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सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः

HUMAN RIGHTS

Newsletter

A monthly publication of the National Human Rights Commission, India



33rd Foundation Day of NHRC, India | National Conference on 'Water as the Elixir of Life' | Open Hearing and Camp Sitting

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Newsletter

Volume 33 | Number 11 | November 2026

National Human Rights Commission, India

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▶ Children expressing themselves through their paintings at a competition organised by the NHRC, India



▶ NHRC, India's 33rd Foundation Day Chief Guest, Chief Justice of India, Justice Surya Kant flanked by the Commission's Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian, Members, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani and Secretary General, Shri Piyush Goyal

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Monthly Recap

From the desk of the Secretary General and Chief Executive

October 2026 was a month of significant engagements for the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India as it marked its 33rd Foundation Day and continued its work across diverse areas of human rights protection and promotion.

The Chief Justice of India, Justice Surya Kant graced the Foundation Day celebrations of the Commission as the Chief Guest, adding to its significance and reaffirming the importance of institutional commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights.

On this momentous occasion, organising a National Conference on *'Water as the Elixir of Life: Advancing Human Dignity through the Right to Water'* brought an important dimension to this commitment. It highlighted access to safe and adequate water not merely as a developmental concern, but as an essential element of human dignity and the realisation of human rights. Detailed reports have been carried on these events in this edition of the Newsletter.

The month brought into focus the importance of safeguarding human dignity through institutional action, policy interventions, public awareness and engagement with stakeholders. The Commission's activities reflected its continued commitment to addressing human rights concerns and strengthening mechanisms for their protection. Its intervention led to establishment of a Gender-Neutral Cell at Central Prison, Hyderabad for persons with diverse gender identities and expressions.

The Commission also issued two important advisories on '*Women's Safety at Work and Public Spaces'* and '*Protection of Human Rights of Female Inmates and their Children*.' These advisories underline the need for institutional accountability, preventive measures and a sensitive, rights-based approach towards vulnerable groups.

This edition of the Newsletter also carries an article on 'Widowhood and Economic Vulnerability: A Human Rights Perspective.' The Commission has always been concerned about protecting human rights of all and particularly of vulnerable people, including widows.

Field visits by NHRC Member, Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors provided opportunities to assess ground realities and strengthen the implementation of human rights safeguards.

The Online Human Rights Quiz 2026 hosted on MyGov was another step towards encouraging awareness and understanding of human rights, particularly among young people. It received a tremendous response from across the country. A brief report on the event has been carried in this edition.

Updates from State Human Rights Commissions and other regular columns offer a wider perspective on efforts to strengthen the human rights framework across the country. The complaints received during the month also provide an insight into the range of concerns brought before the Commission.

The Commission's engagement extended beyond national boundaries through its participation in the international human rights arena, underscoring the importance of cooperation, dialogue and the exchange of experiences among human rights institutions.

The protection and promotion of human rights remain a continuous endeavour, requiring vigilance, responsiveness and cooperation among institutions, governments, civil society and citizens.

The strength of a human rights framework reflects not only in the laws and institutions of a country but also in its ability to transform the principles of dignity, justice and equality into reality for every individual. Hope the readers find the content interesting and informative.

Piyush Goyal
Secretary General &
Chief Executive Officer

Report

33rd Foundation Day of NHRC, India

The National Human Rights Commission, India was set up on 12th October 1993. To commemorate its 33rd Foundation Day, the Commission organised a function on 12th October 2026 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. Chief Justice of India, Justice Surya Kant addressed the gathering as the Chief Guest in the presence of the NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian, Members, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani and Secretary General, Shri Piyush Goyal.

Former NHRC Members, Secretary General, Chairpersons and Members of State Human Rights Commissions and other Commissions, members of the judiciary, the diplomatic community, international organisations and civil society, Special Monitors and Special Rapporteurs, senior government functionaries, academia, human rights defenders, researchers and NHRC senior officers, among others were present.

Justice Surya Kant said that the Constitution of India has made extensive promises to every citizen, guaranteeing the values of dignity, equality, liberty and justice. He said that these words in the preamble are among the finest ever written and they must be observed day after day in the field, in the lockup, in the hospital ward and in the village at the end of the road.

Lauding NHRC's work over the years, Justice Kant said that people sometimes say that "the Commission can only recommend and cannot command, but I would offer an alternative perspective. Picture, for a moment, a solitary lighthouse standing steadfast at the edge of society's vast, restless sea: Its purpose is not to steal the waves of injustice but to cast a guiding light for those adrift in the darkness." He said that Human Rights Commissions must investigate complaints, identify systemic failures and ensure that concerns which may otherwise remain invisible receive institutional attention. Civil society can bring ground realities to the forefront while international institutions can contribute scientific knowledge, experience and cooperation.

Justice Surya Kant said that the true measure of a human rights institution is therefore not only the number of cases it decides but whether it can be heard by those who are least able to make themselves heard. This is where the Human Rights Commissions, particularly the State Human Rights Commissions (SHRCs), have a significant role to play. In a country as large and diverse as India, the experience of rights is often determined not in the capital, but in a remote village, a particular neighbourhood or even the household. The National Commission can set standards and draw attention to larger patterns, but State Commissions are often closer to the ground where violations occur. They can hear a com-



▶ Chief Justice of India, Justice Surya Kant addressing the 33rd Foundation Day function of NHRC, India in the presence of the Commission's Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian, Members, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani and Secretary General, Shri Piyush Goyal



▶ Dignitaries attentively listening to the address by the Chief Justice of India

plaint in the language in which it is made, reach the place where it has occurred and understand the local circumstances in which it has taken place. That proximity gives them not merely an administrative advantage but a life-altering responsibility.

He also commended the Commission for pairing the celebration with the National Conference on 'Water as the Elixir of Life.' He said that the right to water must therefore be understood not only as a right of the present but also as a responsibility towards the future.

Justice Kant said that India itself has made astronomical efforts to expand access to drinking water, including through the provisions of household tap connections in rural areas. That progress deserves commendation, but the next question must be a more demanding one. Is the water safe, reliable and available when the family needs it? Therefore, "the Government must build and maintain the systems through which water reaches people. Courts must intervene when constitutional rights are violated."

He also appreciated the Commission for the launch of the NHRC, India mobile application and the move towards digitisation of its records. He said that this App makes the Commission more accessible to those who have traditionally found it difficult to approach formal institutions.

Before this, thanking the CJI for accepting the invitation to be the Chief Guest for the Foundation Day, NHRC Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian said that "the office of the CJI has become the single most important, the most powerful, the most vibrant, at the same time, the most vulnerable office of the country which is put to the test of fire (*Agni*



▶ NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian addressing the gathering

Pariksha), every day, nay, every minute, not necessarily by sacred souls at all times."

The Chairperson said that "there can be no disagreement on the fact that the world today is a much better place to live than it was a hundred years ago. But at the same time, the challenges that we face today are more complex than ever. Therefore, it is the necessity of time that human rights institutions throughout the world reinvent themselves to continue to be relevant."

Justice Ramasubramanian said that the poorest half of the world's population is responsible for only 14% of global CO_2 emissions. The world's richest 10% are responsible for half of all emissions. It is no coincidence that climate and wealth are so closely linked, as they essentially share a common origin: fossil capitalism. Fossil fuels are the source of humanity's extraordinary progress over the past two centuries but also the source of the extraordinary problems facing us today.

He said that until a few decades ago, the approach to human rights issues was normally two- dimensional. It was presumably citizen versus State. But it is not so anymore. Non-State actors now play a huge role, especially after the digital revolution has happened. Today, in the digital world, the opinions can be manipulated, the thought processes can be influenced and the activities, both physical and mental, can be monitored. Therefore, it is time, especially when we celebrate NHRC Foundation Day, to take a pledge to reinvent ourselves to face new challenges, reaffirm our commitment to the cause of promotion and protection of human rights and re-engineer our personalities to improve our delivery system.

Earlier, NHRC Member, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi said that the Commission is committed to promoting and protecting human rights of all, including the right to dignity and equality in accordance with the law and the Constitution. In the 33 years of NHRC, there may have been some ups and downs, but it remains committed to its responsibility to serve the cause of human rights. It has expanded its outreach to the doorsteps of the victims of human rights violations through its Open Hearing and Camp Sittings.

