

**Press Information Bureau
Government of India**

President of India lauds NHRC on ‘Human Rights Day’ for its role in Promotion and Protection of Human Rights

President calls upon People to not forget their Duties, while claiming their Rights

New Delhi, December 10, 2019

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) celebrated the Human Rights Day in New Delhi, today. Addressing the gathering as the Chief Guest, President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind said that the ideal way for the whole world to commemorate the ‘Human Rights Day’ is to introspect what more we need to do to live up the letter and spirit of the sacred text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the United Nations.

Lauding the role of the Human Rights Commission towards the promotion and protection of human rights and the peoples’ faith in it, the President of India said that it has lived upto the expectations by playing the role of a quasi-judicial watch dog for a quarter of century without fear or favour. However, he said that the effective strengthening of human rights at the ground level is a collective task of the whole society.

Shri Kovind recalled the contribution of Smt. Hansa Mehta, who played a crucial role in the drafting of the Constitution of India as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations. It was because of her that the Universal of Declaration of the Rights of Men was eventually recognised as the Universal of Declaration of Human Rights. She was also called the ‘First Lady of the World’ for her contributions to the cause of human rights. He said that we can do more to commemorate the visionary leadership of Hansa Ben in the field of human rights and gender equality.

Stressing on the need for people to focus on how to make a harmonious society compliant of the Human Rights Charter, the President said that our failings in human rights, as in the cases of violence against women, often stand from our failings in following our Fundamental Duties. The national discourse, besides rightly focusing on the all-important question of human rights, can also make more space for consideration of our Fundamental Duties, he added.

Earlier, addressing the gathering, the NHRC Chairperson Justice H.L. Dattu said that UDHR is an embodiment of the aspirations of people across the world for achieving equality, dignity and peaceful co-existence. Giving an insight into the various functions of the NHRC and its contribution at the national and international forum, including Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) and Asia Pacific Forum (APF) of National Human Rights Institutions, he said that the Commission’s endeavour has been to make itself as accessible to people as possible in redressing their grievances related to human rights violations. He said that the NHRC, India is an ‘A’ accredited NHRI with the GANHRI and also a member of its Bureau, which is an important policy setting body.

Justice Dattu called upon the people to take a pledge to achieve a just and equitable society by upholding the principles and ideas enshrined in our Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for the protection and promotion of human dignity. On the

occasion, Justice Dattu also released NHRC Journals in Hindi and English as well as a DVD of seven short films on human rights awarded by the Commission in 2019.

The UN Secretary General, António Guterres, in his message on Human Rights Day, read out by Ms. Renata Lok-Dessallien, UN Resident Coordinator in India, said that “Every single person is entitled to all rights - civil, political, economic, social and cultural - regardless of where they live; Regardless of their race, ethnicity, religion, social origin, gender, sexual orientation, political or other opinion, disability or income, or any other status. On this International Day, I call on everyone to support and protect young people who are standing up for human rights.”

Welcoming the august gathering earlier, NHRC Secretary General, Shri Jaideep Govind, said that the NHRC-India, being the world’s largest human rights institution, has been making all efforts to promote human rights culture in the country. In the last 26 years, it has taken cognizance of over 18 lakh cases of human rights violations and over Rs. 180 cores have been paid on its recommendations in thousands of cases. Giving an outline of its various engagements with different subject specific and group specific human rights issues and various mechanism to deal with the complaints of human rights violations, Shri Govind said that the Commission has made its functioning more transparent by uploading its orders on HRCnet portal, which is interactive. It has expanded its outreach further by linking its online complaint filing system with over 3 lakhs common service centres.

Besides, the NHRC Members, Justice P.C. Pant, Smt. Jyotika Kalra, Dr. D.M. Mulay, several dignitaries including former Chairperson and Members of the NHRC, Chairpersons and Members of State Human Rights Commission, representatives of Central and State Governments, UN Bodies, Diplomats Civil Society, NGOs, Media, among others, attended the function.

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