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*The Mission of LCHR is to empower the weak, the poor, the needy and the powerless, accompanying them to claim their inalienable rights and human dignity, which has been impaired by inhuman social structure and unfavourable.*

## From the Editor's Desk

Dear Reader,

Warm greetings from Legal Cell for Human Rights (LCHR), Guwahati.

LCHR is launching its first newsletter. I am excited to present this first newsletter. This newsletter presents the news of our past history and recent activities in promoting peace, justice, liberty and harmony among the suffering humanity especially of Northeast India. We are privileged to have partners, well wishers, benefactors, collaborators, friends and volunteers. I invite you to offer your comments and suggestions which will help to improve and renew efforts in serving the human society.

**Felcita**



## From the Director's Desk

Dear Friends

Rendering selfless service to the marginalized is the most valuable privilege which cannot be bought by world's riches. 'Striving for justice with dignity' is being the motto; LCHR moulds the team to strive towards achieving this goal. Enabling the vulnerable to be the architect of one's life by fully knowing their rights and duties enshrined in the Constitution of India. LCHR team works with complete dedication for weaker section of remotest area pouring out input on legal matters through various training programmes, capacity building, advocacy and awareness programmes.

I am extremely glad to present to you the first issue of the newsletter of LCHR to have a glimpse on our activities carried out by LCHR team with hard work and dedication.

**Ravi Sagar**  
Director, LCHR



*"The time has now come, when the court must become the court for the poor and the struggling masses of this country. They must be sensitized to the need of doing justice to the large masses of people to whom justice has been denied by a cruel heartless society for generations" (AIR 1982 SC 1473)*



### **So far.....LCHR**

The LCHR was established on February 15, 2007 by Ravi Sagar, a human rights' activist and practicing advocate in the Gauhati High Court since 2001. LCHR is the programme initiative of Prachodaya Trust. LCHR comprises of a group of socially conscious and committed advocates who carry legal knowledge to the socially ostracized, economically exploited, educationally backward and politically unrepresented sections of the people of Northeast India. LCHR through its committed volunteers champions the cause of exploited women, deprived children, the aged, the destitute, the physically and mentally challenged, the religious, linguistic and ethnic minorities. LCHR promotes the protection of human rights, civil rights, social freedom and cultural diversity.

**The following were major activities of LCHR for the last couple of years:**

### **Training Voluntary Organizations in N.E. India :**

LCHR has animate and strengthened the capacity of 40 Voluntary Organizations in Advocacy and has equipped them with knowledge and skills required to take up various campaigns for human rights and community development taking up a human rights based approach to development.

### **Campaign on RTE-2009 in collaboration with UNICEF:**

LCHR in collaboration with UNICEF has scheduled a Campaign on RTE-2009 at Rani and Rampur Development Blocks in Kamrup district of Assam. Hence, a total of 72 villages of 18 Panchayats are covered out of which 32 villages are from Rani Development Block and 40 villages from Rampur Development Block in Kamrup district of Assam.

### **Public Hearing on RTE-2009 in collaboration with ASCPCR :**

LCHR facilitated Assam State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (ASCPCR) to organize the “Public Hearing” on Right to Education at Labour, Salonah under Kaliabor Sub-Division in Nagaon, at Gandhi Bhawan in Morigaon and Deshbandhu Bidyapith H.S. School, Hojai in Nagaon of Assam in the year 2011-12. A total of 213 written complaints have been received by the ASCPCR on various issues in connection with the implementation of Right to Education and 75 of them have taken up in the presence of both the parties. Around 2700 people thronged the occasion.

### **Programmes in collaboration with Assam State Legal Services Authority (ASLSA) :**

- ✦ Aareness Camps on Anti-Ragging Laws were organized by LCHR in Collaboration with ASLSA in the month of August 2013 in 11 educational institutions including Universities around Guwahati city.
- ✦ 11 Awareness Programme on Mediation and its benefits were organized by LCHR in the month of September and October 2013 in and around Guwahati.
- ✦ 10 numbers of Literacy Camps on Human Rights & Legal Rights of persons affected with HIV/AIDS were conducted in the month of December 2013 around Guwahati city.
- ✦ 08 Awareness Camp on Rights of Women, on PWDV Act & PNDT Act were conducted in the month of January 2014.
- ✦ 5 number of Awareness Camp on the Availability of Different Welfare and Social Security Scheme were organized in the month of February 2014 in nearby villages of Guwahati city.