NHRC Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani said that the concept of human rights is deeply rooted in ancient Indian civilisation, which is also reflected in the Constitution of the country. Quoting *Rigvedas* and *Upanishads*, she highlighted that India's ancient scriptures guided us on how to live together with mutual respect and protect human dignity and wellbeing of all through dialogue and collective strength. Therefore, she said that we must take pride in our heritage and work as equal stakeholders for the protection of rights of girls, children and women, among other vulnerable groups.

In his opening remarks, NHRC Secretary General, Shri Piyush Goyal gave an overview of various dimensions of the Commission's work towards promoting and protecting life. He said that the subjects of human rights are evolving with time. Climate change and digital world are throwing new challenges. He said that as part of its 33rd Foundation celebration, the Commission is organising a National Conference on the theme 'Water as the Elixir of Life: Advancing Human Dignity through the Right to Water' to deliberate on the human rights dimensions of access to safe drinking water, sustainable management of water resources, rejuvenation of water bodies, community participation and the need to strengthen institutional mechanisms for ensuring water security for meaningful recommendations.



▶ A packed audience attending the function

Consultation

National Conference on 'Water as the Elixir of Life: Advancing Human Dignity through the Right to Water'

The National Conference in the two sessions brought together representatives of government institutions, development organisations and other stakeholders. Addressing the first session on 'Water conservation, sustainability and community participation' Shri Brijendra Swaroop, Executive Director (Projects), National Mission for Clean Ganga, Ministry of Jal Shakti emphasised that non-discriminatory access to adequate, safe and affordable water is fundamental to human dignity.

Outlining the Namami Gange Programme, he highlighted its Integrated River Basin Management approach and the objectives of ensuring Nirmal Dhara (unpolluted flow), Aviral Dhara (continuous flow) and protection of the Ganga's geological and ecological integrity. The programme comprises 527 projects with a sanctioned cost of approximately Rs. 43,326 crore, covering pollution abatement, ecological restoration, biodiversity conservation, community participation, research and livelihood enhancement.

Referring to improvements in water quality in several stretches of the Ganga, Shri Swaroop observed that the success of rejuvenation efforts should be assessed through environmental outcomes, including water quality, biodiversity and ecosystem functioning, rather than expenditure or the number of completed projects alone. He stressed the need for comprehensive wastewater management, maintenance of ecological flows, protection of floodplains, wetland restoration and biodiversity conservation. He also called for scientific mapping of water bodies, catchment-based planning, institutional convergence and community participation, emphasising that conservation must precede restoration.

Shri Yugal Kishore Joshi, Programme Director, NITI Aayog highlighted India's water-security challenges, noting that the country has approximately 4% of the world's freshwater resources but nearly 18% of its population. Per capita water availability has declined to approximately 1,300–1,400 cubic metres annually, below the water-stress threshold of 1,700 cubic metres. He emphasised integrating traditional water-harvesting practices with modern scientific methods, strengthening Gram Panchayats, preparing water budgets and addressing encroachment.

Citing a community-led initiative covering approximately



▶ From left to right: Ms. Anjali Makhija, CEO and Trustee, S M Sehgal Foundation, Shri Yugal Kishore Joshi, Programme Director, NITI Aayog, Shri Brijendra Swaroop, Executive Director (Projects), National Mission for Clean Ganga, Ministry of Jal Shakti and Dr. Rajendra Singh, Chairperson, Tarun Bharat Sangh in the panel of the first session of the National Conference

800 villages, in which water-body rejuvenation had been completed in 731 villages at an approximate cost of Rs. 3 lakh per water body, he highlighted the importance of community labour and productive use of excavated silt. He called for stronger local institutions, improved monitoring and wider replication of successful conservation initiatives.

Ms. Anjali Makhija, CEO and Trustee, S M Sehgal Foundation highlighted the importance of collaboration among communities, government, development organisations, academia and other stakeholders in addressing water and agricultural challenges. She outlined the Foundation's work on groundwater recharge, supplementary surface-water storage, rainwater harvesting in schools, water quality and climate-smart, water-efficient agriculture, including drip and sprinkler irrigation and laser land levelling.

She emphasised the role of women's groups and village



▶ Participants engrossed in panel discussions

development committees in identifying priorities, contributing resources and maintaining water structures. Stressing the need to work in coordination with local and district administrations, she advocated combining traditional knowledge with scientific expertise through GIS mapping, soil-moisture and water-quality monitoring as well as third-party assessments. She also called for affordable and accessible technology, greater philanthropic and CSR investment in water and agriculture, besides the development of a scientifically designed water-credit system.

Dr. Rajendra Singh, Chairperson, Tarun Bharat Sangh emphasised that water has its own rights and that rivers must remain nirmal (pure) and aviral (flowing uninterruptedly), with their ecological integrity protected alongside the human right to water. Reflecting on India's natural wealth and its decline, he highlighted his experience of restoring 23 rivers through community participation, traditional water-conservation practices and ecological restoration.

He stressed that the right to water must go hand in hand with the responsibility to protect rivers and their natural ecosystems. Emphasising that knowledge and advocacy must translate into meaningful environmental action, he called for drawing upon traditional wisdom to conserve natural resources, restore rivers and preserve ecological balance for future generations.

Addressing the second session on 'Strengthening drinking-water services and local governance' Shri Ashok K. K. Meena, Secretary, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti emphasised that safe drinking water is integral to human dignity, public health and the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution.

Referring to the Jal Jeevan Mission, launched in 2019, he stated that approximately 82% of the planned water-connection infrastructure had been created. He noted that approximately 25% of blocks were in critical, semi-critical or over-exploited groundwater categories. Surface water-dependent schemes had increased from 15% to 48%, while groundwater-dependent schemes had declined from 85% to 52%.

He called for village-level water budgeting, source sustainability, digital monitoring and stronger Gram



▶ From left to right: Shri Uma Shankar Pandey, noted social worker, farmer and groundwater conservationist, Shri Ashok K. K. Meena, Secretary, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti and Shri Anand Shekhar, CEO, Water Aid India in the panel of the second session of the National Conference

Panchayats and Village Water and Sanitation Committees. Highlighting water-quality surveillance, he noted that approximately 2.4 million women had been trained to use field-testing kits and upload data for remedial action. He stressed interdepartmental convergence and referred to completing infrastructure under Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0 by December 2028, ensuring safe, reliable and sustainable drinking-water services.

Shri Uma Shankar Pandey, noted social worker, farmer and groundwater conservationist emphasised the vital importance of water conservation through collective stakeholder efforts. He highlighted concerns regarding the commercialisation and wastage of water and stressed that ensuring access to safe drinking water is a shared responsibility of the Government and the community. He underscored the need for water literacy, community participation and revival of traditional water-management practices. Using the example of a little bird attempting to extinguish a forest fire, he highlighted the significance of individual contributions. Emphasising the importance of awareness creation, he asserted that building a New Bharat must begin with individual responsibility. He reiterated his slogan, *"Khet mein med, med par ped"*, advocating tree plantation on agricultural field bunds as a sustainable water conservation practice.

Shri Anand Shekhar, CEO, Water Aid India appreciated the NHRC, India's focus on water as a fundamental human right. He stressed that every household tap must be supported by a sustainable water source to ensure reliable access. Recalling that sanitation coverage in India was below 20% in 2014, he highlighted the progress achieved in eliminating open defecation and extending sustainable sanitation services to all rural households within five years through political leadership, public investment and community participation.

He noted that approximately 86% of households now have access to drinking-water services through functional household tap connections. He also highlighted the opportunity presented by the allocation of approximately Rs. 8 lakh crore placed at the disposal of Gram Panchayats, of which 50% earmarked for water and sanitation, enabling nearly 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats to strengthen service delivery. Emphasising source sustainability under the Jal Jeevan Mission, he called for political and administrative ownership, adequate public financing, inter-ministerial coordination, multi-stakeholder partnerships and greater community mobilisation. He underlined that the objective must go beyond coverage to ensure "water for everyone and for always" through reliable, quality and sustainable drinking-water services.

In the concluding session, Justice V. Ramasubramanian, Chairperson, NHRC expressed gratitude to the participants and highlighted the significance of the *Panch Bhoota*, the five elements of nature, in sustaining life and maintaining ecological balance. Reflecting on the properties of water, he appreciated the collabora-



▶ A scene from the National Conference

tive approach to conservation advocated by the panellists and stressed collective efforts and stakeholder participation. He highlighted the contradiction between reverence and action, observing that society often fails to protect what it reveres, citing women and water as examples. He called for responsible behaviour and sustained conservation efforts to bridge this gap.

