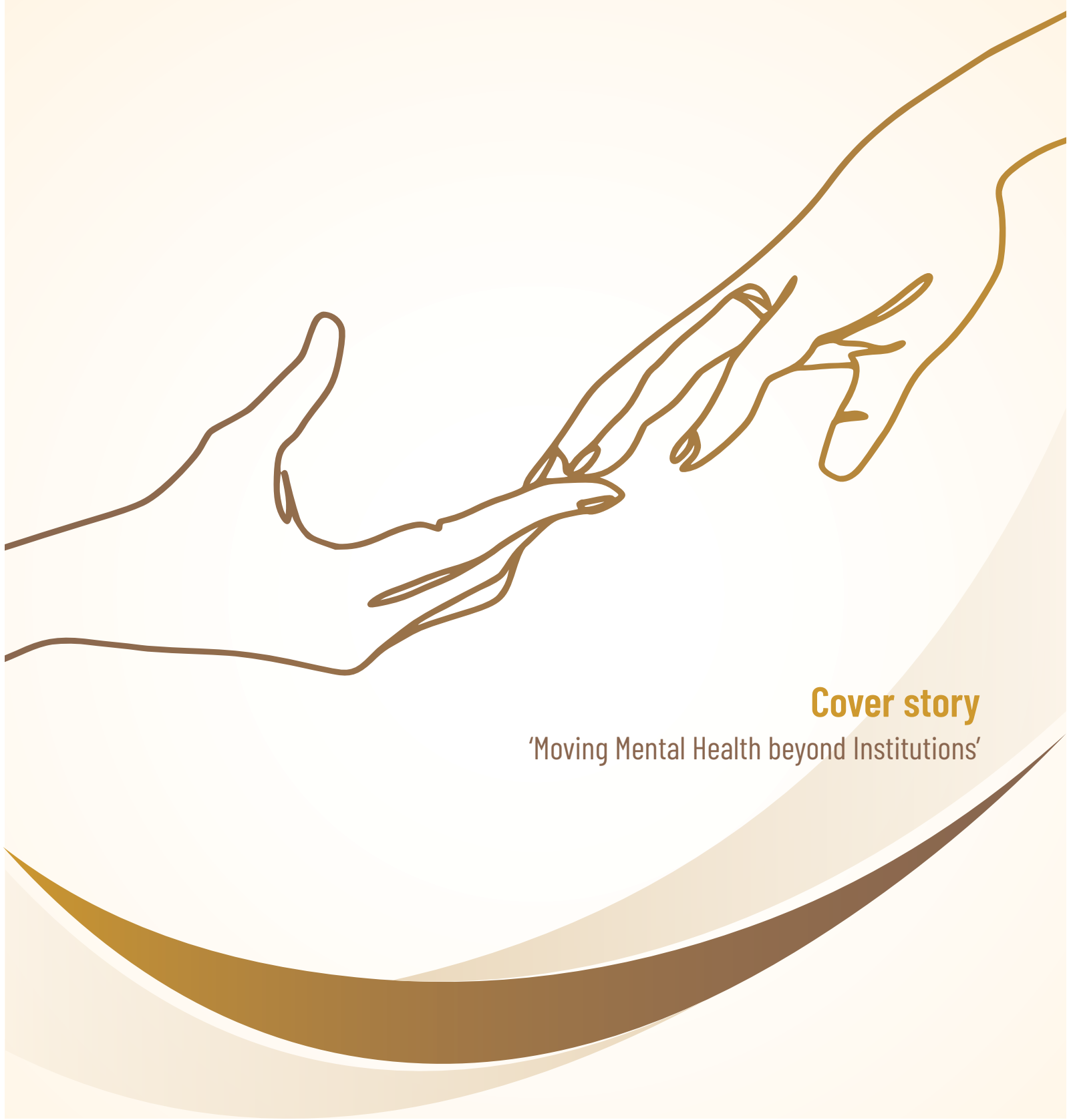


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HUMAN RIGHTS Newsletter



A Monthly publication of the National Human Rights Commission, India



Cover story

'Moving Mental Health beyond Institutions'



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National Human Rights Commission, India

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Members: **Dr Dnyaneshwar M Mulay,
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“If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change.”

— Mahatma Gandhi

Monthly overview

July, 2023

The month of July 2023 holds significance for mental health. The National Human Rights Commission, NHRC, India, organized a National Conference on 'Moving Mental Health beyond Institutions.' The idea was to initiate a discourse in society on mental health so that it is not left within the confines of mere healthcare institutions. Mental health is as much a health issue as it is a social problem. Therefore, all the stakeholders need to help in creating an atmosphere in society so that people impacted by mental health problems are not stigmatized. Once cured, there should be no problem with their rehabilitation. Another critical issue requiring heightened awareness is the equitable treatment of persons with disabilities as fellow human beings. They should have access to facilities ensuring comfortable movement in public places and common areas, along with educational and employment opportunities for self-reliance. Our cover story on this issue will give deeper insights.

The Commission has been making concerted efforts to engage in dialogue with various stakeholders to review the policies, programmes, and legal framework, ensure the welfare of persons with disabilities and make suggestions to the government for improvement

wherever necessary. The consultation held in July by the Commission on 'Policy dialogue on disability inclusion for CIVIL-20 (C20) in collaboration with the 'Disability, Equity, Justice' (DEJ) Working Group' was a significant development in this direction.

Besides this, there are a number of other activities which the Commission carried out during July with a holistic approach towards promoting and protecting human rights including its regular *suo motu* interventions, regular hearing and disposal of cases recommending relief, field visits to old age homes, shelter homes, prisons, observation homes by its Members, Special Rapporteurs and Monitors, human rights awareness training programmes. A noteworthy full Commission hearing focused on air pollution in Delhi-NCR and the hazardous cleaning of septic tanks and sewer lines, with the scope expanded to cover all states and Union Territories. Collective and constructive efforts are anticipated to improve the environment and protect human rights.

The short film awards form part of the flagship programme of the Commission in promoting human rights. It aims to involve and motivate people, particularly the young generation, to ponder various

aspects of human rights and express themselves visually. This issue also features a story on the six films awarded in 2022.

The Commission has always kept itself abreast with the international discourse on human rights. In this context, there was an opportunity to lead a discourse on 'Good Governance & Human Rights' organized by the Permanent Mission of India (PMI), Geneva during the 53rd session of the Human Rights Council. It provided a platform to highlight India's ongoing work in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and good governance to improve the lives of people and ensure human rights besides key meetings with important stakeholders on various aspects of human rights and the work being done in India.

The Commission is actively preparing to host the meetings of the National Human Rights Institutions of the Asia Pacific region next month. This will be another important international engagement to collectively work on joint strategies, particularly tackling the impacts of climate change and ameliorating the cause of human rights regionally, nationally, and globally.

- Bharat Lal

Secretary General & CEO, NHRC



Service is the true essence of life

- Justice Shri Arun Mishra
Chairperson, NHRC

On 2nd July, 2023, NHRC Chairperson Justice Shri Arun Mishra visited Bhopal to attend the C20 SEWA Summit. During a session, 'SEWA' (service) should be the key to developmental practice,' he emphasized that service is the true essence of life. He said that service is deeply rooted in the social and cultural fabric and the teachings of Indian philosophy, and is considered a moral and ethical duty. The concept of globalization, encapsulated in '*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*' (the entire world is one family), has been a part of our cultural fabric for thousands of years. Compassion is integral to our culture, and a separate charter of rights was not deemed necessary. Referring to

the Tattariya Upanishad, Justice Mishra highlighted its focus on collective good and universal human well-being. The Upanishad's proclamation "ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः", is a part of NHRC's logo, symbolizing the idea that service is the sole means to achieve this collective well-being.