### **Programme supported by Govt. of India, Ministry of Minority Affairs**

Capacity building of Minority Women on their Constitutional Rights under “Nai Roshni”, the Scheme of Leadership Development of Minority Women for 2013-14 was conducted by LCHR supported by Government of India Ministry of Minority Affairs in the month of February and March 2014 for 125 women under Bezera Development Block.

### **Training Para-Legal Personnel**

LCHR has delved into the challenging tasks of training Para Legal Personnel in the year 2008 onwards. These trained persons can be called “bare-foot lawyers”. They are trained in order to take the law straight to the homes of the people. Over a period of 6 years in different batches 471 enthusiastic-unemployed-youth are chosen to undergo a rigorous training in paralegal and advocacy skills.

### **Legal Capacity Building among the Rural People of Assam in collaboration with Gauhati High Court Legal Services Committee (GHCLSC)**

In collaboration with the Judges, Magistrates and Judicial Officers deputed for the empowerment of the rural population by the Guwahati High Court Legal Services Committee and the District Legal Service Authority, LCHR educates the rural folk about the various laws and existing government schemes and projects. . These sessions were conducted in 10 districts of Assam. LCHR has conducted 296 sessions in 293 villages in which 15,546 people participated in the legal literacy sessions in 10 districts of Assam mentioned above.

### **Conciliation & Legal Assistance**

LCHR believes in the process of “Alternative Dispute Resolution System” through negotiation and conciliation based on the principles of natural justice and other acceptable legal principles. The organization encourages persons from vulnerable sections, especially the poor and the needy who are not able to approach the courts. Conciliation is an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) process whereby the parties to a dispute use a neutral third party (who is the conciliator), identify the disputed issues, develop options, consider alternatives and endeavour to reach a resolution by agreement. The process is strictly confidential between the parties. LCHR reaches out to people in the interior villages assisting them in settling their disputes. It has successfully settled many issues completely and saved families by creating a healthy community.

### **Legal Assistance**

While offering legal advice, counseling and consultancy, LCHR also encourages disputing parties to resolve their differences through an Alternative Dispute Resolution System which includes out of court settlement, mutual dialogue, conciliation and mediation, thus saving precious time, resources and peace of mind.

### **Internship**

LCHR provides opportunities for internship to students of law from various law schools across the country. Students of social work also learn the art and skills to approach social issues more professionally in LCHR. The interns are encouraged to involve actively in fieldwork and thus learn the skills of advocacy. LCHR uses this as a means to inculcate in young minds a desire to fight for justice and human rights. Several interns from

different Law Institutes and social work institutes have benefited from this exercise.

### Recent activities of LCHR (Oct-Dec, 2014)

- ✦ Sr. Felcita and Mr. Abinash Narzary attended a Development Communication Workshop on 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2014 for DKA-KFB Partners at NEDSF Kharghuli. It helped to identify the need and the potential for media tools in the work. Mr. Sharad Sharma from World Comics Network, India was the resource person for this workshop. There were 34 participants in the workshop.
- ✦ One day DKA partners meet was held on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2014 in NEDSF Kharghuli, where the Director and Project Coordinator (Fr. Ravi Sagar and Sr. Felcita) of the partner organizations attended the programme. There were 28 participants from 19 Organizations. Dr. Eva Wallensteiner from DKA-KFB and the 4 members of the DKA-KFB Support team. The main agenda of the meeting was to identifying the strategies and indicators for the goals adopted for the region in line with the core themes of DKA and KFB, understanding FCRA, seeing the possibilities of networking with Farm to Food, an NGO that promotes organic agriculture as an economically viable option and screening the documentaries on the partners.



- ✦ Fr. Ravi Sagar the Director of LCHR, Guwahati gave input on FCRA- its salient features and implications.
- ✦ LCHR in association with Kamrup District Legal Services Authority conducted 15 awareness camps on availability of Health Care Schemes and PCPNDT Act in the month of October, 2014.