The Chairperson emphasised that conservation efforts must begin immediately, noting that the present generation has benefited from the efforts and sacrifices of its ancestors and has a responsibility to preserve natural resources for future generations. He underscored the cumulative impact of individual and collective efforts, stressing that conservation initiatives require a long-term vision, even when results take decades to emerge. He called for timely, sustained and collaborative action to safeguard water resources for present and future generations.

Shri Piyush Goyal, Secretary General, NHRC summarised the deliberations of the two thematic sessions. He emphasised the urgency of addressing climate change and severe groundwater depletion through decentralised, community-led governance involving Gram Panchayats, village-level water and sanitation committees, women's groups and civil society. He stressed that, although significant ground-level work remained, close coordination among government agencies, civil society and local communities would help ensure a positive and sustainable way forward.

Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary, NHRC delivered the vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to the Chief Guest, the Chief Justice of India, for accepting the invitation and acknowledging the collective efforts contributing to organising the Commission's 33rd Foundation Day and the National Conference reaffirming the shared commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights.



▶ NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian addressing the concluding session of the National Conference

Open Hearing and Camp Sitting

Camp Sittings 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 7th and 8th October 2026, the Commission held its two-day Camp Sitting in Patna, Bihar. The Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian and Members, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi and Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani heard more than 70 alleged cases of human rights violations in the presence of victims and concerned officers. The State Chief Secretary, Shri Pratyaya Amrit and DGP, Ms. Preeta Verma, NHRC Secretary General, Shri Piyush Goyal, Director General (Investigation), Dr. Anupama Nilekar Chandra, Joint Secretary, Shri Samir Kumar and other senior officers were present.

On Day-1, the Commission heard 30 cases and closed 19 cases after hearing the parties and finding the recommendations complied with. The State submitted proof of payment in 10 cases as recommended by the Commission, thereby providing relief for victims and their families. Altogether, compensation exceeding Rs. 1 crore was reported as disbursed, marking a significant step in ensuring justice and redress for human rights violations.

Various cases of serious human rights violations were taken up. In a case pertaining to a woman victim, the Commission directed the Bihar DGP to provide her protection and a dedicated helpline number she can



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

call in case of any threat or when in need. The DGP was further directed to constitute a Special Investigation Team.

In another case involving the rape and murder of a 10-year-old girl in the Maner area of Patna district, the Commission recommended payment of Rs. 5 lakh as relief to the next of kin (NoK) of the victim. In two other cases of death in judicial custody, the Commission observed negligence of jail/ medical officials and recommended relief of Rs. 15 lakh to the victims' families.

On Day-2, the NHRC Chairperson heard 10 cases of alleged bonded labour. Shri K. Senthil Kumar, Additional Chief Secretary, Labour Resources and Migrant Workers Welfare Department, Shri Rajesh Bharti, Labour Commissioner and other officers of the Bihar Government were present. In one bonded labour case, the Commission expressed its displeasure over a Prison official representing the District Magistrate. In two cases pertaining to child labour, the Commission directed the Additional Chief Secretary,Labour Department to submit a detailed report on its format. In a case of alleged practice of multi-generation bonded labour, the Commission directed the Director General of Investigation, NHRC to conduct an on-the-spot enquiry.

On the same day, the Division Bench of the Commission comprising the Members, Justice (Dr.) Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi and Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani heard 33 cases, which included compliance matters and other complaints of alleged violation of human rights. Three cases not included in the list were taken up out of turn on a mention made by the complainant.



▶ Officers and complainants attending the hearing

During the proceedings, the Commission closed 10 cases after hearing the parties and reviewing compliance reports along with proof of payment of compensation of Rs. 40 lakh to the next of kin of the deceased victims. In five other cases of death in judicial/ police custody wherein the Commission observed negligence of jail/ police officials, monetary relief of Rs. 30 lakh was recommended. In other matters, further reports were sought from the authorities.

After the hearing, the Commission interacted with the representatives of NGOs, civil society organisations and Human Rights Defenders on important issues pertaining to the State of Bihar. The Chairperson accepted their suggestions for better coordination with the NHRC.

The Commission also held a meeting with senior officers of the State Government. Important issues like non/ delayed submission of reports to the Commission, lack of information among authorities about laws and Supreme Court judgments, issues pertaining to identification, rescue, release and rehabilitation of bonded labourers, violation of human rights by police, crimes against women and children including human trafficking, lack of proper implementation of the prohibition laws and resultant loss of lives, protection of children including child labour, school safety and child welfare, monitoring of shelter homes, correctional institutions and other residential care facilities were discussed. The NHRC Chairperson appreciated the officers for their cooperation, which helped in providing relief to the victims.



▶ 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 at the Patna Camp Sitting

Article

Widowhood and Economic Vulnerability: A Human Rights Perspective

Meera Khanna
Trustee & President, The Guild of Service, India



The feminisation of poverty is a widely recognised phenomenon. There is another dimension to poverty that has a widow's face. A woman who loses her husband may lose much more than her spouse. She may lose financial security, social standing, community support and, quite often, her marital home. She may find herself excluded from her marital family and, in some cases, denied support by her natal family as well. In a single moment, she can acquire multiple layers of vulnerability. And vulnerability is precisely what exploitation and trafficking thrive upon. Widowhood is therefore not simply a personal tragedy or a cultural concern. It is an economic and human-rights issue that demands urgent public attention.

The Scale of Widowhood: A Significant Data Gap

India's last completed population census, conducted in 2011, recorded that 7.4% of women were widowed, compared with 2% of men. This disparity is striking. Yet these figures tell us little about widows' economic circumstances: whether they own property, have independent incomes, receive pensions or can access healthcare and legal protection.[1]

The absence of recent census data is an important limitation. Even an updated count of widows, however, would not tell us how many experience poverty, dispossession, exclusion or exploitation.

The Guild of Service addressed this evidence gap through its research report, Abandoned Widows: A study on the Socio Economic conditions of widows in India[2] published in 2023 supported by the National Human Rights Commission's research scheme. The report examines widows' social and economic circumstances and highlights the barriers they face in securing their rights.

Its findings must be understood in the context of its research design and sample,

rather than treated as nationally representative estimates. The need for more comprehensive, regularly updated data remains urgent. The central question is not merely how many women are widowed. It is how many are left without the means to live with dignity.

Economic Vulnerability: When a Woman Becomes the Head of a Household

Widowhood may suddenly place a woman in charge of a household without providing her with the resources, training or authority necessary to manage it. Female-headed households may face substantial care responsibilities, unequal access to assets and credit, and limited opportunities for secure employment. Unpaid domestic work further restricts women's time and mobility.

Research confirms that widowhood affects women's work differently depending on their age and family circumstances. Megan N. Reed's 2020 study, "The Labor Force Participation of Indian Women Before and After Widowhood", used the India Human Development Survey to examine 3,217 women who experienced the loss of their husbands between the 2004–05 and 2011–12 survey waves. It found that widowhood was associated with increased days worked among women widowed before age 52 but reduced work participation among older women. Outcomes also varied according to household arrangements.[3]

For some women, widowhood creates an urgent need to earn. For others, age, ill health, care responsibilities and dependence on relatives restrict their ability to work. The feminisation of poverty is therefore closely linked to the feminisation of household headship.

Land, Inheritance and Economic Independence

In an agrarian economy such as India's, land is more than a productive asset. It provides income, collateral, social standing and bargaining power.

The Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005, strengthened daughters' rights in coparcenary property. Yet progressive legislation does not automatically guarantee that women can exercise their rights.

Widows may face resistance from in-laws, disputes over succession, pressure to relinquish claims, difficulties obtaining mutation of land records and prohibitive costs in pursuing legal remedies. Customary practices and differences in applicable laws can further complicate matters.

Even when a woman has a legal claim to property, she may not exercise effective control over it. She may be permitted to reside on the land but prevented from cultivating it, leasing it or using it to secure credit.

Ownership without control is not economic empowerment

The Agriculture Census 2015–16 recorded women as operating approximately 13.9% of India's operational landholdings. This is a historical indicator of gender inequality in agricultural land operation, not a current estimate of women's legal ownership.[4]

A widow dispossessed of land can quickly become dependent on insecure wage labour. Smallholdings may become unviable when women cannot access agricultural credit, irrigation, equipment, subsidies or institutional support.

We need stronger implementation of inheritance laws, accessible legal aid, simpler mutation procedures and protection against coercive dispossession. Joint registration of property in spouses' names, where appropriate, can help safeguard women before widowhood occurs. A widow must be recognised not as a temporary custodian of family property, but as a rights-holder in her own name.