The NHRC Chairperson expressed the belief held by our ancestors that 'the earth is my mother; I am her son' and '*Yatodharmastato Jaya*,' where victory lies in Dharma. He stressed that service is an integral part of Dharma and repaying the debt to the Motherland involves serving the entire world. Indian culture and philosophy are based upon the perfor-

mance of duties, which is the sine qua non for the enjoyment of rights.

He further quoted Gandhiji when he wrote to the committee during the Universal Declaration of Human Rights formation that 'all rights to be deserved and preserved come from duty well done. Thus, the very right to live accrues to us only when we do the duty of citizenship of the world.' Gandhiji also suggested to the Committee preparing our Constitution that "Rights cannot be divorced from duties. "Justice Mishra also quoted Gita and said, कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचना मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि॥ (*You have the right to work only but never to its fruits. Let not the fruits of action be your motive, nor let your attachment be to inaction.*)

Article 51A of the Indian Constitution includes fundamental duties, and there is a requirement to render these duties justifiable. The fundamental duties of every citizen are to protect the sovereignty and integrity of the country, maintain communal harmony, the dignity of women, and cultural heritage, improve the environment, have compassion for all living creatures, and strive for excellence in all spheres of individual activity necessary for the development of the nation. These duties aim to establish an egalitarian social order as envisioned by the Constitution of India.



NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra



Justice Mishra underscored the traditional connection between *Raj Dharm* (duty) and *Sewa Dharm* (service). He cited the example of Ahilyabai Holkar, the Queen of Indore, who ruled in the name of Almighty God and dedicated herself to public service, constructing lakes, ghats, wells, guest houses, and temples.

He said that the Constitution of India aims to fulfill the socio-economic aspirations of the common man and ensures the betterment of individuals as an integral part of society. Spirit of *Sewa* is based on need-based distributive justice, distinct from equality in the distribution of benefits. He highlighted the need for the State to provide compensatory distributive justice, as a corrective measure, particularly for those who have suffered injustice over generations.

Turning to the NHRC's role, he said that the Commission also addresses environmental issues, extending benefits of social welfare schemes inter alia PMAY and food distribution. Several directions are issued for providing civic amenities to the masses following the decision in the Ratlam municipality case, including road construction in remote areas, removal of encroachment from footpaths, and covering potholes.

Justice Mishra said that the Commission has recently recommended a hybrid form of education due to a lack of good teachers to ensure equal and standard education in rural areas. Advisories have been issued to establish rehabilitation centres for people with poor

vision, for mechanical cleaning of septic tanks, and sewer lines, and provide safety equipment to the workers, food security to migrant workers, bonded labour, and welfare of truck drivers. Human trafficking, abuse of cyberspace for Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) and other crimes, deaths by electrocution, and silicosis are other issues dealt with by the Commission.

Justice Mishra said that in our culture, the banyan, peepal, tulsi, and other trees providing oxygen in abundance are considered sacred. In addressing global challenges, he said that the time has come to perform the duty to protect the forests, rivers, and water bodies to prevent global warming and protect the environment.

In India, social impact assessment of big projects and land acquisition is being done. He mentioned that in the Narmada Dam Case, the rehabilitation of displaced people was secured. When humans co-exist with nature, cosmic balance is maintained. He exhorted everyone to promote circular economy, recycle vehicle parts, use renewable energy, and minimize waste.

He said that to give protection to the one who has come into our shelter is deeply embedded in our culture. We are catering to a large number of refugees. Quoting from Atharva Veda, he said that all have equal rights to food, water and live and work harmoniously like a chariot.

Remembering Guru Govind Singh, Justice Mishra said that he started a system of community langar (food), which reflects the basic

principle of the right to food as an essential tenet of social life. Gurudwaras have *Kar Sewa*, which includes cleaning floors, utensils, and shoes. During the Covid-19 pandemic, service by civil society was at its best. The government distributed free food grains to 80 crore people in April, 2020. These issues evinced that no single country can deal with them alone, and solidarity will always remain the law of nature. He asserted that we shall remain indebted to frontline workers for their exemplary contribution during the pandemic. They saved the lives of others at the cost of their own.

He said today is the day for reiterating the message of constructive evolution. He emphasized that the task is to prevent violence, combat terrorism and crime, drug menace, and cyber crimes. The best service would be eliminating discrimination based on gender, disability, and aging. Service with empathy, i.e., done with compassion and understanding the feelings of others, is superior to one done with sympathy, i.e., pity to another.

He acknowledged the role of civil society in protecting, promoting, and preserving human rights with NHRC serving as the bridge between government bodies and civil society organizations.

Justice Mishra said that to ensure a life of meaning and dignity for everyone, we must rededicate ourselves to serve relentlessly. He states that the C-20 provides a unique opportunity for diverse perspectives to converge, share ideas, and for collaborative solutions to emerge. ■

Cover story

National Conference on 'Moving Mental Health beyond Institutions'

The National Human Rights Commission, NHRC, India, under a remit from the Supreme Court of India, has been monitoring the functioning of mental health care institutions in the country since 1997. It expanded the scope of its supervision beyond three mental hospitals in Ranchi, Agra, and Gwalior, in the beginning, to cover the others in various parts of the country and decided to look into the challenges of mental health care in a holistic manner by engaging in sustained dialogues with various stakeholders including the doctors, civil society organizations, NGO's working in the field and government representatives to bring about a change in the perceptions about the mental health and augment mental health care facilities backed by a strong legal framework.

Over a period of time, the subject is gradually gaining mainstream in societal discourse. The Mental Health Care Act, 2017, has also been implemented. However, there is a long way to see the consistency in



MoS Health & Family Welfare, Dr Bharati Pravin Pawar addressing the National Conference on Moving Mental Health beyond Institutions

the improvements for which the Commission has been striving for sustained efforts amidst new challenges.

In this context, the Commission made yet another effort by organizing a National Conference on 'Moving Mental Health Beyond Institutions' at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, on 26th July, 2023. The objective of the conference was to discuss the challenges in the implementation of the Mental Healthcare Act,

2017, and deliberate on the way forward to address mental health issues.

The Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Bharati Pravin Pawar inaugurated the conference as the Chief Guest in the presence of the NHRC Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra, Members, Dr D. M. Mulay and Shri Rajiv Jain, former Member, Justice Shri M. M. Kumar, SG, Shri Bharat Lal, Shri Bharat Lal, mental health experts, senior officials from Government of India and States, representatives of SHRCs, Special Rapporteurs, Special Monitors, NGOs and other dignitaries.

Sharing the government's perspective, as well as that of a health professional being a qualified doctor herself, Dr. Bharati said that mental health care is an integral part of health care. She said that it is important to remove the stigma attached with mental illness that prevents individuals from seeking



A section of participants in the Conference

the help that they need. Highlighting the importance of addressing the challenges of mental health issues and the Mental Healthcare Act 2017, she stated that the Union Government is promoting the availability and access to cost-effective treatment of common mental health issues.

Dr Pawar shared that mental health has been included in the flagship Ayushman Bharat scheme. She also stated that since the launch of the National Tele-Mental Health service, 42 Tele-Manas cells have been established that have already recorded over 2 lakh calls.

The Union Minister underlined the need for a new mental healthcare paradigm that transcends the limitations of institutions and focuses on community-based support. She suggested yoga practices, which are deeply rooted in the Indian culture and globally acknowledged, in schools to enhance the mental well-being of students. She further emphasized that it is the right time for India to lead the way in mental healthcare through its ancient practices of yoga and meditation.

She urged the experts to deliberate on the pressing issues of mental health challenges in India and work towards a future where mental



NHRC, India Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra addressing the National Conference on Moving Mental Health beyond Institutions

healthcare is accessible, affordable, inclusive, and compassionate.