- ✦ A three day workshop on “Tackling of Trafficking through grassroots comics” was conducted in Shipgram Guwahati from 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov, 2014 for the Para Legal Persons who are trained in advocacy skills. It was attended by the 51 Para Legal Persons.



- ✦ Sr. Felcita attended one day regional consultation on Strengthening the North East Region Partnership in combating Human Trafficking organized by NEDAN Foundation at Kokrajhar on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014. NEDAN Foundation has been the pioneer in combating cross border human trafficking in NE India. The objective of the regional consultation was to strengthen and build the capacity of NE Network Forum against trafficking (NENFAT)



- ✦ LCHR has been awarded contract by the Department of Justice, Ministry of law & Justice, Govt of India, for conducting a 8 months long training the empanelled lawyers in State Legal Services Authorities in 8 states of Northeast India.



- ✦ Awareness Camp on Mediation and ADR Mechanism was conducted by LCHR in association with Kamrup District Legal Services Authorities in the month of December 2014. Total eight numbers of programmes were organized and attended by 240 People.



- ✦ Rtd. Mr. Justice B.D.Agarwal visited LCHR on 19th Dec.2014 and encouraged the young advocates in LCHR to work hard for the marginalised people.



- ✦ Mr.Abinash Narzary conducted a legal awareness programme at Singlijan T.E. On 16th Nov. 2014. He spoke on Plantation Labourers Act and the provisions of Right to Information Act. 45 Labourers gained the knowledge on their rights.



### INTERN'S OPINION

By empowering the most disadvantaged class of society, by protecting the rights of minority, By throwing light to the untouched issues of our society LCHR is creating its own mark in the field of social work .....



It's a privilege for me to get the opportunity of doing internship in Legal Cell for Human Rights and to experience the existing social issues of various parts of our state so closely. LCHR's movement against illiteracy, poverty and exploitation can be called a movement for a just society where the Rich will not be allowed to exploit the poor. At the same time LCHR's contribution to secure social justice in the state is remarkable.... I convey my heartfull thanks to the director Mr. Ravi Sagar and the whole team of LCHR for giving me this opportunity.

**Bhaskar Jyoti Kalita**

*Tezpur Law College, Tezpur, Sonitpur*



### WORLD IS CHANGING.... IS "OLD" REALLY GOLD ?



In India, it is generally assumed that a person above the Chronological age of 58 or 60 is 'old' and constitute the 'elderly' segment of the population. Gerontology and Geriatrics are two fields of

research that focus on the needs of the aged. 'Gerontology' involves the scientific study of the phenomenon of aging, and, 'Geriatrics' addresses the prevention and treatment of diseases in older people.

The problem of ageing is a global one in the sense that it is experienced by all societies, be it rich or poor, developed or developing but its magnitude and its manifestation are not the same everywhere. In modern India due to the breakdown of the traditional social structures, there is an institutional change in the value system of the society. The aged ones are left all alone in their loneliness and there is no one to listen to their woes. Thus, due to the young oriented modern culture, with its fast food and fast car, where instant is better and everything is disposable, the slow spacious quality of old age is not valued which have led to the need for institutional care in India.

Even elderly in the slum areas suffers from poverty, poor nutrition, and healthcare, and years of hard physical labor. Loneliness and housing is also one of their main concerns. Majority of the problems that confront older persons are the result of priorities, policies, and practices of society. Some of the other emerging problems of the Aged, elder abuse, lack of economic support, health problems and social problems.

Thus, in India over the years, the government to cater to the needs of the aged

population and to promote the health, well-being and independence of senior citizens around the country has launched various schemes and policies for older persons. These schemes and policies are The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment for welfare and maintenance, especially for indigent senior citizens, by supporting old age homes, day care centers, mobile Medicare units, etc. The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 was enacted in December 2007, to ensure need based maintenance for parents and senior citizens and their welfare. National Policy on Older Persons (NPOP), 1999 is a policy to promote the health and welfare of senior citizens in India. This policy aims to encourage individuals to make provision for their own as well as their spouse's old age. The policy enables and supports voluntary and non-governmental organizations to supplement the care provided by the family and provide care and protection to vulnerable elderly people. Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 ensure the establishment of Old Age Homes for Indigent Senior Citizen, adequate medical facilities and security for Senior Citizens.