Employment, Skills and the Informal Economy

When a widow has no land or productive assets, employment becomes a critical route to economic survival. According to the Government of India's Periodic Labour Force Survey 2023–24, the female labour-force participation rate among people aged 15 and above reached 41.7% under the usual-status measure, compared with 37.0% in 2022–23.[5]

This is an important national indicator, but it is not widow-specific. Moreover, labour-force participation does not necessarily translate into secure employment, adequate wages or economic independence.

Women may remain poor while working because their employment is irregular, poorly paid or unpaid. Widows with limited education and few marketable skills may have limited choices of engagement into domestic work, casual labour, home-based production and other insecure occupations, which may be the barriers widows face in achieving economic independence.

Livelihood programmes must respond to widows' circumstances. Training should be linked to actual employment opportunities and markets, with flexible age and educational requirements. Childcare, safe transport, access to credit, mentoring and assistance with digital applications are equally important.

Intergenerational Poverty and Social Security

The economic consequences of widowhood often extend to

children. When a mother works long hours in insecure employment, girls may be withdrawn from school to undertake domestic responsibilities or care for younger siblings. Economic hardship can also increase pressure to marry girls early, limiting their education and future earning potential.

Social protection for widows must therefore be understood as an investment in children's education, nutrition, health and economic independence. Supporting the mother can protect the daughter's right to remain in school and build a life beyond economic dependence.

India's Pradhan Mantri Vidhawa Pension Yojana (erstwhile National Social Assistance Programme) lists central assistance of Rs. 300 per month for eligible widows aged 40–79 from below-poverty-line households, rising to Rs. 500 per month from age 80. State governments may provide additional assistance.[6]

These central contributions are inadequate to meet the costs of food, shelter and healthcare. Eligibility conditions, documentation requirements, delays and difficulties navigating digital systems can also prevent women from obtaining support.

A pension is an instrument of social protection that helps preserve dignity and reduces the pressure to accept unsafe work or exploitative arrangements. Coverage without adequacy is not sufficient protection. We need adequate, inflation-responsive pensions, simpler applications, accessible grievance redressal and assisted digital service.

6. VB-G RAM G: An Important but Limited Safety Net

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) provided a legal guarantee of at least 100 days of unskilled manual employment in a financial year to rural households whose adult members are willing to undertake such work, subject to the Act's provisions. In financial year 2024–25, women accounted for 58.15% of person-days generated under MGNREGA, with approximately 440.7 lakh women participating.[7]

These figures demonstrate the scheme's importance as a source of rural employment for women. However, they do not establish how many participating women were widows or whether their earnings were sufficient to sustain their households.

With effect from 1st July 2026, MGNREGA has been replaced by the Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025 (VB-G RAM G), which increases the statutory employment guarantee from 100 to 125 days per rural household per financial year.

Although the increase to 125 days offers more employment opportunities, it does not guarantee year-round income security or economic independence. Access to employment, availability of work, timely wage payments and adequate earnings remain critical considerations.

For widowed women, it is particularly important that employment opportunities are accessible without discrimination and that wages are paid promptly. The revamped scheme, VB-G RAM G, must therefore be situated within the broader livelihood security framework that combines wage employment with skill development, social pensions, healthcare, access to productive assets and support for self-employment.

Migration, Displacement and Trafficking

When women lose access to land, income and family support, migration may become a necessity rather than a choice. A widow searching for work may enter an unfamiliar environment without secure accommodation, social networks or knowledge of her rights. Women displaced by conflict, natural disasters or economic hardship face additional barriers to employment and social protection.

These circumstances can expose women and girls to deceptive recruitment, labour exploitation, sexual violence and trafficking, particularly during transit or when employment is arranged through unregulated intermediaries. Widowhood does not automatically make a woman vulnerable to trafficking and trafficking cannot be explained by poverty alone. However, economic insecurity, dispossession, social exclusion and the absence of protective services can combine to increase the risk of exploitation.

Prevention must begin before a woman reaches desperation. Secure housing, income support, legal assistance, safe employment and community networks can reduce dependence on exploitative arrangements.

For women who have experienced trafficking or violence, rehabilitation must go beyond rescue. It must provide sustained livelihood support, psychosocial care, legal assistance and opportunities to rebuild autonomy and dignity.

The Need for Better Data and a Rights-Based Approach

One of the greatest obstacles to effective policy is the absence of sufficiently detailed and regularly updated information about widows. National data should capture age, location, disability, education, household composition, income, employment, property ownership, health, housing, pension access and exposure to violence or exploitation.

A dedicated national survey on widowhood or a systematic module within existing surveys, could help establish the scale and diversity of economic deprivation.

We must also distinguish between household poverty and the poverty experienced by an individual woman within that household. A family may have food and shelter, while a widow may not have independent income, control over resources and access to healthcare or legal assistance.

Poverty measurement must therefore look beyond household averages. It should examine whether a widow can control her earnings and assets, access entitlements, meet essential needs and live without fear of violence or exploitation.

Quantitative data must be complemented by qualitative research that records women's experiences. Statistics tell us how widespread a problem may be; women's testimonies help explain how it operates and what needs to change.

From Vulnerability to Empowerment

Breaking the links between widowhood, poverty and trafficking requires coordinated action.

- Secure property and inheritance rights: Strengthen legal aid, awareness, enforcement and protection against dispossession.
- Make livelihoods accessible: Adapt skills and employment programmes to widows' ages, education and care responsibilities, linking training to markets and sustainable income.
- Strengthen social protection: Improve pension adequacy and accessibility, ensuring that digital systems do not exclude women who lack literacy, devices or assistance.
- Protect children: Support school retention, nutrition, healthcare and childcare to prevent intergenerational deprivation.
- Prevent trafficking and exploitation: Ensure safe migration pathways, decent work, secure housing and accessible support services.
- Build a reliable evidence base: Collect and publish disaggregated data and include widows in policy design and programme evaluation.

Above all, widows must be recognised as rights-holders. Their circumstances differ by age, class, caste, location, disability, family structure and access to assets. Policies must respond to these differences.

Widowhood Must Not Become a Sentence of Poverty

Ensuring the dignity and security of widows requires more than sympathy; it calls for equal rights, effective protection and opportunities to rebuild their lives. The death of a spouse need not lead to destitution. A widow should not have to choose between her dignity and her survival. If the link between widowhood, poverty and trafficking needs to be broken, we must act before vulnerability becomes exploitation.

We must make widows visible in our data, present in our policies and central to our development priorities. A society's commitment to human rights must be reflected in how it protects women from poverty, exclusion and exploitation, ensuring that every widow can live with dignity, independence and hope for the future.

Key References

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[4] *Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India, Agriculture Census 2015–16.*

[5] *Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Periodic Labour Force Survey, Annual Report 2023–24.*

[6] *Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, National Social Assistance Programme.*

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Advisories

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India has been issuing advisories from time to time to various Union Ministries, States and Union Territory administrations, highlighting important human rights concerns and recommending measures to address them. During October 2026, the Commission issued two advisories, 'Women's Safety at Work and Public Spaces' and 'Protection of Human Rights of Female Inmates and their Children' on key issues requiring focused attention and appropriate action by the concerned authorities. The NHRC has urged them to implement the recommendations in the Advisories and furnish an Action Taken Report (ATR) to keep it informed of the progress. The detailed Advisories may be accessed at www.nhrc.nic.in

Women's Safety at Work and Public Spaces

The NHRC noted that despite the existence of stringent laws to protect the rights of women, their safety at workplaces and public spaces remains a concern. As per the recent Periodic Labour Force Participation Survey in India, women's participation in the labour force stood at 34.6% in September 2026. However, about 4.4 lakh cases of crimes against women were also reported, as per the latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report published in 2026. These figures underscore the persistent challenges in ensuring the safety and security of women and highlight the need for sustained and concerted efforts.

The Commission has acknowledged that women's safety is vital to ensure their constitutional entitlement to justice and equal opportunities. Their safety at workplaces and public spaces is essential for their participation in the country's workforce and realising their full potential.

Based on these and the other related considerations, the Commission has sent the Advisory on 'Women's Safety at Work and Public Spaces' to the Secretaries of ten Union Ministries, the Chairperson, Railway Board and the Chief Secretaries/ Administrators of all States and Union Territories.

The Union Ministries to whom the Advisory has been sent include Women and Child Development, Education, Home Affairs, Information and Broadcasting, Labour and Employment, Corporate Affairs, Road Transport and Highways, Housing and Urban Affairs as well as Health and Family Welfare.