NHRC Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra, in his keynote address, said that in a welfare state, it is the state's obligation to provide health care facilities to every human, which is imperative under Article 147 of the Constitution of India. Hospitals should run to perfect standards promoting quality care and protecting the rights of the patients by providing psychological support and interventions, including digital for suicide prevention. He said that depression is the leading cause of disability, and the abuse of elders and workplace stress is to be cared for.

He appreciated the initiatives and the policies of the governments and described the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 as an unparalleled legal

provision. He also said that a lot needs to be done in the country to cover the ground, ensuring proper implementation of the legal framework, facilities, and welfare policies for persons with mental health issues. He questioned why funds being provided by the Centre are not fully utilized for improving the mental healthcare system.

The NHRC Chairperson said that a hospital is not a place where cured patients should be allowed to stay even for a single extra day. There are about 2,000 cured patients languishing in mental healthcare institutions, which amount to a violation of their rights. The problem also restricts the hospital's ability to cater to the needs of new patients who need urgent intervention. Referring to the visits of the Commission and its Special Rapporteur to



NHRC India, Member, Dr. D.M. Mulay chairing a session



NHRC India, Member, Shri Rajiv Jain chairing a session



NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal addressing the National Conference on Moving Mental Health beyond Institutions

the 47 Mental Healthcare Hospitals and Institutions from July, 2022 to January, 2023, he said that the lack of serious coordination was visible among various agencies such as district administration, the police, and the mental health centre officials to facilitate halfway homes or return of cured patients to their families. He expressed the hope that there would be better coordination among authorities to streamline procedures and improve this situation. He said that the lack of proper infrastructure in some of the Mental Health Institutions resembles a lockup situation. Patients and recovered persons should also be taken out for relaxation.

Justice Mishra said mental health education must be integrated into our schools, colleges, and workspaces. Setting up healthy boundaries with social media is also necessitated.

Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General, NHRC in his opening address gave an overview of the conference and said that mental health is an integral part of healthcare. Moving beyond institutions encourages early intervention and prevention strategies. By providing accessible and proactive community-based care, mental health concerns can be

identified early, and interventions made before they escalate. He said that the Commission is committed to carry forward the cause of mental healthcare in consultation with experts and various stakeholders to further improve the mental healthcare system in the country.

On the occasion, two NHRC publications, 'Mental Health: Concern for All – In Context of the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017' and a report on 'Status of Implementation of the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017' were also released.

Later, during the discussions in various thematic sessions, Dr. V. K. Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog, while chairing the session on the way forward, said that infrastructure and human resources of mental health institutions comprise an important aspect related to ensuring optimum high-quality care of individuals with mental health issues and problems. He gave some very thoughtful suggestions to overcome the shortage of psychiatrists, beds, and trained human resources to deal with mental health issues. Smt. Priti Sudan, Member, the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and former Union Health Secretary highlighted the need to strengthen the primary health care facilities and focused on the importance of

infrastructural aspects, human resources, participation in district mental health programmes and sensitizations for better mental healthcare in the country.

Dr R. K. Dhamija, Director, Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences, IHBAS, said that innovative forms of mental health care such as Mobile Mental Health Units and School Mental Health Initiative should be encouraged for mental well-being, especially for children.

Dr Pratima Murthy, Director, National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, NIMHANS, appreciating the efforts by NHRC in promoting and protecting the human rights of persons with mental health issues, said that the continuous inspections and monitoring by the Commission has led to an increase in budgetary allocations and financial resources for mental health institutions, improved food quality, reduced overcrowding and better rehabilitation facilities.

The Conference was divided into four thematic sessions in addition to the inaugural and valedictory sessions. These included 'Challenges in implementation of the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017'; 'Infrastructure & human resource of mental health establishments – Way Forward', 'Rights of persons with mental illness, including reintegration, rehabilitation and empowerment'; and 'Latest trends in critical care of mental health, international perspective & Way Forward'. The panelists included Chairpersons and Members of State Human Rights Commissions, NHRC Special Rapporteurs, senior officers, subject matter experts, members of civil society, mental healthcare professionals, and representatives from various State Mental Healthcare Institutions and officials from the Centre and State governments. ■

Consultations

Policy dialogue on disability inclusion for CIVIL-20 (C20)

The Rights of Persons with Disability is another key area of concern for the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India, since its inception. Pushing for improvements to help persons with disabilities realize their rights like any other citizen to have a strong legal and institutional framework through sustained dialogues with multi-stakeholders has been the motto of the Commission. In this context, on 27th July, 2023, the Commission organized a significant consultation on "Policy dialogue on disability inclusion for CIVIL-20 (C20) in collaboration with the 'Disability, Equity, Justice' (DEJ) Working Group". The discussions were focused on the 'Agenda for Financial Inclusion and Social Security for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)'.

C20 is an official engagement group of the G20, representing the civil society organizations of the G20 member countries. The group was

established in 2013 to provide a platform for civil society organizations to engage with G20 leaders on issues of global importance.

The NHRC Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra inaugurated the consultation in the presence of the Members, Dr Dnyaneshwar M. Mulay, Shri Rajiv Jain, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal, and senior officers. He said that district rehabilitation centres should be set up for persons with disabilities to assist them in enjoying their human rights like any other citizen. The reasonable opportunity should not turn into a proportional opportunity for persons with disabilities.

Referring to the NHRC Advisory to prevent and minimize the impact of ocular trauma, Justice Mishra said that the stakeholders should work towards setting up rehabilitation facilities, especially for persons with visual impairment. He urged the Civil Society Organizations and

the NGOs to join hands towards achieving them. He also expressed concerns on the issue of non-informed consent in case of severe disability during the surgery as severe disability has not been defined in the Act. Throwing light on the NHRC ensuring pluralism, he appreciated the participation of persons with disabilities in the dialogue. He urged for fruitful deliberation and collaborative efforts by all so that the strategies are developed and the recommendations trickle down, benefiting all.

NHRC Member, Dr. Dnyaneshwar M. Mulay expressed the hope that the 'Disability, Equity, Justice Working Group' will advance the voices of disability. Summarizing the proceedings of the policy dialogue, he said that the discussion was relevant, as it identified the gaps, and will help move towards better policy discussions. He also urged NGOs and Civil Society representatives to take



NHRC Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra inaugurating the consultation on 'Policy dialogue on disability inclusion for CIVIL- 20 in the presence of Members, Dr D. M. Mulay and Shri Rajiv Jain, SG, Shri Bharat Lal and DG (I) Shri Manoj Yadava



A section of participants in the consultation

advantage of the HRC net portal to send complaints to the NHRC online. He also said that Civil Society representatives and NGOs can augment better community awareness and sensitization efforts for the rights of persons with disabilities.

NHRC Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal, in his opening remarks,

acknowledged the concerted and collective efforts towards the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities. He said that such collaborative efforts and discussions help in improving the system to meet the requirements of persons with disabilities ensuring the protection of their rights.

Smt Nidhi Goyal, Coordinator, DEJ Working Group, chairing a session in the discussions on 'Ensuring Financial Inclusion and Social Protection', presented the main findings of 'Disability, Equity, Justice Working Group'. NHRC Joint Secretary, Shri D. K. Nim said that uniform access to banking solutions, access to insurance, and friendly technology needs to be further improved for the protection of the rights of the disabled.

NHRC Director General (Investigation), Shri Manoj Yadava, senior officers of the Commission, members from NHRC Core Group on Disabilities, civil society organizations, and NGOs participated in the discussions. ■

NHRC Interventions

Violence in Manipur

(Case No.39/14/16/2023)

In April 2023, violence erupted in some parts of India's north-eastern state of Manipur, which, reportedly, acquired the form of ethnic violence in the Imphal valley and the surrounding hills, known for rich diverse tribal culture, traditions, and internationally acclaimed sporting talent.

