



A Discussion on Right to Food & Transgender people rights Telangana State



Speakers:

Prof.Kanche Ilalah Shepherd
Prof. Sujatha Surepally
Prof. Jayashree Subramaniam
Vasudha Nagaraj, Sr, Advocate
Kondaveeti Satyavathi, Bhumika
A.Suneetha, Anveshi
O.Lalla, THTS
Chandramukhi Muvvala, THTS

Date: 20-11-2019
Venue: Shoalib Hall, SVK,
Baghlingampally
Timings - From 2.30 pm to 5.30 pm



A discussion on Right to Food and Transgender Peoples rights

20.10.2019

Agenda

Session	Time	Topics	Guest speakers/Resource Person
I	2.00-02.30 AM	Registration & Inaugural	Rachana, HRLN
II	02.30-03.00 AM	Introduction about HRLN, Bread for World project and Right to Food Subject	Rachana, HRLN Philip, HRLN
	03.30-04.00 AM	Sharing views on Right to Food Campaign	Suneetha Achyuthan , Anweshi women studies research center
III	04.00- 04.30 PM	Sharing views on Right to Food Campaign	Sathyavathi Kondaveeti, Bhumika Women's initiative
	04.30 – 04.45 PM	Tea Break	
IV	04.15 – 04.30 PM	Sharing views on Right to Food Campaign	Jayashree Subramanium, Hyderabad Central University
	04.30 – 04.45 PM	Tea Break	
V	04.45 – 05.30 PM	Experience sharing of Trans Community Suggestions and Advices.	Rachana HRLN

Total participants – 50 transgender people from across the Telangana State

Introduction about HRLN & Bread for World project - Rachana

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.

Introduction about Right to Food Subject - Philip

Philips explained that the Right to Food (RTF) campaign in India has been mobilizing and advocating on hunger, malnutrition and food-related issues in the country for the last ten years. The RTF campaign's foundation statement asserts that it is 'an informal network of organisations and individuals committed to the realisation of the right to food in India' (RTFC n.d.). Over these years the RTF campaign has expanded into a wide network with members across the country representing different groups, including agricultural workers' unions, women's rights groups, Dalit rights groups, single women's networks, child rights organizations, those working with construction workers, migrant workers and homeless populations, and so on. These varied groups have come together in agreement with the campaign's belief that 'everyone has a fundamental right to be free from hunger and that the primary responsibility for guaranteeing basic entitlements rests with the state' (ibid.). The campaign has a small secretariat for coordination, a steering committee which takes decisions between conventions, while the agenda for the campaign is set in a National Convention that is open to all those who consider themselves members to attend.

The RTF campaign has its origins in a public interest litigation (PIL) filed in the Supreme Court in April 2001 by the People's Union for Civil Liberties, Rajasthan. The petition demanded that the country's gigantic food stocks should be used without delay to protect people from hunger and starvation. Popularly known as the 'Right to Food case', this is now one of the longest-running mandamuses in the world. More than fifty orders have been passed, including some very significant ones such as universalization of school midday meals and the supplementary nutrition programme for children under six years, pregnant and lactating mothers and adolescent girls. While some of these orders were path-breaking in their content, it was soon realized that for them to actually translate into action on the ground required pressure from the people. Different groups began to mobilize around the Supreme Court orders and came together to form the Right to Food campaign. Very soon, the scope expanded beyond the Supreme Court case towards building a larger public campaign for the right to food.

Introduction about Right to Food Subject - Philip

- Philips also explained Since the NALSA judgement in 2014, other than minor orders and judgments from few High Courts across the nation progression to a greater and a more concrete realization of socio-political and economic rights of Trans gender people has been almost none. Interestingly enough a number of Government Orders passed by states and some judgments have been contrary to the directions in the NALSA judgement. It is in this present paltry state of affairs that one is looking at strategizing, both from the front of litigation as well as movement. Furthermore what has become evident, is a complete apathy from the state to implement any kind of social welfare legislation either through government orders or enforceable policies.
- Critical forms of discrimination aimed at members of the Transgender Community still continue to persist and resistance from the state in providing Transgender Persons with Ration Cards, Housing assistance and medical assistance put a critical number of fundamental rights in question, but most particularly the Right to Life, which can only be realized through the realization of one's Right to Food, Housing and Health. Two major legal challenges HRLN did in Andhra Pradesh High Court are:
 - 1. Challenging G.O. 16 which mandated physical examination of transgender persons before providing them with transgender ID cards
 2. Challenging gender and sex specific employment in police recruitment
 - Two critical legal challenges in the Telangana High Court that are still pending are:
 - 1. Questioning the Non-Implementation of NALSA in the State of Telangana
 2. Challenging the Telangana Eunuchs Act
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Introduction about Right to Food Subject - Philip

- The obstacles and challenges overcome though may seem minor but were critical to the strengthening of the movement. G.O. 16 was held contrary to the NALSA judgement and was quashed, in the second case the High Court has reserved one seat for Transgender Persons. With respect to the cases in the Telangana High Court, the no more arrests can be done under the Telangana Eunuchs Act, but other than that the state has failed to provide any concrete reply. The PIL filed on Non-Implementation of NALSA has received the same apathy that has been exhibited to every concern raised by the Transgender community It is keeping this in mind that HRLN along with the support of members of THTS, THITS and other district level Trans community based organisations carried out multiple district level meetings and fact findings in 5 districts of Telangana on the access to ration cards and the question of right to food. The report points to a range of discrepancies in implementation of how ration cards are disbursed and inherent transphobia with regard to when persons access ration cards, housing schemes and health systems. It is in light of these instances that the present State Level Consultation is being organized. Where as human rights activists and lawyers could strategize for different levels ranging from the district level to the state as to what action should be taken and what has been the most effective. Building stronger partnerships, newer collaborations, strengthening grassroots and increasing coordination would be a part of the concerns that would be dealt with in the present consultation.
- He also explained about the name and gender change process under the Transgender persons (protection of rights) 2019, bonded labour clauses of the same act and rehabilitation as mentioned there. He also explained how the penalty for sexual violence has been constrained to only minimum of 6 months to w years where as if such victims are women the minimum punishment of 7 years.