The NHRC Advisory is focused on eight key areas for action. These include raising awareness on topics of women's safety and sexual harassment, infrastructure, encouraging bystander intervention, the role of the police, survivor support, cybercrime against women, long-term reforms and other measures.

Protection of Human Rights of Female Inmates and their Children

The Commission noted that the rights and needs of prisoners, particularly the female inmates and their children, who constitute a more vulnerable group among them, require focused attention and a sensitive, gender-responsive approach. Beyond custodial safeguards, there is a need for humane prison conditions, adequate maternal and child healthcare, access to justice, preservation of family ties, protection of the best interests of prison inmates' children, meaningful opportunities for their rehabilitation and social reintegration.

Based on these and the other related considerations, the Commission has sent the Advisory on the 'Protection of Human Rights of Female Inmates and their Children' to nine Union Ministries, Chief Secretaries/ Administrators, Director Generals of Police of all States and Union Territories.

The Advisory is focused on ten broad areas for action. These include Pre-Admission, Arrest and Entry into the Prison System, Admission Records, Child Database and Documentation, Health, Medical Care and Mental Health Services, Women Inmates: Living Conditions, Hygiene, Welfare and Sensitisation, Children Living with or Separated from Prisoners, Communication, Mulakat and Family Contact, Prison Administration, Legal Aid and Access to Justice, Gender-Responsive Facilities and Welfare Measures during Court Production of Women Inmates, Rehabilitation, Post-Release and Social Reintegration and Foreign National Inmates.

Important intervention

A separate Gender-Neutral Cell for persons with diverse gender identities and expressions at Hyderabad Central Prison

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India has been informed by the Hyderabad Central Prison authorities that they have established a separate Gender-Neutral Cell for persons with diverse gender identities and expressions to ensure their dignity and appropriate living arrangements.

The move followed a visit to the Prison on 8th October 2026 by the Commission's Special Monitor, entrusted with matters relating to Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC). During the visit, the need for implementation of the NHRC and MHA advisories was emphasised for ensuring the welfare of transgender persons.

In its compliance report, the Superintendent of Central Prison, Hyderabad informed the Commission that the recommendations to set up a Gender-Neutral Cell have been implemented. Besides this, the Prison authorities have also permitted affirmative clothing for persons accommodated in the facility.

The initiative reflects the Commission's efforts to promote the protection of the human rights and dignity of persons with diverse gender identities and expressions in correctional institutions.

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 October 2026, the Commission took *suo motu* cognizance of eight cases reported in the media and issued notices to the concerned authorities, seeking detailed action taken reports. Brief summaries of these cases are as follows:

Family kept as bonded labourers

(Case No. 942/36/2/2026-BL)

On 30th September 2026, the media reported about a 12-member family from Uttar Pradesh kept as bonded labourers for nearly a year at a construction facility in Bachupally, Medchal-Malkajgiri district, Hyderabad, Telangana. When rescued, they were reportedly found being paid meagre wages and made to work seven days a week, facing physical and verbal abuse while living in hazardous and unsanitary conditions.

According to the media report, the movement of the bonded labourers was restricted and their belongings were locked away by a supervisor. They were rescued by the Revenue and Labour officials following a complaint by social workers. The Commission has issued notices to the Telangana Chief Secretary, Director General of Police, Medchal-Malkajgiri District Magistrate and Cyberabad Commissioner of Police, calling for a detailed report on the matter.

The report is expected to include the status and whereabouts of all the 12 rescued victims and the steps taken for their immediate safety, shelter, food and medical care besides details of the FIR registered against the employer and any other responsible persons, along with the status of the investigation. It should also include the confirmation about the issuance of Bonded Labour Release Certificates to all the eligible victims and details of the immediate financial assistance of Rs. 30,000 paid to each of them under the Central Sector Scheme for the Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers, 2021.

A comprehensive plan has also been sought for their long-term rehabilitation, including their repatriation to their home district in Uttar Pradesh, if they so desire, in coordination with the State authorities. The Medchal-Malkajgiri District Magistrate has been directed to ensure that the entire process of release and rehabilitation of the rescued bonded labourers is conducted in a time-bound and victim-centric manner.

Chemical burn injuries to workers

(Case No. 1542/7/15/2026)

On 30th September 2026, the media reported that a large number of 'Bleaching Units' are operating in Panipat district of Haryana without a valid No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Pollution Control Board. Reportedly, the workers in these units are not being provided boots, gloves or any other safety equipment, due to which they are directly exposed to the hazardous chemicals, causing severe damage to their hands and feet apart from skin allergies.

At least 10-12 workers from these units approach the Civil Hospital daily for medical treatment with severely injured hands and feet. No arrangements are put in place to dispose the chemical-laden wastewater in these units, which is being directly discharged into pits. The Commission has issued a notice to the Panipat District Magistrate, calling for a detailed report on the matter.

Dilapidated Primary School building risking lives

(Case No. 2284/4/10/2026)

On 5th October 2026, the media reported that in Kiratpur of Darbhanga district in Bihar, a Government Primary School roof continues to be temporarily supported by wooden benches, desks and bricks underneath after the main pillar holding it had collapsed three to four months ago. It is a risk to the safety of about 191 students and school staff. Reportedly, the administration appears to be unaware of the situation. The Commission has issued a notice to the Darbhanga District Magistrate, calling for a detailed report on the matter.

Sexual harassment of journalists during a protest

(Case No. 3134/30/0/2026)

On 5th October 2026, the media reported that three women journalists were subjected to sexual harassment by Delhi Police personnel during a protest at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi on 3rd October 2026. Reportedly, the New Delhi District Police received complaints about the alleged incidents, which were transferred to the Crime Branch of Delhi Police for an enquiry. The Commission has issued a notice to the Delhi Police Commissioner, calling for a detailed report on the matter.

Borewell water contamination

(Case No. 2022/13/19/2026)

On 7th October 2026, the media reported that borewell water in the Dattanagar locality near Ambad Industrial Area in Nashik district, Maharashtra became contaminated due to seepage of chemical-laden effluents, allegedly discharged from factories in the adjoining industrial area. Reportedly, contaminated water was being supplied to the residents for the past two months. Children were advised not to attend school, while doctors advised women from the area to avoid pregnancy. The residents spent approximately Rs. 5,000 per month on purchasing clean drinking water, besides incurring a huge amount on medical treatment. The Commission has issued a notice to the Maharashtra Chief Secretary, calling for a detailed report on the matter. It has also sought comments from the Maharashtra State Pollution Control Board.

Injuries to students in classroom ceiling plaster collapse

(Case No. 2081/20/29/2026)

On 7th October 2026, the media reported that three students, aged 7 to 8 years, were injured when a portion of their classroom ceiling plaster collapsed on them in a dilapidated government primary school building in Udaipur district, Rajasthan. Reportedly, the victims sustained head injuries. Teachers were not present in the school when the incident occurred. The injured students walked back home on their own. Subsequently, their family members took them to the hospital for treatment.

Reportedly, the authorities have closed the school and ordered alternative arrangements to conduct classes. The Commission has issued a notice to the Udaipur District Magistrate, calling for a detailed report on the matter. It is expected to include the health status of the injured students.

Atrocity and violation of a woman's dignity

(Case No. 1018/6/24/2026-WC)

On 8th October 2026, the media reported that a married woman, who had been living with another man, was subjected to cruel and inhuman treatment by her husband and family in Surendranagar district, Gujarat. Reportedly, the woman and the man were tracked and brought back under the guise of conducting a 'purification ritual'. The woman was beaten with sticks, kicked and tied to a tree. The accused also allegedly forced the man accompanying her to rape her.

Reportedly, the incident came to light when the video of the incident was circulated on social media. The Commission has issued notices to the District Magis-

trate and the Superintendent of Police, Surendranagar, calling for a detailed report on the matter. It is expected to include the status of the victim's health and compensation, if any, paid to her.

Parading of three persons in semi-nude condition by police

(Case No. 2722/25/5/2026)

On 28th October 2026, the media reported that police paraded three persons in a semi-nude condition on the streets with ropes tied around their waists in Kolkata, West Bengal after they were arrested for beating, stripping and forced naked parading of three other persons, including two boys who were seen with a minor girl.

Reportedly, the father of one of the boys was also summoned by the girl's family and assaulted before being stripped and parading naked along with the two boys on the streets at gunpoint. The Commission has issued a notice to the Kolkata Police Commissioner, calling for a detailed report on the matter.