There were reports of the State government and the Centre making efforts to bring peace through dialogue and by strengthening the security apparatus. However, the incidents of violence continued to be reported, resulting in human rights violations, and loss of life and

property. The Commission received complaints about them, and it promptly issued notices calling for reports from the State government. These included the complaints seeking its urgent intervention into the incident of a mob taking away five members of a tribal family from police custody in B Phainom village of Kangpokpi district on 4th May 2023; parading the women naked and brutally gang-raping one of them, and murdering two male members of their family, who tried to protect them. The Commission sought action taken report on the incident against the culprits and relief to the victims and asked the

State government to inform about the steps taken/ proposed to be taken to safeguard the human rights of the citizens, especially women and vulnerable sections of the society from such barbaric incidents.

On 25th July, 2023, the Commission issued yet another notice to the Government of Manipur observing that in most of the matters relating to violation of human rights due to continued violence in the State of Manipur, the action taken reports sought by it from the State government are awaited. Therefore, it became imperative to know what actions have been taken by the



concerned authority in the series of incidents that kept on happening for a considerable period and the disturbances that continued for a long time. The authorities were directed to ensure that no further violence happened resulting in a violation of human rights.

The Commission stated in the notice that without arriving at any final decision at this stage in all the complaints registered by it in the series of incidents in Manipur, it would like to know the efforts by the concerned authorities such as,

- i.) What is the quantum of compensation awarded as of now to the victims of violence?
- ii.) How many persons and family members have been covered under the compensation scheme?
- iii.) What are the steps taken for the rehabilitation of the

victims and the Next of Kin (NoK) of the deceased?

- iv.) How many persons or families of the victims have been rehabilitated as of date?
- v.) Whether the process of compassionate employment to the NoK of the deceased, who died due to unfortunate violence, has been initiated or not, and what is the stage of such process?
- vi.) How many persons, as of now, have been appointed on the ground of compassionate employment?
- vii.) What steps have been taken by the concerned authorities to promote harmony and restore common brotherhood to save human lives and to protect the properties, both private and public, abjure violence, particularly against women, and to promote fraternity and

the spirit of brotherliness amongst the community?

The Commission also expects that enough measures should be taken to prevent the communities from resorting to violence and to maintain peace, harmony, and togetherness to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood, one of the important Fundamental Duties, so enshrined in Article 51-A of the Constitution of India.

Without making any observation about the steps taken by the concerned authorities, the Commission directed that rehabilitative measures initiated to offer compensation to the victims or their families should be continued uninterruptedly and without any discrimination or arbitrariness. The process be expedited and a comprehensive action taken report. ■

Full Commission hearing on checking air pollution in hazardous cleaning of septic tanks and sewer lines

(Case No. 2886/90/0/2022)

The National Human Rights Commission, India had taken *suo motu* cognizance of the media reports of the unabated air pollution in Delhi-NCR, due to the alleged continued burning of stubble in the nearby States of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Punjab. It started the hearing of the Chief Secretaries of the four States on the measures taken to stop this menace. Subsequently, the Commission expanded the scope of

queries including various other factors affecting the environment in the region other than the stubble burning. These included controlling water pollution, dust, and vehicular pollution with massive plantation mechanized water sprinkling, road repairs, vehicular pollution, sewage and garbage dump disposal using mechanized devices for hazardous cleaning, and in this regard the status of the implementation of its Advisory.

In its efforts to find lasting solutions to check air and water pollution to protect a clean environment, the Commission further decided that in addition to Delhi, UP, Haryana, and Punjab, it should also seek reports from all the States and Union Territories on all these aspects which may contribute to ensuring clean environment protecting the right to health and life of the people. Thus, in the hearing on 4th July, 2023, the Chief Secretaries of Chhattisgarh,



Telangana, Goa, Lakshadweep, Odisha, and Meghalaya, were also asked to present their report in hybrid mode before the full Commission apart from Delhi, UP, Haryana, and Punjab.

All these states, as indicated in their reports during the hearing, asserted that manual cleaning has been replaced by mechanical cleaning. Additionally, workers engaged in hazardous cleaning

have been provided with safety equipment and health insurance coverage. The measures in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, and Uttar Pradesh have shown a considerable decline in stubble burning. Delhi Government said that more mechanized devices are being procured and that it doesn't have any landfill sites for garbage disposal. It also said that it is working on cleaning of River Yamuna.

The Commission has sought a more specific count of machines; safety equipments procured and proposed to be procured to stop manual cleaning of hazardous substances. This is in addition to seeking information about the measures taken and planned to check air and water pollution, with a sustained system in place in all states and union territories. ■

Suo motu cognizance

Media reports have been a very useful instrument for the National Human Rights Commission to know about the incidents of human rights violations. Over the years, it has taken *suo motu* cognizance of many such issues and has brought succor to the victims of human rights violations. During July 2023, the Commission took *suo motu* cognizance in five cases of alleged human rights violations reported by the media and issued notices to the concerned authorities for reports. Summaries of some cases are as follows:

Dilapidated state of blind school building in Panchkuyian area

(Case No. 2745/30/1/2023)

The media reported on 26th June, 2023 that about 35 students of one of the country's oldest schools for the visually impaired are forced to study at the risk of their lives in a dilapidated building with literally no requisite educational as well as residential

facilities. Reportedly, this unrecognized school is being run by an NGO in the Panchkuyian area of Delhi, which was set up in Lahore in 1939 and was migrated to its present location in central Delhi in 1947. Reportedly, there are 8 teaching and 15 non-teaching staff in the school in addition to the 35 children. The Commission has issued a notice to the Chief Secretary, Government of NCT of Delhi calling for a detailed report.

Death of a construction worker due to electrocution

(Case No. 2852/30/1/2023)

On 3rd July, 2023, the media reported that an 18-year-old boy died due to electrocution while working in the basement of the Delhi government-run Lok Nayak Jai Prakash (LNJP) Hospital. Reportedly, a new hospital building was being constructed at the site where the incident happened and there were some open wires in the basement that was waterlogged. Considering this as a serious issue violating the human rights of the victim, the Commission

has issued a notice to the Chief Secretary, Government of NCT of Delhi calling for a detailed report on the matter and asked whether safety equipment was provided to the workers at the construction site.

Increasing incidents of rats gnawing on the feet of patients

(Case No. 1517/20/19/2023)

On 3rd July, 2023, the media reported that the rats were gnawing on the feet of patients in government-run Mathura Das Mathur Hospital, MDMH in Jodhpur. Reportedly, in Ward-C of the Psychiatry Department, four patients' feet were bitten by rats.

The Commission, observing the apparent negligence of the authorities, has issued a notice to the Chief Secretary, Government of Rajasthan calling for a detailed report on the matter including the steps being taken/ proposed to be taken to address the grievance of the patients at the MDMH, Jodhpur. ■



Recommendations for relief

Hearing the cases of human rights violations and recommending relief to the victims in such matters, is one of the major functions of the National Human Rights Commission. It regularly takes up such cases and gives directions and recommendations to the concerned authorities

for relief to the victims. In July 2023, besides the number of cases taken up daily by the Single Member Benches, 53 cases were heard by the Full Commission, 61 cases were heard by the Double Member Bench-I, and 50 cases by the Double Member Bench-II. Monetary relief of ₹ 1.43 crore was recommended

for the victims or their Next of Kin (NoK) in the 30 cases, wherein it was found that public servants had either violated human rights or been negligent in protecting them. The specific details of these cases can be downloaded from the NHRC website by logging the case number given in the table below:

S. No.	Case No.	Nature of Complaint	Amount (in ₹ lakh)	State/ UT
1.	914/1/5/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Andhra Pradesh
2.	3535/4/25/2021-JCD	Death in judicial custody	10.00	Bihar
3.	166/33/14/2019-PF	Death in firing	05.00	Chhattisgarh
4.	2127/30/9/2020-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Delhi
5.	2313/30/9/2021-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Delhi
6.	5524/30/5/2020-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Delhi
7.	1902/34/16/2021-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Jharkhand
8.	1135/13/20/2020-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Maharashtra
9.	3112/18/12/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Odisha
10.	2863/20/19/2021-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Rajasthan
10.	12/23/8/2020-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Tripura
11.	10294/24/56/2021-JCD	Death in judicial custody	07.50	Uttar Pradesh
12.	21722/24/44/2019-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Uttar Pradesh
13.	35143/24/30/2016-JCD	Death in judicial custody	04.00	Uttar Pradesh
14.	7396/24/54/2021-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Uttar Pradesh
15.	7857/24/30/2021-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Uttar Pradesh
16.	8650/24/30/2020-JCD	Death in judicial custody	10.00	Uttar Pradesh
17.	8954/24/15/2021-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Uttar Pradesh
18.	9795/24/3/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Uttar Pradesh
19.	7396/24/54/2021-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	Uttar Pradesh



S. No.	Case No.	Nature of Complaint	Amount (in ₹ lakh)	State/ UT
19.	2028/25/5/2018-JCD	Death in judicial custody	01.00	West Bengal
20.	239/25/13/2022-JCD	Death in judicial custody	05.00	West Bengal
22.	343/6/21/2020-AD	Alleged custodial deaths in police custody	05.00	Gujarat
23.	1865/20/8/2020-AD	Alleged custodial deaths in police custody	07.50	Rajasthan
24.	3109/18/5/2022	Death due to electrocution	05.00	Odisha
25.	23076/24/44/2021	Death due to electrocution	01.00	Uttar Pradesh
26.	3793/24/19/2022	Death due to electrocution	05.00	Uttar Pradesh
27.	746/34/12/2021	Abuse of power	03.00	Jharkhand
28.	26100/24/10/2022	Murder by anti -social elements	01.00	Uttar Pradesh
29.	1692/34/6/2022	Children	01.00	Jharkhand
30.	39547/24/31/2022-WC	Indignity of women	02.00	Uttar Pradesh

Payment of relief to the victims

The Commission closed 22 cases, either on receipt of the compliance reports and proof of payment from the public authorities or by giving other

observations/directions. An amount of ₹ 69.75 lakh was paid to the victims or their Next of Kin (NoK) on the recommendations of the Commission. The specific

details of these cases can be downloaded from the NHRC website by logging the case number given in the table below:

S. No.	Case No.	Nature of Complaint	Amount (in ₹ lakh)	State/ UT
1.	1902/34/16/2021-JCD	Death in judicial death	05.00	Jharkhand
2.	16938/24/78/2020-JCD	Death in judicial death	05.00	Uttar Pradesh
3.	24772/24/34/2020-JCD	Death in judicial death	05.00	Uttar Pradesh
4.	26627/24/23/2018-JCD	Death in judicial death	03.00	Uttar Pradesh
5.	26850/24/4/2019-JCD	Death in judicial death	03.00	Uttar Pradesh
6.	9803/24/20/2021-JCD	Death in judicial death	05.00	Uttar Pradesh
7.	802/4/39/2021-AD	Alleged custodial deaths in police custody	05.00	Bihar
8.	1079/18/5/2021-AD	Alleged custodial deaths in police custody	04.50	Odisha
9.	16976/24/28/2020-AD	Alleged custodial deaths in judicial custody	03.00	Uttar Pradesh



S. No.	Case No.	Nature of Complaint	Amount (in ₹ lakh)	State/ UT
10.	2521/30/0/2020-PCR	Custodial rape (police)	05.00	Delhi
11.	248/20/29/2022-WC	Attempt to rape	03.00	Rajasthan
12.	505/4/24/2022	Medical negligence	03.00	Bihar
13.	1612/18/18/2022	Medical negligence	05.00	Odisha
14.	412/18/7/2020	Medical negligence	03.00	Odisha
15.	28832/24/57/2019	Medical negligence	01.00	Uttar Pradesh
16.	16187/24/3/2021	Malfunctioning of medical professionals	05.00	Uttar Pradesh
17.	4435/30/5/2019	Child rape	02.00	Delhi
18.	19/17/8/2017	Atrocities on sc	01.00	Nagaland
19.	341/18/10/2021	Deaths/ injury in unorganized sector	05.00	Odisha
20.	24392/24/31/2018	Inaction by the state government/ central Govt. officials	01.00	Uttar Pradesh
21.	27372/24/55/2021	Death due to electrocution	01.50	Uttar Pradesh
22.	396/3/2/2022	Miscellaneous	00.25	Assam

Case studies

In many cases, the Commission received compliance reports from the respective state authorities. Summaries of such cases are as under:

Relief to a rape victim

(Case No.2521/30/0/2020-PCR)

The matter pertained to an alleged gang-rape of a 16-year-old domestic helper at New Delhi Railway Station on 17th June, 2020, by the two Government Railway Police (GRP) Constables. Allegedly, the victim went to the station to go back to her home in Ranchi when she was approached by the constables on the pretext of helping her board

a train. The constables, however, took her to a secluded place and gang-raped her. On the basis of the material on record received in response to its notices to the concerned authorities, the Commission found the allegations true and that criminal proceedings were initiated against the accused. It directed that the Railways pay Rs. 5 lakh to the victim of human rights violations by public servants. The recommendations of the Commission were complied with.

A suicide in police station

(Case No.1079/18/5/2021-AD)

The matter pertained to the suicide

of a 35-year-old man while he was in illegal custody of Police Station Golanthara, District – Ganjam Odisha on 3rd May, 2021. Allegedly, the police tortured the victim when he refused to pay a bribe to them. Based on the material on record received in response to its notices, the Commission found that the Diary Charge Officer and Sentry were suspended and the then IIC PS Mr. Golanthara was removed from the post and attached to the District Police Office, Berhampur. Criminal proceedings were also initiated in the matter. The Commission directed that the Government of Odisha pay Rs. 4.50 lakh as mone-

tary relief to the NoK of the deceased, which was paid.

Death of a student due to the negligence of school authorities

(Case No.412/18/7/2020)

The case pertained to the death of a 5-year-old tribal girl who succumbed to her illness due to the negligence of Ramchandrapur Ashram School authorities in Keonjar district. Allegedly, the victim was suffering from diarrhea and was not provided with adequate medical treatment by the school authorities. Instead, her parents were asked to take her home. However, when her condition deteriorated, she was taken to the District Hospital but she could

not survive. Based on the material on record received in response to its notices to the concerned authorities, the Commission found that the school management failed to maintain the protocol, and disciplinary proceedings were initiated against the errant officials of the School for their negligence. The Commission recommended that the Government of Odisha pay Rs. 3 lakh to the NoK of the deceased, which was paid.

