

# chrí ANNUAL REPORT 2007 2008



**COMMONWEALTH HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVE**  
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# Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) is an independent, non-partisan, international non-governmental organisation, mandated to ensure the *practical* realisation of human rights in the countries of the Commonwealth. In 1987, several Commonwealth professional associations founded CHRI. They believed that while the Commonwealth provided member countries a shared set of values and legal principles from which to work and provided a forum within which to promote human rights, there was little focus on the issues of human rights within the Commonwealth.

The objectives of CHRI are to promote awareness of and adherence to the Commonwealth Harare Principles, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other internationally recognised human rights instruments, as well as domestic instruments supporting human rights in Commonwealth member states.

Through its reports and periodic investigations, CHRI continually draws attention to progress and setbacks to human rights in Commonwealth countries. In advocating for approaches and measures to prevent human rights abuses, CHRI addresses the Commonwealth Secretariat, member governments and civil society associations. Through its public education programmes, policy dialogues, comparative research, advocacy and networking, CHRI's approach throughout is to act as a catalyst around its priority issues.

The nature of CHRI's sponsoring organisations\* allows for a national presence and an international network. These professionals can also steer public policy by incorporating human rights norms into their own work and act as a conduit to disseminate human rights information, standards and practices. These groups also bring local knowledge, can access policy makers, highlight issues, and act in concert to promote human rights.

CHRI is based in New Delhi, India, and has offices in London, UK, and Accra, Ghana.

International Advisory Commission: Sam Okudzeto - Chairperson. Members: Eunice Brookman-Amissah, Murray Burt, Alison Duxbury, Yash Ghai, Neville Linton, B.G. Verghese, Zohra Yusuf and Maja Daruwala.

Executive Committee (India): B.G. Verghese - Chairperson. Members: Anu Aga, B.K.Chandrashekar, Bhagwan Das, Nitin Desai, K.S. Dhillon, Harivansh, Sanjoy Hazarika, Poonam Muttreja, Ruma Pal, R.V. Pillai and Maja Daruwala - Director

Executive Committee (Ghana): Sam Okudzeto - Chairperson. Members: Anna Bossman, B.G. Verghese, Neville Linton and Maja Daruwala- Director

Executive Committee (UK): Neville Linton - Chairperson. Members: Austin Davis, Meenakshi Dhar, Derek Ingram, Claire Martin, Lindsay Ross, Elizabeth Smith

\* Commonwealth Journalists Association, Commonwealth Lawyers Association, Commonwealth Legal Education Association, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Commonwealth Press Union and Commonwealth Broadcasting Association.

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**COMMONWEALTH HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVE  
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**CHRI's mission is to work for the *practical realisation* of human rights of all people in the Commonwealth. Human rights advocacy and education are at the core of CHRI's activities and the aims and ends of all its reports and investigations.**

**CHRI believes access to justice and access to information form the vital matrix that enables the realisation of human rights, promotion of good governance, deepening of democracy and pro-poor development. Consequently, CHRI furthers these agendas at international and national levels. To these ends, the organisation focuses on promoting mechanisms of accountability for better governance, particularly in developing countries of the Commonwealth while drawing and disseminating lessons on good practice from all.**

**CHRI was established in London in 1987 by a group of Commonwealth professional associations including Commonwealth Lawyers Association (CLA); Commonwealth Legal Education Association (CLEA); Commonwealth Journalists Association (CJA); Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA); Commonwealth Press Union (CPU); Commonwealth Broadcasting Association (CBA). CHRI shifted its Head Quarters to New Delhi, India in 1993 and established its Africa office in Accra in 2001. CHRI's family of offices in New Delhi, Accra and London, jointly implements our programme activities.**

## **1. HIGHLIGHTS OF 2007-08**

The Secretary General, Don McKinnon, spoke at a conference organised to commemorate 20 years of CHRI in September in London, and launched the Executive Summary of CHRI's 2007 Report for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), "*Stamping Out Rights: the impact of anti-terrorism laws on Policing*" at the event. The report was released at the Commonwealth Human Rights Forum, organised by CHRI as part of the Commonwealth People's Forum in Kampala, immediately preceding CHOGM 2007.

CHRI published a report titled 'Easier Said than Done: A report on the Commitments and Performances of the Commonwealth Members of the UN Human Rights Council'. The report found that none of the 13 Commonwealth members managed to fulfil all their pledges to the Council.

The Commonwealth expert group on policing found a mention on the communiqué that came out of the Committee of the Whole but was later excluded at CHOGM.

