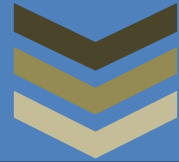




RFYN Leaders' Gathering - Report



Human Rights Resource Centre
Angelo Institute
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INDIA



Introduction

A two-day RFYN Leaders' Gathering followed the **Human Rights Resource Centre (HRRC) launch ceremony** on 8th August 2013 at HRRC, Hindupur.

Mrs. Brown, Women's Rights Supporter of Madhya Pradesh Human Rights Commission, Chhindwara, shared about the present need of Human Rights awareness and the value of Human Rights Education in India. The rural communities are suppressed in many ways, and it is the responsibility of young adults to support the suppressed people, via centres such as this new Human Rights Resource Centre. She also shared about the problems faced by women and children in India.

Fire Camp

The evening session started with a fireside camp program where the young adults gathered around and shared their experiences. This helped those from different geographies to erase borders and understand each other. Sharing about the regional works and projects organised by RFYN in different places also made them realise how widespread are HRRC's branches.



Village Exposure

(Learning for young adults from protected environments and unaware of the rural reality).

To understand the knowledge gap among the community, RFYN decided to visit a village called **Bevanahalli** on the second day (9 Aug).

RFYN reached the destination on a bike and auto rickshaw ride – with HRRC flags! The young adults were divided into three groups, and interacted with the villagers targeting three streets. A study of 2.5 hours was made by visiting people from different castes and economic backgrounds. They discussed Human Rights violations such as caste-based



discrimination, education systems, government's schemes and policies, poverty and other social problems in the village.

Why this Village?

In the majority of villages in India, caste and gender discrimination is practiced as a trail of orthodox cultural belief.

Caste discrimination is based on the type of work the

individual performs. Castes are thus divided into Schedule Castes, Schedule Tribes and Other Backward Castes.

RFYN experienced the villagers' standard of living: poor-condition houses, sanitation, water etc. The information on the economic status of families was breath-taking, and made the young adults see why inculcating human rights in villagers' minds is vital. Most families receive daily wages and a 4-member family's income is Rs60 per day (US\$0.90).

Gender discrimination was noted on interaction with the women, as men are paid Rs150 per day and women Rs60 for same work. All these factors incline RFYN towards this village, to bring the values of IARF-HRRC to grass-roots level.

An RFYN Story: Human Sacrifice for a new temple

Bevanahalli village is also known for its superstitious beliefs. One RFYN young adult, **Sabarinath**, has been a victim of these. He narrated his experience of a fight for life. Five years ago, some of the village people constructed a new temple. It was their belief that a human sacrifice would make the Almighty happy, and provide the villagers with huge wealth. One house owner thought of an innocent boy of 13-14 years for this sacrifice. He took the boy (a tenant of his) to the temple promising to buy him a mobile phone. They grabbed him near the temple place of sacrifice, recited prayers, and made a cut around his throat. The boy started bleeding and fell unconscious. The villagers took the blood and offered to the god. Then they threw the boy half a kilometre away. A few cowherds saw the body and informed the police, who took it for medical diagnosis and found him alive. The doctors said the boy would have lost his life if the cut had been deeper. His life was saved by a hair's breadth. Sabarinath says he got a second life, and a mark on his throat (see below) is a reminder of this orthodox belief.



Data Collected from the Village

The total number of families are 475, of whom RFYN visited 21 and collected information – among them 14 Dalit (Scheduled Caste) families. The village has two kinds of communities (castes): Scheduled Caste & High Class. Higher-class families live a better life than the Scheduled Caste.

Community	Number of Families	Life Style	Education	works	Income (INR)/day	Dwelling place
Schedule Caste (Dalit)	180	Very Poor	20% goes to school	Daily Wages	F- 60 M - 150	Huts
Other Class (High class)	295	Reasonable	80% goes to school	Land lords	Above 300	Concrete Building

The Dalit people shared about their life and the situation prevailing in that village:

- ❖ They feel difficulty earning their livelihood, with the very low wages.
- ❖ Many are deprived of government support as they have not received Government IDs & Ration Cards.
- ❖ Most pregnant ladies and growing babies can't get proper nutritious food.
- ❖ They do not possess proper sanitation and medical assistance.
- ❖ School children are not able to get proper education as teachers are not qualified.
- ❖ No proper roadways and transport facility. Only high-charge Auto-Rickshaw is available.
- ❖ For higher education they have to travel 8-10 km away. This charges them 60-70% of their earnings per day.
- ❖ Dry lands and no proper water.

All this happens due to deliberate negligence, by those who do wrong 'intelligently & intentionally' for their own benefit.

Action taken to Develop the Village

RFYN heard about a number of human rights violations, and found the root cause to be lack of education in the village. So it was decided to establish a **tuition centre** for children here. It was also planned to visit the village to bring human rights awareness using 'Nukad Natak' dramas.





Visit to historical site of Lepakshi

A visit to the ancient temple of Lepakshi, 16km from Hindupur, helped the young adults to understand the historical depth of faith in the region, and therefore the importance of interfaith efforts.

Future RFYN Activities

Evaluation of the two days' learning followed, with discussion of future programs by RFYN. It was decided to organise 10 HRE Trainings under IARF-HRRC this year, and a national-level RFYN program at Bangalore in January 2014 in which all will participate who attended these 10 trainings. There was a suggestion to publish a **quarterly magazine on Human Rights and young adult programs** under the name of the newly promulgated HRRC.