Medical negligence

(Case No.16187/24/3/2021)

The case pertained to the death of a woman due to medical negligence by doctors and nursing staff of a community health centre in Aligarh district, Uttar Pradesh. Based on the

material on record received from the concerned authorities in response to its notices, the Commission found that the victim died due to negligence by the staff nurses of Health Centre, Atrauli. Their services were terminated and a charge sheet was filed against them. The Commission issued a notice to the Government of Uttar Pradesh to show cause why the NoK of the deceased should not be recommended to be paid Rs. 5 lakh as relief. In response, the State government said that there was no lapse on the part of the medical team and claimed that the victim died due to malnutrition and improper care by the family. However, when the Commission reiterated its recommendation, the State government paid the relief. ■

Spot enquiries

The following spot enquiries were conducted by the Commission’s officers in its Investigation Division:

S. No.	Case Number	Complaint	Date of visit
1.	9162/24/22/2021	Unlawful arrest and false implication by Madhya Pradesh Police from District Etah, Uttar Pradesh.	3 rd -7 th July, 2023
2.	6298/30/9/2022	First refusal and then fabrication of facts by police in the FIR in a matter of theft in Mayapuri, Delhi.	11 th -13 th July, 2023



NHRC, India Investigation team conducting spot enquiries

S. No.	Case Number	Complaint	Date of visit
3.	4642/30/6/2022	Brutality, torture and illegal detention by named policemen of PS Narela Industrial Area, Delhi for filing a complaint against police in connection with extorting money on a monthly basis.	12 th -14 th July, 2023
4.	6559/24/1/2022	Death of a man due to severe beating by police in Agra, Uttar Pradesh followed by the false implication of his wife's relatives.	17 th -20 th July, 2023
5.	4461/25/17/2021	To see the steps taken by the State Government to resolve the issue of social boycott of villagers at Morjunglepur by a tribal organization of districts of Puralia & Birbhum, West Bengal.	17 th - 21 st July, 2023
6.	1313/1/5/2019	Despite directions of the Commission, the continued misuse of power violating human rights of the complainant by police in East Godavari, Kakinada Districts and Secundrabad City of Andhra Pradesh.	31 st July, 2023
7.	709/20/22/2022	Death of a youth due to torture by police personnel of PS Surpaliya, District Nagaur, Rajasthan.	31 st July, 2023

Field visits

Bindapur Old Age Home in New Delhi

The rights of older persons have been an area of concern for the National Human Rights Commission, India. It has set up a Core Group on Older Persons

to advise on the issues of their rights and to make recommendations ameliorating the cause of their human rights from time to time. An advisory on the rights of

elderly persons in the context of Covid-19 was one such affirmative action, among others. The team also visits old age homes in different parts of the country to have a firsthand account of the conditions of the facilities there and make recommendations for required improvements.



NHRC, India Member, Dr D.M. Mulay visiting a home for aged and infirmed persons in Bindapur, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi

On 20th July 2023, a team of the Commission led by the Member, Dr. Dnyaneshwar M. Mulay visited a home for aged and infirmed persons in Bindapur Uttam Nagar, New Delhi. It was established in Narela in 1971, which later shifted to Bindapur in 2011, and was constituted/ restructured in pursuance of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007. It has a capacity

of 50 residents and is operating at its full strength. Out of the total 50 residents, there are 11 males and 39 females. The age range of male and female residents was 60- 80 years. Most of them were abandoned. In the absence of phone connectivity or a website of the old age home, any persons who need to make enquiries about the facilities and process for admission would have to be present physically, which the team found unusual in an era marked by technology.

Nevertheless, it was satisfying to see a well-ventilated and spacious old age home with an adequate level of cleanliness maintained by the staff. There are 2 separate blocks for male and female residents. The kitchen is common for both blocks. There are a total of 25 well-ventilated rooms wherein, some rooms are available to the residents on a sharing basis with 3 to 5 residents placed together. Washrooms are attached to the rooms and are mostly maintained and clean.

The building has a gym, prayer hall, multipurpose hall, and a space for yoga. A ramp for persons with disabilities was available at the entrance. Additionally, one wheelchair was also available. One lift out of the two was not functioning and CCTV cameras for security purposes were also not functional. The team suggested relocating from the fifth to the ground floor for those who were suffering from chronic illness and obesity.

There is a first-aid clinic inside the building, which has all the generic medicines and the hospital is within 5 km radius. An ambulance is available on the premises for any



NHRC India Member, Dr D.M. Muly interacting with the inmates of the Bindapur Uttam Nagar old age home

emergency condition. Laundry services along with assistance in washing utensils are provided to the residents who aren't capable of self-care. There are 25 staff members, 9 security guards, and 7 sanitation workers as opposed to the 11 sanctioned posts, out of which 14 are caregivers. However, they haven't received any professional training for the same.

There are 2 health professionals (Doctors), each appointed to provide medical care thrice a week. There is 1 psychiatrist and 1 clinical psychologist who visit the OAH once a week, and 1 physiotherapist who visit thrice a week. Separate physiotherapy sessions are provided by professionals engaged by Helpage India. However, other than regular checkups, no assistance for getting dentures is provided to older residents.

A list of diet charts was displayed at the old age home and shared with the NHRC team by the administrative staff of the old age home. However, during inspection, it was found that fruits and vegetables

were not there indicating that the nutritional value of the food being served wasn't found to be satisfactory. The old-age home has allocated a total annual budget of 1,37,20,000 /- including salary, wages, rewards, allowance, travel, etc.

No lawyer is associated with the home and the Superintendent and District Welfare Officers were not trained or aware of the Maintenance and Welfare of the Parent and Senior Citizens Act 2007. However, they said that in case of any legal issue, they will approach the DLSA. Out of 50 residents, only 1 male inmate is receiving a monthly pension of Rs. 2,500/- and there is no provision and designated officer in the old age home to assist the older persons in applying for and receiving the pension. Further, the administrative staff also informed that as most of the older persons are abandoned, they do not have any identity proof due to which it is not possible to provide them these services, which the team found a matter of concern. ■

Visits of NHRC Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors

The Commission has appointed 15 Special Rapporteurs to keep watch on the human rights situations in different geographical zones in the country. In this connection, they visit shelter homes, prisons,

observation homes, etc., and submit reports to the Commission on their observations and suggestions for further course of action. Besides this, the Commission has also appointed 12 Special Monitors who have been assigned thematic

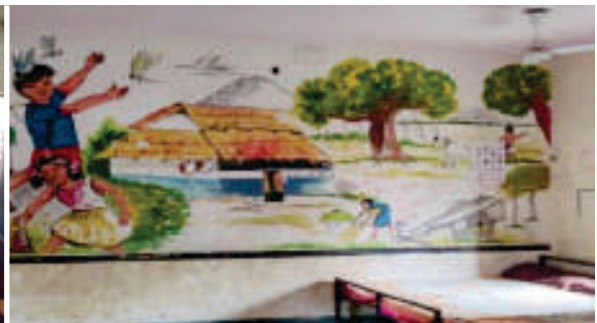
issues of human rights to keep a watch on the related development in the country and report to the Commission accordingly. During June 2023, several places were visited by the Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors.

Special Rapporteurs

From 19th-24th July, 2023, Umesh Kumar (Retd. IPS) visited and inspected Child Care Institutions at Bilasipara and the Anganwadi centre at Rupashi in Dhubri district to assess the working conditions of children living there. He observed that the children's home, established in 2018 by an NGO, has a total of 20 students against a total strength of 25. He observed that there is a requirement for a female doctor and psychiatrist, space for recreational activities, vocal training for children, and strengthening rehabilitation services.

From 20th-22nd July, 2023, and 28th-31st July, 2023, Shri Mahesh Kumar Singla (Retd. IPS) visited Observation Homes in Punjab, Haryana, and Special Home for girls in Chandigarh. Following his visit, he highlighted shortcomings and recommended strengthening counseling and rehabilitation services. Assisting children in attending regular classes at schools, follow up action after release of children, and Polytechnic Colleges for providing vocational training to the inmates, regular monitoring of mental health, etc were some of the recommendations.

From 22nd-24th July, 2023, Smt Suchitra Sinha (Retd. IAS), visited various institutions to assess the human rights situation in Jamshedpur, Ranchi, Gumla, and Chaibasa in Jharkhand. Following her visit to the Children's Home Jamshedpur on 21st July, 2023, she observed that the children's home had strength of 28 children, whereas the sanctioned capacity was 50. She also observed that the education imparted to the children was not up to the mark, no vehicle was available for transportation during an emergency, and the living conditions were unsatisfactory. She observed that the children needed to be engaged in extra-curricular activities and regular classes for their mental well-being.