Attitudes are a very powerful determinant of older people's quality of life and also have a deep impact on policy making. Old people are no longer respected or valued as they were in the past. In the modern age old people have lost their 'rarity' value, the achievement status, which was previously attained by the Third age group.

Now the question is, as a citizen of a civil society what do we do to help them? Where will they get the care and compassion when everyone is busy improvising their own life? How do we give them companion at an age when they need us the most? If only we can be the reason of their smile, if only we can lend our

shoulder to rest their burden upon, if only we can be their umbrella to save them from the worldly troubles. Let us all think about it and open our heart not only to show sympathy but to gift them a new life in their second childishness.

**Preeti Rekha Gogoi**

### Increasing of law & order is difficult for Implementation



India is a very rich country in making new laws and rules. Increasing law & order is very hard to follow because our society believes in democracy and every citizens of India believe in independency. It

is difficult for the people to follow the barrier of law in such a way that they don't even know which law is made when and what the reason is behind to make those particular laws. Yes, it is good to make some rules and regulation for the society because by law and order a peaceful society can be formed. But I believe that instead of making new Laws & Rules we should concentrate to implement the earlier laws in a new way with new techniques. Every people of India are bound to follow the law and order but in actually it is always discriminated. According to me, Justice is for everyone it cannot be purchased or sold.

The Indian Constitution provides that people have Right to Freedom (Article 19) but in actual it is not applicable in the society. North-east people are regularly harassed in Delhi, Bangalore etc in recent few years, especially the working women and the students from North-east. India is "sovereign socialist secular democratic republic" country where people are supposed to be united. According to the sources in everyday one of the north-east people harassed in their own country. It is

shame for us that in our democratic country people did not have independency to go somewhere to live somewhere to wear somewhere by our own. We should make aware the people by any kind of possible way like Media, Television, Newspaper etc. but it can only be possible if the youth will fight for their rights because our constitution itself it says we have right to freedom, right to speech and expression etc. Let us speak for our Rights & Stop the Violence against the women and the children.

The crime of human trafficking is another major issue in India particularly in North East. According to the sources, In India every minute a women or a child is sold for labour or prostitution. The victims of trafficking are mostly belongs to the rural areas of India. Trafficking has become an easy money business for the underworld society. It can only be decreased by making aware among the people especially where the main places of trafficking takes place. Let us help to stop trafficking because children are our future, they are the light of a better world or a better society. Save the country, Save the Dignity & Save the Origin.

**Sanjib Hazrarika**

### Humanity, call of Nature to Man

*"Let us never cease to feel compassion for those in want. Let us never tire of helping victims of injustice and oppression. He who puts his faith in the restoration of human dignity cannot be wrong."*  
Poul Hartling.



The quote above, by a famous Danish diplomat and politician calls to the need of



humanity, alarming the rapid trend caused by human action leading towards increasing injustice and oppression. This quote is aptly applicable in the present scenario of our society where injustice prevails without measure in every aspect of human life, and individuals deprived of their basic rights. Humanity is slowly losing its significance, with a sense of consumerism and accumulation of wealth, power and prestige. Man is moving towards a world where an individual's identity is based on the amount of wealth possessed. In the course of action, man is losing the basic sense of humanity and strives to acquire the materialistic world at the cost of his fellow beings and nature at large. And thus is blind to see the consequences of his actions, deaf to hear the cries of the oppressed, dumb to speak for them. It is an endless process of wants followed with a

chain of unconscious deeds leading to destruction of humanity.

Though injustice is done and injustice is endured, there is a brighter side, unaware, of every individual which is yet to be discovered. A deep self conscious is the need to get in touch with the self and nature that will lit the spirit of humanity. Man's actions are the result of his thoughts, and the only way to re direct the course of his action is to modify the thoughts. And the thought can be alternated with a desire to get in touch with the self and the value of humanity considered higher than material wealth. This is the call of nature to every individual, to be never tire of being compassion and helping victims of injustice and oppression.

**Sharmila Dhan**



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