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 October 2026, an amount of Rs. 58 lakh was recommended for the victims or their next of kin (NoK) in 8 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 No.	Nature of complaint	Amount (Rs. in lakh)	Authority
1	395/4/26/2023-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Bihar
2	1412/7/10/2024-JCD	Death in judicial custody	7.50	Govt. of Haryana
3	1297/20/30/2024-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Rajasthan
4	3408/4/26/2025	Rape and murder of a 10-year-old girl	5.00	Govt. of Bihar
5	3084/30/6/2024	Assault by the police	0.5	Govt. of Delhi
6	1784/7/23/2024	Mob lynching	5.00	Govt. of Haryana
7	1133/12/33/2026	Failure of the electricity department to provide financial or medical assistance to their employee who sustained injuries due to electric shock	20.00	Govt. of Madhya Pradesh
8	1598/18/8/2025	Inaction by State administration to curb malaria causing death of two children	10.0	Govt. of Odisha

Payment of relief to the victims

During October 2026, the Commission closed 15 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. 63 lakh was paid to the victims or their next of kin (NoK) on the recommendations of the Commission in 15 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
1	1352/1/5/2023-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Andhra Pradesh
2	932/1/5/2023-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Andhra Pradesh
3	2443/4/26/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Bihar
4	4053/4/20/2023-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Bihar
5	4101/4/23/2023-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Bihar
6	4408/4/8/2023-JCD	Death in judicial custody	3.00	Govt. of Bihar
7	5884/24/69/2021-JCD	Death in judicial custody	5.00	Govt. of Uttar Pradesh
8	675/25/5/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	1.00	Govt. of West Bengal
9	2566/4/11/2023-DH	Death in observation home	5.00	Govt. of Bihar
10	141/4/26/2024-PCD	Death in police custody	7.50	Govt. of Bihar
11	2469/4/23/2020-AD	Death in police custody	10.00	Govt. of Bihar
12	1552/4/30/2022-WC	Police inaction in a case of assault	0.5	Govt. of Bihar
13	14751/24/75/2021	Police inaction on a complaint of suspected murder	5.00	Govt. of Uttar Pradesh
14	6330/4/29/2022	Police assault resulting in hearing impairment	0.5	Govt. of Bihar
15	973/18/1/2024	Newborn stolen from a Govt. Hospital	0.5	Govt. of Odisha

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:

Death due to electrocution

(Case No. 3038/30/7/2024)

The matter pertained to the death of a 12-year-old boy due to electrocution in South West Delhi in 2024. The boy was returning home from his tuition classes at around 7.00 pm when he came into contact with broken electric cables on the flooded street. Based on the material received in response to its notices, the Commission found that around 10 days before the incident, the residents of the colony had complained to the department about these loose cables, as some children and a dog had already experienced electric shocks. However, the authorities failed to address the issue, posing a grave threat to the lives of residents. Holding the Delhi government vicariously responsible for the negligence of its workers, the Commission recommended that it pay Rs. 10 lakh as relief to the next of kin (NoK) of the deceased, which was paid.

Death of an under trial prisoner

(Case No. 1548/18/17/2023-JCD)

The matter pertained to the death of an under trial prisoner while in the custody of the Bargarh Sub Jail, Odisha in 2023. He complained of abdominal pain and retention of stool and urine. He was subsequently referred to CHC, Bargarh and thereafter to DHH, Bargarh, where he died during the course of treatment. Based on the material received in

response to its notices, the Commission found that the prisoner died within 15 days of his admission to the jail. The victim was provided IHSR and treatment by the jail pharmacist. As his condition deteriorated, he was referred to the district hospital. The Magisterial Enquiry Report noted that the seized biological substances were not sent for chemical examination for the final opinion, raising concerns about the adequacy of medical care during custody. Therefore, holding the State vicariously responsible for the negligence of its employees, the Commission recommended that it pay Rs. 5 lakh as relief to NoK of the deceased, which was paid.

Suicide of an under trial prisoner

(Case No. 77/7/18/2022)

The matter pertained to the suicide of an under trial prisoner at District Jail, Sirsa, Haryana, where he was lodged for 11 days in 2022. He committed suicide by hanging in the jail bathroom. However, his father alleged that his son had been killed by the jail authorities. Based on the material received in response to its notices, the Commission found that despite the deceased's history of drug abuse and subsequent withdrawal symptoms, the jail authorities had failed to ensure his safety and security. 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 complied with.

Abuse of power

(Case No.1046/22/13/2022-AD)

The matter pertained to the detention of two men by police during routine vehicle checking in the intervening night of 18th - 19th April 2022 in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. They were taken to a PS-Secretariat Colony and were tortured. When their conditions deteriorated, they were taken to a hospital where one of them died during treatment. Based on the material received in response to its notices, the Commission found the allegations of death in custody due to torture to be true.

Therefore, holding the State vicariously responsible for the negligence of its employees, the Commission recommended that it pay Rs. 10 lakh as relief to the next of kin of the deceased as well as suitable compensation to the other victim who survived the police atrocity. Subsequently, the Government of Tamil Nadu paid the recommended amount to the NoK of the deceased and Rs. 2,62,500 to the other victim under the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. Criminal proceedings against the six accused personnel have been initiated in the court.

Spot enquiries

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

Case No. 2796/30/6/2021-ED

On 5th October 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation of a death in police encounter in Delhi.

Case No. 1463/12/35/2025

From 13th to 16th October 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation of police torture resulting in injuries and partial loss of hearing in Ratlam, Madhya Pradesh.

Case No. 7418/24/60/2025

From 5th to 9th October 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegation about a rape victim being pressurised by police to withdraw her complaint in lieu of monetary consideration in Pilibhit, Uttar Pradesh. When she refused, she was humiliated and offered poison.

Case No. 575/18/27/2026

From 5th to 8th October 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted into the allegations about false implication in a case of obstructing a public servant to carry out duties in Kendrapara district, Odisha.

Case No. 2213/12/8/2026

From 26th to 28th October 2026, a spot enquiry was conducted in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh where the complainant alleged that the Vidya Niketan Hostel Mess, RIE Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh has repeatedly served food containing foreign objects/ insect-like larvae in cooked rice, raising food-hygiene concerns.

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 14th October 2026, NHRC, India Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani visited the Day Care Centre at Sri Padmavati Mahila Visvavidyalayam, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh and found the facilities satisfactory. The same day, she also visited Gangotri and Gayatri hostels in Block B of Sri Padmavati Women's College in Tirupati and observed several shortcomings in infrastructure, food, security and health. She urged the concerned authorities to improve the condition.

On 15th October 2026, the Member visited DAV School, Gurugram, Haryana and interacted with the Principal, Head Teachers of various subjects and officials from the Education Department. Various perspectives on human rights were shared on how to educate and sensitise students on the importance of constitutional values, fundamental rights, human dignity, equality and justice. She urged them to integrate three important themes - the Constitution of India, human rights and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) into the teaching-learning process.



▶ NHRC, India Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani visiting Gangotri and Gayatri hostels in Block B of Sri Padmavati Women's College in Tirupati

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 Rapporteurs

From 4th to 6th October 2026, NHRC Special Rapporteur, Shri Praveen Sinha visited Patna and Bhojpur (Arrah), Bihar to assess human rights situation in the District Jail, orphanages, juvenile homes, institutions and NGOs. He also met the

State Chief Secretary, DGP, Secretary of the Social Welfare Department, IG (Prisons) and other concerned officials. He also met the officers of the State Human Rights Commission.

From 5th to 8th October 2026, NHRC Special Rapporteur, Shri K. Padmakumar visited Nilgiris district, Tamil Nadu to assess human rights situation and various facilities at tribal settlements, including Kurumba, Irula, Toda and Kattunayakan communities, as well as schools, educational and healthcare facilities. He interacted with tribal communities and held discussions with the concerned tribal authorities on the concerns relating to their community.

From 6th to 11th October 2026, NHRC Special Rapporteur, Shri Mohammad Jamshed visited South Goa district, Goa and assessed the facilities at a police station lock-up, an anganwadi centre, an old-age home, a children's shelter home and a worksite under Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar & Ajeevika Mission (Gramin), formerly MGNREGS. He also met the District Magistrate, Superintendent of Police and representatives of NGOs working for child rights and protection.