NHRC Special Rapporteur, Smt Suchitra Sinha (Retd. IAS) inspecting various institutions in Jamshedpur

Special Monitors

1. From 12th-14th and 17th-18th July, 2023, Shri Jayanto Narayan Choudhury (Retd. IPS) visited various institutions in West Bengal in connection with the issues related to the Criminal Justice System. He visited Presidency Correctional Home (PCH) and Alipore's Women Correctional Home (AWCH) on the issues of overcrowding, medical care, rehabilitation programmes, basic needs, etc. After visiting the Dhrubashram Observation and Special Home, he also interacted with the Commissioner of Kolkatta and visited SV State Police Academy, Barrackpore.

2. From 23rd- 28th July, 2023, Shri Sudhir Choudhary (Retd. IPS) visited Juvenile Homes and anti-human trafficking units in Chandigarh and Panchkula in Haryana. The inspections covered Observation Homes, Open Shelter Homes, Child Care Institutes, and Places of Safety, revealing issues like overcrowding and communication challenges. He also assessed the counseling and safety measures ensuring the well-being of children in care, with a focus on their reintegration with families and communities.

3. From 25th- 27th July, 2023, Prem Singh Bisht (Retd. IPS) visited Public Sector Units prone to human rights violations in Panipat and Shahabad (Kurukshetra) in Haryana. He assessed the facilities and systems in place to ensure the protection of human rights in these units.

4. From 28th-31st July, 2023, Shri Balkrishan Goel visited Observation Homes, Child Care Institutions, Aanganwadi Centres, Government Schools, Old Age Homes located at Raipur, Mahasamund, Durg, Rajnandgaon in Chhattisgarh. These visits highlighted various shortcomings in the facilities and services, emphasizing the need for significant improvements in infrastructure, staff conduct, and specialized services to serve the communities and individuals involved better.

Awards

Six short films on Human Rights awarded by the NHRC

On 31st July, 2023, the National Human Rights Commission, India, organized a function at its premises in New Delhi to present awards to the winners of its short film competition-2022. The NHRC Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra, Members, Dr. Dnyaneshwar M. Mulay, Shri Rajiv Jain presented the awards in the presence of Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal and Director General (Investigation), Shri Manoj Yadava.



NHRC Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra addressing the short film awards function

Shri Nilesh Ambedkar's film – **Chirbhog**, in the Marathi language, was awarded the 1st prize. The film highlights the caste and vocation-based discrimination in society through the story of a boy and his humiliating struggles until he decides to stand up and expose the contradictions in theory and practice to ensure the rights of liberty, equality, dignity, and education. The 2nd prize was given to Shri Bhawani Doley Tahu for her film – **Enabled** in Assamese language. Through the story of a differently abled child, the film emphasizes the need to change mindsets about Divyngs and discrimination in their upbringing by parents, undermining their rights to life, liberty, equality, and dignity.

The 3rd prize was given to Shri T. Kumar for his film – **Atcham Thavir** in Tamil language. Through the story of a girl, the film pitches in to build awareness among students about inappropriate touch and sexual harassment in school and the need for the teachers and school administration to be vigilant about it to ensure their right to dignity and education are not violated.

Three other films were awarded the certificate of special mention. These included Rajdutt Revankar's **Lost in Progress**, Abdul Rashid Bhat's **Don't Burn Leaves**, and Haril Shukla's **U-Turn**. Lost in Progress depicts how the overarching expectations of parents from their children to make them all-rounder create unwarranted pressure and rob them of natural growth. 'Don't Burn Leaves' is a documentary highlighting the problem of air pollution due to the burning of dry leaves and the scientific method to dispose of these without affecting



The first prize winner Shri Nilesh Ambedkar receiving the award

the environment, and U-Turn depicts society's double standards in dealing with the problems of domestic violence against women.

Apart from a trophy and a certificate, the first three award-winning films were given cash awards of Rs. 2 lakh, 1.5 lakh and 1 lakh, respectively. The certificate of special mention films got a cash prize of Rs. 50,000 each.

Congratulating the winners, Justice Shri Arun Mishra said that the films have evolved as a very effective medium of expression on human life and sentiments, crossing the geographical boundaries of nations. These can be very useful instruments for impacting minds and creating positivity. He appreciated all the winners and said that their films had raised various vital issues concerning inequality, child education, and the environment.

NHRC Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal, giving an overview of the Commission's short film competi-

tion, said it was instituted in 2015. Over the years, the competition has generated much interest, reflecting the significant number of entries from various parts of the country in different Indian languages. The Commission has about 50 award-winning films and has been referring them to different government departments in the Centre and States to utilize them for human rights awareness.

Shri Bharat Lal said that in 2022, the Commission received 137 films, of which 123 met the criteria. These were put through the process of selection for the awards. He said the Commission is committed to ensuring how best to utilize these films to create awareness about various human rights aspects. Besides the teams of award-winning films, senior officers of the Commission, including the Registrar (Law), Shri Surajit Dey, Joint Secretaries, Smt. Anita Sinha & Shri Devendra Kumar Nim and DIG, Shri Sunil Kumar Meena, and senior officers and staff were present. ■

NHRC in international arena

Discourse on 'Good Governance & Human Rights' in Geneva

On 11th July 2023, Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General, NHRC, India led the Discourse on 'Good Governance & Human Rights' organized by the Permanent Mission of India (PMI), Geneva during the 53rd session of the Human Rights Council. He highlighted India's ongoing work in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and good governance to improve the lives of people and ensure human rights.

Shri Bharat Lal also had an insightful discussion with Ms. Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary General, UNCTAD, on the role of S&T in good governance and development in facilitating people to enjoy human rights. In this context, India is a shining example as it has enabled tech-led development. He also met Amb'r Vaclav Balek, President of the UN Human Rights Council, and discussed NHRC's work as well as active collaboration with the

Council. They discussed wide-ranging issues of mutual interest.

Besides this, he also had a wide-ranging discussion with Ms. Nada Al-Nashif, Dy High Commissioner for Human Rights at the UN Human Rights Council, Geneva on the protection & promotion of human rights. Ms. Priyanka Chauhan, DPR to the UN and Shri Pawan Badhe, Counsellor also attended the meet. ■



NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal addressing the discourse on 'Good Governance & Human Rights'



NHRC, India Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal with Permanent representative of India to UN in Geneva, Shri I.M. Pandey and other dignitaries

G20 Conference on Crime and Security

On 14th July, 2023, NHRC, India Member, Shri Rajiv Jain delivered a talk on 'Criminal Use of ICT: Evolving a Framework for International Cooperation' in G20 Conference on Crime and Security in the age of Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs), Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Metaverse in Gurugram. He opined

that the magnitude of the problem was immense, given the complexity of ICT (Information & Communication Technology) and significant digitization of banking and other public services. Citing examples, he averred that international cooperation on ICT issues in the existing regional and sectoral mechanisms had limitations.

He stressed the need for consensual and wholehearted international cooperation on serious issues like CSAM, terrorism (as it impacts right to life and dignity), critical information infrastructure, right to livelihood, civic facilities, etc. For handling ICT-based crime, he said, international cooperation would be required for homogeneity of laws



for quick and substantive sharing of information related to security and crime, metadata and content, data being extension of person, joint investigation, etc.

Most important, he underscored that victim perspective and human rights perspective should be there in the proposed UN Convention on ICT and crime. It should ensure a safe and enabling environment for enjoyment of Human Rights by all. He exhorted the big technology companies to focus on right to life also, besides espousing only the rights to privacy and freedom of expression.



