



DISCUSSION ON WOMEN'S JUSTICE & LABOUR RIGHTS

DISCUSSION ON WOMEN JUSTICE AND LABOUR RIGHTS, ASIFABAD,TELANGANA

22.06.2019

AGENDA

Time	Session	Speaker
10:00 - 10:15	Introduction to HRLN and Bread for the World Project	Rachana Mudraboyina, HRLN resource person
10:15 - 10:45	Women Justice and Labour Rights	Rachana Mudraboyina, HRLN resource person
10:45 - 11:30	Sharing the Experience of working with Tribal Women	Facilitated by Mrs.Archana Manukonda, MVR Foundation, Hyderabad.
11:30 - 12:00	Tea Break	
12:00- 12:30	Sharing the Experience of Tribal Women Women Justice and Labour Rights	Mrs.Sugunamma, Co-ordinator, MNGNREGS, Koyavagu,Asifabad, Kumurum Bheem District, Telangana
12:30 - 01:30	Discussion and Recommendations	Facilitated by Mrs.Archana Manukonda, MVR Foundation, Hyderabad.
01:30 onwards	Lunch follows	

SESSION 3: SHARING THE EXPERIENCE OF WORKING WITH TRIBAL WOMEN

Session 1: Introduction to HRLN and Bread for the World Project –

Human Rights law Network: Rachana explained about HRLN that is a collective of Indian lawyers and social activists who provide legal support to the vulnerable and disadvantaged sections of society. It works on child rights, disabilities rights, rights of people living with HIV/AIDS, prisoners' rights, refugee rights, rights of indigenous people, worker rights and rights of the minorities and people who have faced or subject to sexual violence among others.

HRLN is a project of the Socio-Legal Information Centre (SLIC). SLIC is a non – profit legal aid and education organization, which provides free legal assistance to people who lack the capacity to approach courts for redress. SLIC files more than 100 petitions each year to protect the health, dignity, and rights of India's citizens. SLIC is one of the country's largest, most active legal human rights programs and reproductive rights unit. SLIC is also an implementing partner of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. As a non-profit non-governmental organization, HRLN started in 1989 as a small group of concerned lawyers and social activists from Bombay. The team was led by Colin Gonsalves,, a public interest lawyer. Today, HRLN is considered the country's leading public interest law group and has a nationwide network of more than 200 lawyers, paralegals, and social activists spread across 26 states/Union Territories.

HRLN is also the parent body of the Indian People's Tribunal (IPT), also called the Indian People's Tribunal on Environmental and Human Rights or Independent People's Tribunal. Set up in June 1993, IPT is an unofficial panel led by retired judges who conduct public inquiries into human rights and environmental abuses. It provides an alternate outlet for the victims faced with official obstruction and delays in the delivery of justice. IPT conducts investigations into cases of relocation of rural people to make way for dams or parks, eviction of slum dwellers, industrial pollution and communal or state-sponsored violence.



SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION TO HRLN AND BREAD FOR THE WORLD PROJECT

In 2003, HRLN was awarded the Mac Arthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions for its contributions to reproductive rights advocacy in India.

Activities of HRLN

1. Legal aid and public interest litigation

2. HRLN offers pro-bono legal services to those with little or no access to the justice system, and runs a helpline for people seeking such help. It also conducts litigation in the public interest. Lawyers of HRLN take up cases in the lower courts as well as the Supreme Court and various state High Courts

3. Legal education

HRLN provides training through several avenues and also trains young lawyers. HRLN also periodically publishes 'know your rights' material. The group also provides opportunities for internships and scholarships and organizes country-wide seminars, workshops, and training courses, such as paralegal certificate courses.

4. Advocacy

HRLN works to increase public awareness through research and dissemination of information on violations and anti-poor policies. HRLN has formulated laws and policies against child sexual abuse, against communal crimes, and for the right to food and work.

5. Investigations, monitoring, and crisis response

6. HRLN conducts fact-finding missions to monitor and document cases of violations. It also deploys crisis-intervention teams and makes sure that these cases take the form of petitions in court.

7. Publications



SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION TO HRLN AND BREAD FOR THE WORLD PROJECT

The Bread for the World Project :

The main objective of the project is to bring about changes in the law, public policy and implementation of the law for social and economic rights and entitlements in the 11 States of India, in favour of the poor and marginalised communities in India. The project will indirectly benefit the following groups of people as both direct and indirect beneficiaries:

1. Dalits and other marginalised communities systematically denied access to justice to enforce their socio-economic rights especially their right to education, health, welfare and employment. Additionally who have been subjected to atrocities and extreme forms of exploitation and excluded from welfare and economic schemes.
2. Tribal and nomadic communities who are vulnerable to the violation of their forest rights, depletion of natural resources affecting livelihoods and exclusion from welfare and economic schemes.
3. Religious minorities who are vulnerable to social exclusion and communal violence, lynching, exclusion from welfare and economic schemes.
4. Human Rights Defenders, journalists and activists and community leaders who have worked on defending the rights of marginalised persons and access to justice and have been subject to a concerted effort by the state to silence voices of dissent through their illegal arrests, detention, terminations and in some cases violence.
5. Women, men and children vulnerable to trafficking, distress migration, violence and discrimination.
6. Children who are in the Juvenile Justice System, both children in need of care and protection and children in conflict with the law.
7. Workers and unions who are kept away from accessing their right to reservations, safety standards, adequate working conditions and benefits.
8. Persons with disability who are vulnerable to social exclusion and denial of rights to education, livelihoods, care and shelter in addition to exploitation, abandonment, discrimination and violence.