Sam Okudzeto, Chairperson of CHRI's International Advisory Commission was awarded The Order of the Volta (Member Division) by the President of Ghana, His Excellency John Agyekum Kufour, at a public ceremony on July 6, 2007 for distinguished service to the nation. Uncle Sam, as he is universally and affectionately called, is well known for his outspoken nature on national issues, and richly deserves this award.

CHRI has been accepted as an associate member of Des Ligues Des Droits De L'homme (International Federation for Human Rights) in 2007 at their triennial global networking meeting at Lisbon, Portugal, which the director attended.

## **2. HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY**

### **2.1. Overview**

CHRI has endeavoured to raise issues of human rights concern both within the Commonwealth and beyond it - the Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group, periodic meetings of ministers, the Heads of Government Meeting and more recently, involvement with the United Nations Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review process. CHRI has also engaged widely with civil society groups; encouraging human rights and governance groups to engage within the Commonwealth to further human rights objectives.

### **2.2. Activities**

#### **❖ In the Commonwealth**

##### **Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group**

CHRI has made submissions to every Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) meeting in this year. In particular CHRI has expressed its concerns on events in the Maldives, Bangladesh, The Gambia, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. In November 2007, following the declaration of a state of emergency and suspension of the Constitution in Pakistan, CHRI made submissions stating that this is a direct and serious violation of the Harare Principles and recommending that Pakistan be suspended from the Council. Subsequently in the same month CMAG made a decision to suspend Pakistan.

##### **Commonwealth Secretariat**

CHRI continues to liaise with the Commonwealth Secretariat on human rights issues more broadly, as well as specifically on policing and right to information. Since March 2006, CHRI has been sending a weekly update of human rights issues across the Commonwealth to the Human Rights Unit.

The Secretary General, Don McKinnon, spoke at a conference organised to commemorate 20 years of CHRI in September in London, and launched the Executive Summary of the 2007 Report for CHOGM, "*Stamping Out Rights: the impact of anti-terrorism laws on Policing*" at the event.

##### **Commonwealth Human Rights Network**

To enable sharing of information, collaboration and encourage combined advocacy efforts between various civil society groups, CHRI initiated the Commonwealth Human Rights Network (CHRN). Its co-convenors are the Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit and the New Zealand based Amnesty International Commonwealth Amnesty Sections. The network continues to grow with a current membership of over 370 in 43 Commonwealth countries (and 10 non-Commonwealth countries). The network is serviced by CHRI which sends out an average of four emails each week.

These despatches deal with various human rights issues ranging from briefs on issues like Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and the new Human Rights Council, to news updates from countries where human rights violations are taking place, to information on conferences and other opportunities available for CHRN members. Important information sent by members is passed on where it will do the most good. Members of the CHRN come

to the Commonwealth human rights forum (CHRF) which now takes place as a regular feature in tandem with the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

### **Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2007**

In the run up to CHOGM, CHRI furthers its own specific areas of concern, encourages others to intervene in the official Commonwealth on issues related to human rights, and makes submissions close to the event. Every two years CHRI publishes a biennial report on an issue of human rights concern. Prior to CHOGM 2007, submissions were sent to the Committee of the Whole (CoW) in London. The basis for CHRI's CoW submission was the recommendation for the Heads of Government to convene and agree to the establishment of an Expert Group on Policing. The recommendation was acceded at CoW. The establishment of the Expert Group then became one of the key focal points for CHRI as an outcome of the CHRF. The recommendation was part of the CHRF Communiqué/ Final Statement; it also was carried into the broader CPF Communiqué. However, it met with opposition at the Heads of Government Meeting and did not make it to the final CHOGM Communiqué. CHRI will continue to advocate for a Commonwealth Expert Group on policing.

### **Commonwealth Human Rights Forum**

The topic of the 2007 Commonwealth Human Rights Forum (CHRF) was 'Transforming Societies – realising People's Potential: Living up to Human Rights Commitments' and focused on the need for governments to enable civil society participation and live up to previous human rights commitments. The final communiqué from the CHRF was widely disseminated, including to all government delegations via the Secretariat, and reported in the media. The CHRF Communiqué was appended to the CPF Civil Society Communiqué, as well as being integrated within the human rights aspects of that Communiqué. Some of its content also contributed to the final input for the CHOGM Communiqué. CHRI will continue to run a human rights meeting in the eaves of the Heads of Government Meeting.