NHRC, India Member, Shri Rajiv Jain (in the middle) with the other dignitaries at G20 Conference

NHRC training programmes

The National Human Rights Commission, India, has approved six collaborative training programmes of six different institutions for the first batch of 2023-24. The training programmes

will be organized in collaboration with the U. P. Academy of Administration & Management, Lucknow, Central University of Rajasthan, Ajmer, Rajasthan, Mahatma Gandhi State Institute of Public Administra-

tion, Chandigarh, Punjab, Indian Institute of Technology, Jodhpur, Department of Law, Tezpur, Assam, and Yashwant Institute of Technical Education (NGO). ■

News in brief

On 1st July, 2023, Shri Bharat Lal assumed the charge of the Secretary General of the National Human Rights Commission, India and met Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra. The outgoing SG, Shri D. K. Singh, Joint Secretaries, Smt. Anita Sinha and Shri D. K. Nim were present. Shri Lal joined civil service in July, 1988. Before joining the NHRC, he served as the Director General, National Centre of Good Governance (NCGG), an autonomous institution of the Government of India.

Prior to joining NCGG, he served as Secretary to the Lokpal of India, the anti-corruption body of the country. He has also served as the Founder Mission Director, National Jal Jeevan Mission – a flagship programme started in August, 2019 to ensure clean tap water to every household in the country by 2024. He has also served as Additional Secretary to the then President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind.

During his tenure as the Resident Commissioner of Gujarat, he was responsible for investment promotion in Gujarat and its diplomatic outreach. He has a vast experience of policy making at the highest level, both in the state as well as at the Centre. He believes in 'out of box' thinking and finding solutions to solve complex problems.



On 3rd July, 2023, NHRC, India DG (I), Shri Manoj Yadava met with Shri Shantanu Bharali, Acting Chairperson, the Assam State Human Rights Commission and discussed human rights issues. He also explained the utility of HRC Net Portal to avoid duplication of complaints and ensure expeditious disposal of cases. Shri Yadava also visited the Assam Police Headquarters and held discussions with Shri GP Singh, DGP, and Shri Harmeet Singh, Spl. DGP (L&O).

On 5th July, 2023, a five-member delegation from the Embassies of Nordic countries in India visited the NHRC, India. They were given an insight into the functioning of the Commission and had an insightful discussion.



On 6th July, 2023, NHRC, India had a screening of a film on Child Sexual Abuse: 'Yes Papa' in Hindi, directed by Shri Saif Hyder Hasan, in the presence of Members, Dr. D M Mulay, Shri Rajiv Jain and senior officers & staff. It was followed by a Q&A session with the filmmakers & team.



Ms. Thuy Doan-Smith, Development Manager visited NHRC, India in connection with the preparations for the 28th Asia Pacific Forum Annual General Meeting and Biennial Conference to be hosted by the NHRC, India in Delhi in September, 2023.

On 6th & 7th July, 2023, NHRC Director General (Investigation), Shri Manoj Kumar Yadava delivered a lecture on Islamic Theology at IB Central Training School (IBCTS), New Delhi to the direct recruited officers, ACIOs Gr.II and other executives and at NIA Centre-Dwarka, New Delhi to the direct recruited officers and other executives.

On 10th July, 2023, the Chief of Mission for UNHCR India and Maldives, Mr. Oscar Mundia Githaiga visited NHRC, India. He met the Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra, Members, Dr. D. M. Mulay & Shri Rajiv Jain and senior officers.



On 12th July, 2023, Shri Kulbir Singh, Dy. Supt. of Police, Investigation Division, NHRC delivered a lecture during the one day course on Human Rights for Constable(s) to Asst. Sub-Inspector(s) at STC/ Delhi Police Academy, Rajinder Nagar, New Delhi.

On 13th July, 2023, Vaidya Shri Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Union Ministry of Ayush met Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General, NHRC, and had a very meaningful discussion on Yoga, Ayurveda and the role of wellness centres in people's lives. They discussed how preventive healthcare through AYUSH practices is changing people's fitness level and enhancing their productivity.



On 14th July, 2023, the NHRC Director General (Investigation), Shri Manoj Kumar Yadava inaugurated a training session by Prof. Dr. Adarsh Kumar, Dept. of Forensic Sciences, AIIMS, New Delhi on Suicide and Post Mortem Report - injury related issues. More than 45 senior officers/officials of the Investigation Division and Law Division of the Commission attended.

On 27th July, 2023, a delegation of 18 senior Iraqi officers visited the NHRC, India as a part of the ITEC training programme. They had an interaction with the Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra, Member, Shri Rajiv Jain, SG, Shri Bharat Lal, and senior officers about the functioning of the Commission.



On 28th July, 2023, a group of students and faculty members from the Society for Community Organization (SOCO) Trust visited the National Human Rights Commission, India. They were given a briefing by DySP, Shri Dushyant Singh about human rights and the functioning of the Commission.

On 31st July, 2023, the National Human Rights Commission, India, bid farewell to Director General (Investigation), Shri Manoj Yadava. He took over as the Director General, Railway Protection Force. His contribution to the process of investigating human rights violations were lauded by the NHRC Chairperson, Justice Shri Arun Mishra, Members, Dr. D.M. Mulay, Shri Rajiv Jain, and Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal.





Forthcoming events

28th Annual General Meeting and Biennial Conference of the APF

The National Human Rights Commission, India, in collaboration with the Asia Pacific Forum (APF) will host the 28th Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Biennial conference of the National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, on 20th – 21st September, 2023.

Besides the representatives of NHRIs of 25 countries from the Asia Pacific region, the conferences will also be attended by five observer member NHRIs, Secretary of Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GAHNRI), its Geneva representative, National Institutions and Regional Mechanisms Section (NIRMS) Chief, APF Secretariat, LLBW & Partners-Auditor, Pacific Community, representatives from governments, civil society, academics and UN agencies. The Asia Pacific Forum was established in 1996 with the collaboration of five NHRIs, among them the NHRC,

India, to encourage the formation of independent NHRIs in the Asia Pacific region and to help them in their work to promote and protect human rights as effectively as possible.

Gender sensitization programme

On 17th August, 2023, the National Human Rights Commission, India will organize a gender sensitization programme for its officers and staff. Prof. (Smt) Ritu Gupta, Director, CBFL, NLU, Delhi will be the guest speaker for the programme.

HRD and NGO core group meeting

On 22nd August, 2023, the NHRC, India, will organize a meeting of its Core Group on Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and NGOs. This will be the second meeting this year. The group was constituted to advise the Commission on the issues of human rights.

15-day Online Short Term Internship

On 21st August, 2023, the National Human Rights Commission, NHRC,

India will begin its 15-day Online Short Term Internship- 2023. This flagship internship programme is organized once in two months to give an orientation about the importance of the promotion and protection of human rights and related aspects to under graduate and post graduate level students from different parts of the country.

'Training of Trainers' with senior police officers

On 21st August, 2023, the National Human Rights Commission, NHRC, India, will organize its first five-day residential 'Training of Trainers' programme on Human Rights for the officers of the different State/ UT police organizations. The training module has been developed by the Commission's officers in its Investigation Division after wide-ranging discussions with various stakeholders, including the Bureau of Police Research & Development (BPR&D). ■

Human Rights and NHRC in News

During July, 2023, the Media & Communication Wing of the Commission prepared and issued 9 press releases. 2,851 news clippings on various human rights issues were culled out from different/ select editions of major English and Hindi newspapers and

some news websites out of which in 582 news clippings a reference was made to the NHRC. News clippings related to the incidents of alleged human rights violations were brought to the notice of the Commission. News stories having specific reference to the interven-

tions by the NHRC can be seen at 'NHRC-in-News' on the website of the Commission. The 'NHRC X handle' was abuzz with **112 posts including threads & re-posts** on the Commission's interventions & activities. ■



Complaint management in July, 2023

Complaints received	7,930
Disposed off	9,713
Under consideration of the Commission	8,718

Important telephone numbers of the NHRC for filing complaints

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

For Filing online complaints: www.nhrc.nic.in, hrcnet.nic.in, Common Service Centres
Email: jrlawnhrc@nic.in (For complaints), cr.nhrc@nic.in (For general queries/ correspondence)

Focal point for Human Rights Defenders:

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