The second objective of the project involves State Level Consultations, Collaborative meetings with local communities and skill-based training for young lawyers and activists on working with communities that will benefit lawyers, activists, community-based organisations, community leaders, unions, judges, collectives, students and other rights based groups in a three-fold structure.



SESSION 2: WOMEN JUSTICE AND LABOUR RIGHTS

Rachana has explained that Women make up a vital part of the economic and social fabric that hold their communities together, yet that work is rarely valued at the same level as is men's work. Much of this has to do with what opportunities are available to them. Women are disproportionately likely to be poor, under-educated, employed in low-wage or unpaid work, and subject to dismissal for getting married or having children. In many industries, female workers are systematically denied their rights to regular pay and regular working hours; equal pay for equal work; permanent contracts; safe and non-hazardous work environments; and freedom of association. Egregious abuses, including sexual violence, harassment and forced pregnancy tests, are all too common. Moreover, the social status of women has not opened up at the same pace at which women have been brought into the workplace. They may have increasing opportunities at work, but they are prone to domestic violence and unequal expectations at not only home but at working place. Violence against women has taken particularly acute forms in circumstances where populations are already marginalized, such as in areas affected by armed conflict, and areas undergoing mass displacement. Women in the Tribal belts and amongst Dalit populations are vulnerable, and become even more so in areas affected by conflict. There is therefore a pressing need for the judiciary to recognize and address the particular forms of violence levied against women who are 'doubly marginalised' by caste, class, religion, or in situations of conflict. A number of laws that protect women from discrimination are also either inadequate or have not been implemented properly.



SESSION 3: SHARING THE EXPERIENCE OF WORKING WITH TRIBAL WOMEN

The Founder of MVR Foundation Archana Manukonda has explained The tribal women, as women in all social groups, are more illiterate than men. Like others social groups, the tribal women share problems related to household consumption, literacy, work participation, political empowerment and decision making. They are mainly engaged in non-agricultural activities such as cattle farming; forestry; fishing; mining and quarrying; manufacturing of tobacco; wood product; transport; trade and various services. The MGNREGA schemes constituted by Central Government is also available in tribal areas of Telangana and most of the tribal women are engaged in this as a part time apart from their household and agriculture labor which they do as routine. The MGNREGA was implemented presently, land development and rural connectivity activities are the major works that are environment conservation and sustainable approaches in nature in these tribal areas. More than one-third of the total job card holders and employment or person days generated are benefited by tribal women; which is more than their population contribution in the tribal belt of Telangana. Importantly, MGNREGA work increases the period of engagement in work for both principal/main and subsidiary/marginal workers thereby reducing underemployment and unemployment among the tribal women. It is widely and effectively implemented in rural areas, with the help of strong and efficient Panchayati Raj Institution, as one of the most successful employment generation schemes. It improves the economic participation rates as well as strengthens an economic well-being of the rural household status by supplementing their income with the assured minimum wage rate of MGNREGA work. It acts as a driving factor for poverty alleviation and enhances development for women in tribal areas. With this introduction she handed over the next session to Sugunamma who is the coordinator of MGNREGA and also the WASH programme in the koyavagu



SESSION 4: SHARING THE EXPERIENCE OF TRIBAL WOMEN WOMEN JUSTICE AND LABOUR RIGHTS

Sugunamma is the coordinator, MGNREGS, Koyavagu, Asifabad, Kumurum Bheem District, Telangana from more than 10 years. Sugunamma said there are around 900 families in nearby 4 slums of Koyavagu which is in the down the river level of river named Peddavagu. Most of the tribal women belong to the separate casts within STs, SCs and also few nomadic tribes. They all are agricultural labor and involved in MGNREGS schemes either part time or full time. Sugunamma also coordinates the sanitation projects in the Koyavagu, where she will sensitise the slums people regarding bad effects of open defecation , help them to understand the importance of toilets and connects the families in the Government schemes to get resources like sand, bricks and cement to build toilets in their houses. Sugunamma shared the problems faced by women in MGNREGS how they are often under paid for the work they do and also how travel is often not paid by the managers or how they ask to bear out of the wages where as it is the responsibility of the Contractor. Primarily there are many women who are dependent on this scheme for their livelihood options but at the end of the day nothing is saved out of their earnings. Sugunamma also explained how it is difficult to explain and motivate people to discourage open defecation and motivating them to build toilets, they in return will revolt on her for advising them. They do the routine defecation , so she told installation of CC surveillance somehow stopped them to do the open defecation. She also said they will go to village to village to sensitise people regarding the healthy sanitation practices.



SESSION 5: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Sugunamma and Archana lead the discussions. One of the tribal women has said that there should be more sensitisation campaigns to be taken up to make people aware of safe sanitation practices. The contractors should also be sensitised about the labour laws. The sexual harassment within the families as explained by few tribal women is due to the unofficial and illegal liquor sales which happens for every three houses is the reason. There is no control by the government for such belt shops so that should be cribbed first to decrease the impact of sexual harassments by husbands. So the women decided to write a representation to the government regarding strict action to be taken on belt shops. There are few women who are houseless and doesn't covered under housing welfare schemes so we decide to draft a representation for the government free house schemes.