### **CHRI 2007 CHOGM Report**

CHRI's 2007 report, *Stamping Out Rights: the impact of anti-terrorism laws on policing* was launched on 20 November 2007, during the Commonwealth Human Rights Forum, as a part of the Peoples Forum, as well as CHOGM, by the Deputy Secretary General of the Commonwealth Secretariat. The report examines new counter-terrorism legislation and measures that have been adopted in the Commonwealth; how these measures are impacting policing on the ground; the compatibility of legislation and policing practices at international law; how anti-terrorism policing measures are impacting on police oversight and accountability mechanisms; and offers recommendations to Commonwealth heads of government, member states, heads of police, civil society and donors.

### **Twentieth Anniversary Conference**

CHRI's 20th Anniversary Conference was held on September 14th 2007, and titled "*Human Rights for Human Wrongs: The Continuing Commonwealth Challenge*". The conference was held in association with the Royal Commonwealth Society, with the generous support of the Joffe Charitable Trust. Several eminent persons spoke, including the Secretary General. The Conference was attended by around 65-70 people, who included representatives from DFID, the FCO, the High Commissions, Human Rights NGOs such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, Commonwealth Associations and the European Union's Democratisation and Human Rights Unit in Brussels.

CHRI released a flyer ad, press release and hosted a reception. The 2007 CHOGM Report and Overseas project news were also launched at this meeting. The Director, Africa Coordinator and the Right to Information Coordinator spoke to Voice of Africa, Sunrise Radio and on the BBC Hindi service.

### ❖ **Direct Advocacy with Governments**

As well as targeting governments through their membership in the Commonwealth, United Nations or regional bodies, CHRI has also sought to engage with them directly.

Modalities vary as CHRI is sometimes able to meet with representatives in person, while at other times communicate from afar. It selects its strategies depending on the context and issue – sometimes working more quietly behind the scenes, while at other times making its critiques more publicly and garnering strong media coverage.

### ❖ **In the United Nations**

In 2007-08, CHRI has stepped up its engagement with the UN Human Rights Council. Since its inception CHRI has been monitoring the Council's work in particular the performance of Commonwealth countries who sit in the Council. At present there are 13 such countries (Bangladesh, Canada, Cameroon, Ghana, India, Malaysia, Mauritius, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka, UK and Zambia). CHRI has in specific been monitoring the performance of these countries against pre-election pledges made to the Council by them.

CHRI has been actively engaging with other civil society groups working on the Council. In April 2007 it co-sponsored a joint statement made on the Fourth and Fifth sessions along with five other organisations. During the Sixth session CHRI co-sponsored a statement by Southern NGOs on the Universal Periodic Review Mechanism. Following the release of 'Easier Said than Done' CHRI joined a network of prominent civil society groups working around the UN Human Rights Council on a cross-regional basis. CHRI has participated in many crucial meetings of the network and has actively shaped its goals and objectives. The network allows for information and strategy sharing. CHRI participated in two crucial meetings of the network in Geneva and Sao Paulo. In the Geneva meeting CHRI confirmed its status as a core member of the network and in the Sao Paulo meeting CHRI participated in creating a global strategy for the network.

During May 2007, CHRI issued a media release on the Second elections for the UN Human Rights Council in which CHRI underlined various flaws that exist in the election system. During June 2007, upon the completion of the Council's first year, by way of increasing accountability among Commonwealth members, CHRI published a report titled 'Easier Said than Done: A report on the Commitments and Performances of the Commonwealth Members of the UN Human Rights Council'. The report found that none of the 13 Commonwealth members managed to fulfil all their pledges to the Council. 'Easier said than Done' made several recommendations to governments, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Heads of Government. CHRI plans to make this report an annual process and is currently planning the next report.

CHRI made submissions to the Fifth and Sixth sessions of the UN Human Rights Council. CHRI's submission to the Fifth session was based on its findings in 'Easier said than Done'. CHRI has been closely watching the Council and has made several statements around the crucial Fifth session of the Council in June 2007. CHRI issued a media release on the Fifth session of the Council calling upon Commonwealth members at the Council to act together to uphold Commonwealth values at the Council. CHRI's submission to the Sixth session raised concerns about the Universal Periodic Review mechanism on which a final decision

was to be taken in that session. CHRI plans to make regular submissions to future Council sessions.

During September 2007, CHRI staff attended a training programme on the UN Human Rights Council and attended the September part of the Sixth session. The training programme provided an opportunity to gain hands on experience at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. It also provided CHRI with an opportunity to network with other civil society organisations and to explore joint projects.

