experience-sharing programmes to strengthen National

Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) of the Global South in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs.

So far, the Commission has organised five Capacity Building Programmes, including one in September this year, with the participation of 149 senior functionaries of the NHRIs of 46 countries across Africa, East Asia, Central Asia, South America and the Pacific. The programme underscores NHRC, India's commitment to strengthening global dialogue on human rights, advancing South-South cooperation and promoting rights-based governance.

The Commission's efforts to directly engage with civil society in promoting and protecting human rights, through events like human rights photography, quiz and short film competitions, have also received a tremendous response. Its short film competition on human rights received a record 526 entries from across the country last year in various Indian languages with subtitles in English on different aspects of human rights.

The Commission has also been expanding human rights awareness through its various publications apart from the monthly Newsletters. Last year, it released two new publications, including collections of research-based articles on various thematic issues in its annual 'Journal' in English and 'Manav Adhikar: Nai Dishayein' in Hindi.

Several initiatives have been taken to expand its outreach, including linking its HRCNet Portal with all the State authorities and the majority of State Human Rights Commissions. Any person can file online complaints directly and track the real-time status of their complaint on the Commission's portal. The NHRC, India Mobile App, launched last year, has augmented this facility further, besides providing updates on the Commission's activities and programmes promoting human rights awareness among the masses.

Human rights and NHRC in news



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भवन्तु सुखिनः

National Human Rights Commission

Important telephone numbers of the NHRC for filing complaints

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

For Filing online complaints: www.nhrc.nic.in, hrcnet.nic.in, Common Service Centres

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

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