From 18th to 24th October 2026, NHRC Special Rapporteur, Shri Subhash Chandra visited several places in Indore and Dhar districts in Madhya Pradesh to assess human rights situation. These included Dr. Ambedkar Nagar (Mhow) industrial areas, municipal sanitation and waste-management facilities, police stations, child-care institutions, anganwadi centres, Sakhi One Stop Centre and women's shelters, old age homes, facilities for persons with disabilities and senior citizens as well as institutions and schools for tribal students, including Eklavya Model Residential Schools and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas. He interacted with children residing in child-care institutions, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, industrial and migrant workers and other stakeholders to examine issues concerning their welfare, safety, access to services and the protection of human rights. He also met District Administration, Police, Municipal Corporation and officers from Social Welfare, Women and Child Development, Tribal Affairs and other departments to discuss various human rights issues to improve the situation.

From 22nd to 31st October 2026, NHRC Special Rapporteur, Shri Upendra Singh Baghel visited several places in Lucknow, Agra and Etah districts of Uttar Pradesh to assess human rights situation. These included an old age home, government Scheduled Caste hostels, as well as Agra's Institute of Mental Health and Hospital. He also held working meetings with senior State officials to brief them on NHRC's mandate and sought their cooperation for similar visits to various other institutions.



▶ NHRC Special Rapporteur, Shri Sayeed Ahmed Baba visiting Dr Motsuo Memorial District Hospital Wokha, Nagaland

From 25th to 31st October 2026, NHRC Special Rapporteur, Shri Sayeed Ahmed Baba visited Kohima, Wokha and Mokokchung districts of Nagaland and assessed various facilities and human rights situations at district jail, hospital, orphanages, old age homes, mental health and halfway homes and NGOs. He also held meetings with district officials besides debriefing meetings with health, social welfare and prisons officials to assess progress.

From 25th to 31st October 2026, NHRC Special Rapporteur, Smt. Shomita Biswas visited Srinagar in Jammu & Kashmir and held meetings with senior officials of



▶ NHRC Special Rapporteur, Smt. Shomita Biswas visiting Central Jail, Srinagar

the Social Welfare, Women & Child Welfare, Home/ Prison and Health Departments. She also assessed various facilities at observation-cum-special homes, child-care institutions, shelter homes, old age homes, one stop centres, destitute homes/ Nari Niketan and anganwadi centres.



▶ NHRC Special Rapporteur, Shri S.K. Satapathy visiting Capital Hospital and PGIMER in Bhubaneswar, Odisha

From 26th to 31st October 2026, NHRC Special Rapporteur, Shri S.K. Satapathy visited Khordha and Cuttack districts in Odisha to assess human rights situation in the district jails, women's shelters, child-care homes and Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribe habitations, elderly-care and disability facilities, educational and research institutions and universities. He also visited hospitals to assess mental health wards for compliance with the Mental Healthcare Act 2017.

From 26th to 31st October 2026, NHRC Special Rapporteur, Smt. Suchitra Sinha, Special Rapporteur, NHRC visited Ranchi, Khunti, Hazaribagh and Lohardaga districts in Jharkhand and met jail superintendents and District Legal Services Authority representatives to discuss various human rights issues. She also visited Hotwar Jail and the Juvenile/ Observation Home in Ranchi, as well as district jails in Khunti, Hazaribagh and Lohardaga to assess human rights situation.

Special Monitors



▶ NHRC Special Monitor, Gopi Shankar Madurai discussing the need for strengthening legal architecture for an Intersex Birth Registry in India at the NALSAR University of Law in Hyderabad, Telangana

From 4th to 13th October 2026, NHRC Special Monitor, Gopi Shankar Madurai visited Hyderabad, Telangana. The visit focused on capacity-building, data collection, field visits, stakeholder consultations, analysis and advocacy on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) related issues, including the rights of persons with diverse sex characteristics, intersex infants and gender-non-conforming children. He also met with the concerned government officers besides visiting medical, academic, research, correctional and welfare institutions.

From 6th to 8th October 2026, NHRC Special Monitor, Dr. Poonam Malakondaiah visited Vadodara district, Gujarat and visited elementary schools and Anganwadi Centres to assess various facilities and human rights situation. She also interacted with students, parents and teachers besides holding meetings with the Collector and District Magistrate, Child Development Project Officer, Sub-Divisional Magistrate, District Education Officer and other concerned officers.

From 11th to 18th October 2026, NHRC Special Monitor, Shri Umakant visited Gram Sabhas, Village Panchayats, Block Panchayats and Zila Parishads in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh to assess human rights situation. He interacted with Panchayati Raj Institution functionaries and local residents as well as held meetings with senior State Government officials. He also interacted with officials of the State Human Rights Commission, State Election Commission and State Finance Commission.

From 14th to 16th October 2026, NHRC Special Monitor, Shri Devendra Singh Dhapola visited Imphal, Manipur to review the implementation of NHRC advisories on mechanisation of sewer and septic-tank cleaning, rehabilitation of persons engaged in beggary and issues relating to silicosis. He held

meetings with municipal, district and State- level government officials. He also assessed implementation of welfare schemes and rehabilitation measures.

From 20th to 27th October 2026, NHRC Special Monitor, Prof. Kanhaiya Tripathi visited several educational institutions in Itanagar, Papum Pare, East Siang, West Kameng, Anjaw and Namsai districts in Arunachal Pradesh. These included PM SHRI Kendriya Vidyalaya 1 and 2, Rajiv Gandhi University and its hostels, NIT and North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology at Nirjuli in Itanagar besides Arunachal Pradesh University at Pasighat in East Siang.

He also held meetings with the Director/ Principal, officials, faculty members, students and scholars of Binni Yanga Government Women's College in Papum Pare district and interacted with heads, officials, faculty members and committee members of Central Institute of Himalayan Culture Studies in West Kameng district, PM SHRI KendriyaVidyalaya, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya in Namsai district.

From 23rd to 28th October 2026, NHRC Special Monitor, Dr. Purva Mittal visited several places in Sonipat, Haryana to assess various facilities and human rights situation. She visited Tehsil Office in Rai, Commissionerate of Police in Rai, a government school, a rural anganwadi centre, residential facilities for girls at Motilal Nehru School of Sports and health and legal education institutions. She also interacted with authorities and stakeholders besides NGOs and civil society organisations.

From 25th to 31st October 2026, NHRC Special Monitor, Shri R. Hemanth Kumar visited Raipur, Uttar Bastar Kanker, Kondagaon, Narayanpur, Jagdalpur, Dantewada and Bijapur districts of Chhattisgarh to assess tribal rights, welfare and development initiatives, including the implementation of constitutional safeguards, statutory protections and development programmes for Scheduled Tribes and Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.



▶ NHRC Special Monitor, Shri R. Hemanth Kumar visiting a Naxal rehabilitation centre and a garment factory operating in Bijapur, Chhattisgarh

From 25th to 31st October 2026, NHRC Special Monitor, Shri Dhananjay Tingal visited Jaipur, Ajmer, Bundi, Chittorgarh, Sirohi and Udaipur districts of Rajasthan and held meetings with State and district officials, NGO representatives and survivors of bonded and child labour. He also visited child-care institutions and reviewed measures for the prevention of and response to bonded and child labour.

From 26th to 31st October 2026, NHRC Special Monitor, Dr. Pradeepta Kumar Nayak visited Ri-Bhoi, East Khasi Hills (Shillong) and Eastern West Khasi Hills (Mairang), Meghalaya and visited health centres, communities and leprosy colonies to assess health and welfare services and compliance with relevant NHRC advisories. He also met district and State authorities and visited hospitals.

From 27th to 29th October 2026 NHRC Special Monitor, Shri Devendra Singh Dhapola visited Chennai, Tamil Nadu to review the implementation of NHRC advisories and the NAMASTE Scheme, rehabilitation measures for persons affected by silicosis and welfare interventions for persons engaged in beggary, including the SMILE Project. He held meetings with municipal, State Government and other concerned authorities.

From 27th to 31st October 2026, NHRC Special Monitor, Shri Balkrishan Goel visited Jaipur and Beawar districts in Rajasthan and assessed various facilities at observation homes, places of safety, child-care institutions, anganwadi centres, one stop centres, jails, health facilities, old-age homes, schools and women's police stations. He also held meetings with District Magistrates and other concerned officials.

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.

Collaborative Awareness Initiatives

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

- On 27th October 2026, NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian addressed online as the Chief Guest of a training programme on "Surakshit Bachpan: From Awareness to Action. A practical Training on Child Rights and Protection Mechanisms." It was organised by the NHRC in collaboration with the Centre for Research on Human Rights, United World School of Law, Karnavati University, Gandhinagar, Gujarat.