CHRI has actively followed progress on the new Universal Periodic Review mechanism that the UN Human Rights Council has set up. CHRI has made submissions on the three Commonwealth countries to be considered in the first review session (India, UK and South Africa) in April 2008. CHRI has also encouraged other civil society organisations to make submissions and participated in a national NGO forum in India, which subsequently made a submission to the review process. In the future CHRI will be making regular submissions to the review process and is currently preparing for the second session of the review. CHRI will work to facilitate greater participation by Commonwealth civil society in this process.

#### ❖ **In the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights**

CHRI issued a statement before the 41<sup>st</sup> Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights on the unresolved extra-judicial killings and disappearances of 44 Ghanaians in the Gambia, which have for long caused public outcry and yet, no attempt has been made to put the perpetrators to account despite calls from human rights defenders to investigate the circumstances that led to the killings and disappearances and prosecute the perpetrators.

CHRI also organised a ceremonial vigil for the victims during the 9<sup>th</sup> African Union Summit in Accra in July. CHRI also raised awareness on the incident during our Commonwealth Human rights Forum and the same was incorporated in the communiqué.

#### ❖ **Advocacy in Ghana**

##### **Advocacy against forced evictions**

CHRI undertook several fact-finding missions to Sodom and Gomorrah, Kumasi; Mallam, Accra, Dambai, Glefe to analyse forced evictions by government. In defiance of a court stay on the process, the government went about acquiring through use of force land for development projects or emptying it because it was unsafe for habitation. People repeatedly gave evidence of being forcibly removed from their homes without proper notice or adequate compensation. Concerned about the systematic manner in which local government authorities backed by excessive use of force spearheaded evictions CHRI Africa office submitted reports to the government and expressed its concern on the pattern of forced evictions. On World Habitat Day, CHRI brought the issue to the notice of delegates at a round-table Conference, organised by the United Nations and sought their intervention citing the breach of the international instruments guaranteeing the right to adequate housing. It is incumbent upon the government to devise redress measures to combat the root causes of urban poverty than resort to illegal forced evictions.

##### **Other initiatives**

Human rights advocacy by the CHRI Africa office in Accra, Ghana included:

- raising awareness and campaigning against the prevalent practice of instant justice in Ghana. CHRI compiled the first-ever report on instant justice cases in Ghana, and issued a Memorandum on Instant Justice and submitted it to the Minister of Interior.
- actively campaigning to have a lady Chief Justice appointed to the Ghana Supreme Court
- advocating for the proper establishment and operation of Mother-Baby Units (“MBU Order”) in Ghana’s female prisons
- handling 17 cases involving various human rights abuses including; police misconduct, domestic violence, child maltreatment, mysterious murders and prisoners’ amnesty. 53 cases have been forwarded to the police unit of the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit for prosecution, the Commission of Human Rights and Administrative Justice and some sent to the Legal Aid Board for legal aid assistance.
- organising the Third Annual Human Rights Lectures in Ghana as a collaborative effort by of CHRI with the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and the Ghana Bar Association (GBA).
- holding workshops and seminars with participants from civil society organisations, Government officials and the general public on vital issues relevant to human rights such as the right to information, reproductive health and child abuse.
- Pre-African Union Summit Consultative Forum titled, ‘Building Bridges for Peace in Africa’ in collaboration with the Women Peace and Security Network – Africa (WIPSEN) in Accra. The Communiqué was targeted at the African Union’s 9<sup>th</sup> Summit, which was scheduled to take place from July 1-3, 2007 in Accra, which was focused on the grand debate on the establishment of a Union-Government for African states. The Communiqué reaffirmed the member states’ commitment to implementation of various protocols and instruments on women, peace and security globally and regionally, which go a long way to meeting the needs of women in peace and security.

#### ❖ **The UK Joint Committee on Human Rights**

Part of CHRI’s preliminary steps toward developing a programme of work out of UK has involved exploring how best to create greater awareness of human rights with influential communities in-country. Toward this CHRI actively participated and intervened in the process of producing a Commonwealth Model National Plan of Action on Human Rights, by the Human Rights Unit at the Commonwealth Secretariat. The NAP is the product of an expert group formed in June 2007, which included CHRI. It is intended primarily to assist Commonwealth member countries in the process of developing their own national plan, in accordance with their national and international obligations.