Sharing views on Right to Food Campaign - Suneetha Achyuthan, Anveshi

Suneetha explained that there are many discrepancies that state has not fulfilled its constitutional duty out of which various peoples movements have been emerged and now transgender movement has also taken share as a peoples movement to push the validity of constitutional rights. She said initially in go's its HRLN which initiated the right to food movement approached the Supreme Court of India where the court called all the state governments and asked for the hunger deaths and given strict instructions to supply food for free for all the citizens who are dying of hunger. This historical judgment has turned the peoples movement in the India the foremost founders of Anveshi Women Research center like Meenakshi durguna, nutritionist (advisor appointed by Supreme court) have been also into the committees for Right to Food campaigns. Apart from the pioneer activists of this Right to Food campaign the activists from Dalit, Muslim, Minority and women activists also felt that this issue belongs to everyone and that is how it has been escalated from top to bottom and people started approaching the governments voluntarily to set the things in place for the campaign. There is enormous hard work , committees, fact finding and regular check and balances happened even with the civil supplies departments , its ration dealers and the discrepancies cribbed through peoples social audit systems like are the few of the out comes of Right to Food campaign. Our Anveshi members like Veena Sathrugna, Sajaya Kakarla and Rama Melkote are also part of Right to Food campaign. They worked in the districts of Adilabad, Mahboobnagar and Warangal Districts regarding the Right to Food campaign in the region of Telangana. There was advises gone along with the rice , oil, pulses, sugar and other nutrition supplements should be supplied in the civil supplies stores in subsidised rates. We are now discussing how to emerge with the women movement with that of trans movement on right to food concept and supply of such ration to trans community also . After listening to the transgender rights peoples issues relating to the food cards and ration cards . I feel that there is a need to push our agenda beyond NALSA Vs UOI in the state of Telangana, for that I will suggest the Telangana women and trans JAC should impede in the PIL which is pending with the Hyderabad high court for the non – implementation of the judgment. We should also consider that a person who can work in his or her life there is a time where need to take rest and need the nutrition supplements also which state need to supply as responsibility.

Sharing views on Right to Food Campaign - Sathyavathi Kondaveeti, Bhumika

- Sathyavathi explained that there used to be lot of food grains in the government godowns which use to be spoiled without supplying the same to the needy. We use to felt very bad spoiled grains at one side and hunger deaths at other. Many people doesn't know about schemes, people are also not availing the subsidised cards. If people wont use such opportunity of getting the essentials on ration card they will be sold in the black market. People who are not using the cards should be given and replaced with the needful citizens like trans people. There is a shocking news in the Telangana state department for children where there is a food called 'balamrutham' I have visited the factory of manufacturing powder . But it is not reaching the children in need they are given to the cattle. If this is used properly by the people then children will not be die of malnutrition. It is our responsibility to not to waste the food grains also.
- I am proposing two things one is preparing a newsletter on behalf of Telangana Hijra Transgender Samithi with of 2- 3 pages so that our issues come into limelight. We collect information and present the same in the socieity. Second thing is we need a helpline for transgender people , we were there with you all people able to understand your issues but we need to strengthen this system. We need to take our issues to all the public , ration cards are also one of such issues. I was also following up with trans people in prisons through our sakhi centres. When Venkat issues happen we are frighten that how trans people are accustomed to all such violence. I promise now that what are the schemes available for the trans people, start your news letter I will start writing in the news letter. We will do in the both of the telugu states. We know that Andhra there are few schemes like pension, housing etc.,. But not happening in Telangana so we need to take this to the people till it get sensitised. We will help in all the ways. We need to start working for Transgender welfare board under the Ministry for women and children. You can use the Bhumika help line till you start your own helpline. If not you can use the government helpline . 24 hours there are sakhi centeres in all the districts of Telangana. Let us explore all these issues.

Sharing views on Right to Food Campaign - Jayashree Subramaniam, HCU

Jayashree explained that I use to have one student who interviewed about transgender people education. But not I am talking about the right to food that when you all people are talking about this issue we have right for the same but we are seeing lot of trans people are facing violence and loosing their lives. When I am being a trans person if I have right but needed to buy the necessities outside why is this situation is like this. But we see that here the right to life is also extorted as trans people are not allowed to do except begging or sex work. Why society is excluding in this issue and they next excluded from all the spaces. The binary patriarchal is forcing men is good, women has no rights this is the main ideology which is forcing not being enjoying the freedom of independence its very restrictive to the marginalised. Being marginalised we need to fight and fight to get their rights but why is this situation like this while other enjoy such rights by the virtue of their birth itself. The ignorance is not of marginalised but it is powerful ignorance of the privileged intentionally avoiding the marginalised to claim their rights. The knowledge is not coming from the academia which is centric with power occupying the universities , schools and colleges but it is always in reverse knowledge is coming from the fringes of the society where the vulnerable are pushed because of their fight and livelihood battles every day. Many of trans people drop their education due to stigma , transphobia and discrimination. So we need to think of education, employment along with the necessities which is the responsibility of the State. The society should remove this inequalities. I feel the right to education should be seen important to achieve at right to food. So I suggest to look at that angle regarding the policy and law level. There is still untouchability regarding the trans people so I suggest text books should have the struggles of trans people to sensitise the generations about your issues.

Photo gallery