- On 28th October 2026, Late Dr. Haribhau Admane Arts and Commerce College, Saoner, Nagpur, Maharashtra organised a training programme on "Know Your Rights, Empower Yourself."



- On 28th October 2026, Sree Chaitanya College of Engineering, Karimnagar, Telangana organised a training programme on "Human Rights with a special focus on Women, Children and Vulnerable Groups."



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 including SSP, Shri Yuvraj, DR (Law), Shri Sparsh

Aggarwal, SSA, Shri Sanjeev Sharma, ARs (Law), Ms. Anjani Lata and Ms. Sakshi Srivastava, DySP, Shri Kulbir Singh and SA, Shri Amit Sharma, respectively. The following institutions visited the NHRC in the month of October 2026.



- A group of 57 Students and 2 faculty members from Institute of Home Economics, University of Delhi



- A group of 57 Students with 2 faculty members from Durgapur Institute of Legal Studies, Durgapur, West Bengal.



- A group of 51 Students with 2 faculty members from Department of Educational Studies, Faculty of Education, Jamia Millia Islamia.



- A group of 25 Students and faculty from B. R. Ambedkar University, Delhi.



- A group of 35 Students and 3 faculty members from K.R. Mangalam University, Gurugram, Haryana.

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

- On 21st October 2026, Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary and Ms. Prerna Hasija, Research Consultant, NHRC attended the GANHRI Working Group on Business and Human Rights meeting.
- On 14th October 2026, Ms. Satovisha Samajdar, Director and Ms. Stuti Joshi, Research Consultant attended the stakeholders' consultation organised by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to discuss and formulate India's national position on the legally binding instrument on the human rights of older persons with the objective of promoting, protecting and ensuring the full enjoyment of their rights.

Awards

NHRC Online Human Rights Quiz-2026

As part of its 33rd Foundation Day celebrations, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India, in collaboration with MyGov, organised 'Human Rights Quiz-2026: Celebrating Life, Liberty, Equality and Dignity' from 1st September to 10th October 2026. The quiz sought to engage everyone in learning about human rights, the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993 and the functions, powers and duties of the NHRC in promoting and protecting human rights across the country.

The quiz saw participation from all States and Union Territories (UTs) of the country. It attracted 1,67,127 views with 26,459 submissions. Most submissions were in the age group of 18-24. Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu topped the state-wise participation.

Participants had the opportunity to assess their knowledge of human rights, explore significant milestones in the advancement of human rights at the national and global levels and reinforce their understanding of the principles of equality, dignity, justice and fundamental rights through the specially curated Human Rights quiz.

The 1st prize of Rs.15,000 has been won by Ms. Aarti Mahajan. The 2nd prize of Rs.10,000 has been won by Ms. Ritika and the 3rd prize of Rs.5,000 has gone to Ms. Tooba Benazeer. The seven consolation prizes of Rs.2,000 each have gone to Shri Aditya Gupta, Shri Tarun, Shri Rani Mandal, Shri Basant Kumar Mahato, Shri Likhith Kumar A, Ms. Deepika Madasu and Shri Gamit Rutvik Kumar Jitendrabhai.

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.

Tripura State Human Rights Commission

The Tripura State Human Rights Commission (TSHRC) has been taking several initiatives towards safeguarding human rights, protecting vulnerable sections of society and promoting human rights awareness and education.

In a significant case of custodial death of under trial prisoner at Kendriya Sansodhanagar, Bishalgarh, the TSHRC in October 2026 examined medical, forensic and magisterial inquiry reports. It raised serious concerns regarding custodial security after detection of organophosphorus compounds in the deceased's viscera.

Therefore, it recommended a high-level administrative enquiry, disciplinary action against negligent personnel and further investigation, besides Rs. 3 lakh monetary relief to the NoK of the victim. It also recommended that security measures need to be strengthened in correctional facilities.

In another case, the TSHRC found that the photograph of a person with 75% permanent disability was inadvertently published in newspapers alongside those detained for drug-related counselling at A.D. Nagar Police Station, wrongly suggesting his involvement in drug-related activities.

The Commission observed that this had violated his dignity and reputation due to serious police lapses. It recommended that the Government of Tripura provide him relief of Rs. 1 lakh, correct the official records and put in place safeguards in police detention and media-related procedures.

Madhya Pradesh State Human Rights Commission

In the month of October 2026, Madhya Pradesh Human Rights Commission (MPHRC) Chairperson, Dr. Awadhesh Pratap Singh chaired a review meeting with district officials in Tikamgarh, emphasising that protecting human rights forms the foundation of good governance and comprehensive development.

He urged the authorities to act promptly on public interest matters, expedite immediate financial relief to families of deceased victims, regularly monitor clean drinking water infrastructure and oversee healthcare and educational services. Additionally, he discussed the operational status of CCTV cameras in police stations to ensure transparency.

Through the Commission's intervention and continuous hearings during the month, monetary relief of Rs. 37 lakh was disbursed to the NoKs of three deceased victims. Proactive measures also resolved significant public and individual grievances.

In Betul district, hospital authorities repaired hazardous entrance potholes following the Commission's enquiries. Similarly, in Khandwa district, municipal officials restored the monthly government old-age pension of a man after the Commission processed his complaint and sought official reports.

Telangana State Human Rights Commission

In October 2026, the Telangana State Human Rights Commission (TGSHRC) took *suo motu* cognizance of three incidents of human rights violations. These included the surgery on the wrong eye of a woman in Rajanna Sircilla district, food poisoning affecting around 50 girl students at the Government Women's Polytechnic College hostel, Pebbair and death of two workers in a chloroform vapour leak at Saraca Laboratories Limited, Sangareddy district. Further, the TGSHRC directed the NIMS Director to release pending pensionary benefits of a man within three weeks.

Himachal Pradesh State Human Rights Commission

In October 2026, the Himachal Pradesh State Human Rights Commission registered 92 cases of human rights violation and disposed of 30 cases. It also recommended a relief of Rs. 24.75 lakh as relief to the victims or their next of kin.

News in brief

- On 1st October 2026, NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr). Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi addressed as Chief Guest the Human Rights Awareness Programme organised on the occasion of the International Day of Older Persons at Apsara Mandap, District Nayagarh, Odisha.

  He highlighted the importance of safeguarding the rights and well-being of older persons. He emphasised that the elderly deserve respect, care, security and compassionate treatment from their families, society and the State. He called upon all stakeholders to work collectively towards creating an inclusive and age-friendly society for them.





- On 23rd October 2026, NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian called on the Hon'ble Vice President of India, Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan and requested him to grace the Human Rights Day function as the Chief Guest on 10th December 2026, which the Hon'ble Vice President accepted.

- On 24th October 2026, NHRC, India Member, Justice (Dr). Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi attended a one-day Training Programme and Human Rights Awareness Programme at Bhagidari Bhawan, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh as the Chief Guest.

  He deliberated on the significance of human rights, constitutional values and the need to promote a culture of respect for human dignity, equality and justice.



He highlighted the importance of creating awareness about fundamental rights and the corresponding duties of public authorities in protecting and promoting human rights. He emphasised that effective implementation of human rights safeguards requires sensitivity, accountability and a commitment to ensuring justice for all, particularly vulnerable and marginalised sections of society. He also stressed the role of training and awareness programmes in strengthening institutional capacity, sensitising stakeholders and fostering a human rights-oriented approach in governance and public service delivery.

- On 25th October 2026, NHRC, India organised a painting competition for its employees' children at Manav Adhikar Bhawan. The competition was conducted in three categories: children up to Standard III, IV to VII and VIII to XII. A total of 82 entries were received, of which 78 children participated. The paintings were evaluated by a two-member jury comprising Shri Mukesh, Deputy Registrar and Ms. Vineetha Ottapurakkal Kallada, Deputy Secretary, NHRC.



Forthcoming events

On 10th December 2026	NHRC, India will organise a function to commemorate Human Rights Day in New Delhi. Vice President of India, Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan will grace the occasion as the Chief Guest.
From 14th December 2026	NHRC, India will begin its month-long in-person internship for post graduate level students at its premises in New Delhi.

Complaints in October 2026

Number of fresh complaints received	6,582
Number of cases disposed of including old cases	4,425
Number of cases under consideration of the Commission	42,531

Human rights and NHRC in news



सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः

National Human Rights Commission

Important telephone numbers of the NHRC for filing complaints

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

For Filing online complaints: www.nhrc.nic.in, 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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