In the course of the year following on work done earlier in cooperation with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, where CHRI developed an on-line course on human rights for parliamentarians, Staff also developed a short paper synopsis the work of the UK’s Joint Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights in order to provide the Commonwealth a best practice model.

#### ❖ **The UK Overseas Territories Project**

The UK Overseas Territories Project to build human rights capacity has been approved by DFID and the FCO and an announcement regarding the programme was made at CHRIs Twentieth Anniversary Conference at the evening reception, where members of the CF, the CLEA, DFID and the FCO were present. The programme is designed to strengthen the human rights mechanisms of eight Caribbean and South Atlantic societies of the UK Overseas Territories (Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Turks and Caicos Islands, Falklands, Montserrat, and St. Helena).



### **3. MEDIA ADVOCACY**

#### **3.1. Overview**

Three years ago CHRI created a two-member, specialized Media and Communications unit. Its role is to ensure that CHRI's human rights concerns are highlighted across the many diverse regions of the Commonwealth. The Unit's priority is to put out messages to the largest possible audience through engaging with the mass media. To provide visibility to the issues of concern to the organization the media unit supports CHRI's core programme areas as well as develops its own programmes and initiatives aimed at influencing media agendas and changing discourse.

The Media Unit has focused its efforts this past year to ensuring publication in many more countries of the Commonwealth and creating mass media products. The variety of mass communication interventions is indicative of this effort.

#### **3.2. Activities**

##### **❖ CHRI in the News**

- 40 articles written by staff have been published; some carried in multiple editions or media around the Commonwealth
- CHRI has been quoted in more than 300 places across the Commonwealth
- the year has also seen the increased use of press releases and these are disseminated across the web as much as in the papers
- Staff and director have appeared in 7 TV interviews and on 4 radio programmes, including an hour long solo interview intended primarily for parliamentarians
- During the year, CHRI Africa office has used the media extensively as one of its advocacy tools and recorded a total of 336 articles, features and press releases in the print, radio and television that cited and reported on CHRI related activities.

##### **❖ Media Products**

- Aired *Ab To Hum Janenge*, CHRI's 13 part radio series on RTI at various national radio broadcasting stations across North India. The series has played a major role in creating awareness of the new access to information legislation; clarifying doubts and issues regarding application procedure and challenges to refusals.
- CHRI is in discussion with NGO groups in Malaysia for developing CHRI's RTI radio Programme *Ab To Hum Janenge* into various local languages for international dissemination.
- With Canadian High Commission support CHRI has developed a radio series on Citizen's empowerment and rights vis-à-vis police. The radio programme, aimed at rural, semi-rural, urban audiences of the national radio went on air on 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2007 at Vividha Bharati Network, covering 29 stations in the Hindi speaking states.
- With support from UNDP and Government of India, CHRI has developed a pilot for a TV-Series on legal literacy and citizen's rights vis-à-vis police. CHRI is trying to find corporate funders to support the production of the full series.
- Cinema Spots: CHRI has developed a cinema spot on how to file a first information report with the police and citizen's right to have it recorded and receive a copy. This has been done in response to the common police mal-practice of refusing to record public complaints. The spots have been aired on various cinema halls across Delhi.
- CHRI aired its cinema spot on female foeticide for 3 months covering all the cinema halls of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan. These 3 states suffer from the widespread

practice of female foeticide - sex selective abortion. This gets reported in the media on a regular basis. Audience response has centred on seeking detailed information on an issue where there is widespread ignorance of law.

- CHRI has since 2007 developed a calendar around stories of successful use of RTI. It has sketches and cartoons and has become quite popular and was adapted in various languages and styles by various NGO groups to carry forward the message of the 'importance of RTI'. The Media Unit along with the RTI team is developing the annual calendar for 2008, where RTI is depicted as a problem solving genie who assures rights via the usage of RTI.
- The same genie the 'infogenie' will brand other RTI products throughout the next two years.

#### ❖ **Media Campaign on Important Issues**

The media unit is constantly developing contacts with the local and international media, NGO groups, government and the media agencies to further its issues. 'Campaigns' denote moments of heightened activity toward a specific goal or around an event.

