

MESSAGE

In the year 1998, on this day of 9th December, General Assembly, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted the 'Declaration on the Right and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Organs of society to promote and protect Universally recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms', which is popularly known as 'The Declaration on human rights defenders'.

Over the last two decades, individual or group of individuals tirelessly and selflessly strive to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedom for all to realise and recognize the universality of human rights without distinction of any kind by defending human rights by peaceful means. National Human Rights Commission, over the years, unequivocally propounds and propagates that effective protection of the dignity, equality, liberty, physical and psychological integrity and security of human rights defenders is *sine qua non*, for the realisation of the right to defend human rights. Moreover, NHRC firmly believes that a safe and enabling environment is absolutely essential for the realization of different fundamental human rights that are necessary to carry out human rights work.

The Commission, in its long 25 years' journey, to avoid marginalisation of human rights defenders, actively and constructively has been engaging with them to empower their participation by various means including in public debates. NHRC also recognizes the relevance and importance of the contributions of human rights defenders, albeit, these are critical of the state authorities or even challenge them. Keeping in mind the Paris Principles, the Commission facilitates regular exchange of views between human rights defenders and State Institutions by applying appropriate consultative mechanisms.

NHRC constantly encourages and facilitates human rights activities through and by the human rights defenders by putting

in place practical measures aimed at creating safe and conducive environments that enable and empower human rights defenders to pursue their activities freely and without undue limitations, including work conducted individually and collectively.

The Commission for last few years consistently persuaded the state authorities not to impose undue limitations on the dissemination of information that in practice prevent human rights defenders from carrying out their work or providing services to their beneficiaries.

While celebrating Silver Jubilee year of its foundation, the Commission organized various events in past few months, including silver jubilee memorial lecture, addressed by leading Human Rights defender, in the field of child rights, Nobel Laureate Shri Kailash Satyarathi. The Commission also organized a national seminar on Media's role in protection and promotion of Human Rights.

The Commission once again upholds and preserves the rights of human rights defenders by promoting and striving for the realisation of human rights regardless of profession, age or other status or whether they are carrying out their human rights activities individually or jointly with others as part of an informal groups or non-government organisation, or whether they act voluntarily or professionally.

—H. L. D. 1,
CHAIRPERSON