Illustratively,

- **RTI in Jammu and Kashmir:** Mounted a media campaign to put pressure on the Governor to withhold assent to the Right to Information Amendment Bill passed by the state legislature without discussion. Flaws in the Bill were publicised and stakeholders urged to seek a better bill. In the event pressure was built, questions were asked in the legislature and the governor delayed signing the Bill and wrote to the government asking it to reconsider. However, the government certified the Right to Information law as a money bill and returned it to the governor who has no choice but to assent a money bill. The battle continues.
- **Foreign Contribution Regulation Bill:** CHRI has worked with the Voluntary Action Network India an umbrella organisation to prevent the enactment of a new Foreign Contribution law, which would severely curb the autonomy of civil society organisations. Apart from writing articles, short backgrounders were sent to the press to explain the implications of the new provisions to the functioning of civil society. Several newspapers and the Foreign Correspondent's Club took this up. Our detailed analysis and critique of the bill was circulated widely and our submissions sent to the Standing Committee on Home. As a result of the joint campaign, the Standing Committee on Home where the Bill was referred to received thousands of submissions protesting the Bill.
- **Police Reform in India:** In the course of the year's work our constant effort has been to expand the dialogue from only government and police to include many others in the discussions and developments around police reform. CHRI has issued seven press releases on the various Supreme Court hearing following the judgment including a short note on the Model Police Bill as well created a series of press briefings which are sent to point persons, and which we see incorporated in their publications. A joint CHRI campaign with a leading newspaper to highlight the need for police reforms is being finalised.
- **Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, 2007:** A month before CHOGM CHRI sent out targeted articles, fliers and briefings, plus useful information on accreditation, the Commonwealth Human Rights Forum, and People's Forum to select media contacts, as well as to listservs and other electronic outlets. The Launch of our biennial Report was covered by Reuters and made its way in The Washington Post, ABC and other leading international portals and papers.

- **Campaign on Pakistan:** Beginning with CHRI's statement of concern on the issue of judicial independence in Pakistan to the imposition of emergency to its final expulsion from the Councils of Commonwealth, CHRI sent four releases on the state of emergency calling on the Commonwealth to suspend Pakistan. Our releases were carried in more than 60 places, by leading international news agencies and most importantly it was taken up by the Pakistan print and the electronic media.
- **Right to Know Day:** To publicise this day each year since 2005 CHRI sends media backgrounders and articles on RTI targeting specific regions of the Commonwealth to inform and educate people of the importance of Freedom of Information and advocate hard for the enactment and implementation of Right to Information laws in the respective jurisdictions. (Targeting print, radio and the electronic media).

## **4. ACCESS TO JUSTICE**

### **4.1. Police Reforms**

#### **4.1.1. Overview**

The police reforms programme continues to position itself as a pre-eminent resource on policing in the Commonwealth, building from the 2005 report to the Commonwealth Heads of Government on police accountability and the ten years of CHRI work on police reform in India. During 2007, the programme continued its work in East Africa, developed a closer cooperation between the Delhi office and the Ghana office's police work and began to expand the programme into South Asia.

Activities focused on advocacy, research, capacity building and technical resourcing. Programme staff spoke at conferences in South Africa, Uganda and the United Kingdom and facilitated conferences in India (for South Asia) and Kenya (for East Africa). Existing partnerships – with local actors, civil society, regional bodies and governments – were strengthened and new friends made, as more and more individuals, groups and governments take up police reform. Two major publications were released, on police accountability in South Asia and Ghana, joining the 2006 reports on police accountability in each of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

#### **4.1.2. Activities**

##### **➤ East Africa**

The programme built on the 2006 release of the reports on police accountability in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, as well as its 2006 regional conference on police accountability. The programme shifted away from its previous research-heavy focus, to an approach centred around capacity building, advocacy and acting as a technical resource.

In March 2007, programme staff were invited to speak at an IDASA conference on post-conflict policing in sub-Saharan Africa, on the role of civil society in police reform in Uganda. This invitation was recognition of the increasing profile CHRI has as a technical resource on policing, particularly in East Africa. The IDASA meeting was used to further develop CHRI's policing networks across the African continent, as well as highlighting its work in East Africa.

In June 2007, CHRI co-facilitated a conference on police accountability and effectiveness in Eastern Africa with the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) and the African Police Civilian Oversight Forum (APCOF), in Nairobi, Kenya. The conference was held over three days and was attended by over sixty delegates from Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, hailing from across civil society, national human rights institutions, police oversight agencies, judiciary, academia, government bodies, diplomatic corps, international organisations and the media. The conference covered three key themes particularly relevant to police accountability in Eastern Africa – elections, counter-terrorism responses and crime. The addition of counter-terrorism as a component was a direct follow-up on CHRI's 2007 report to CHOGM. The conference concluded with a strong delegate response supporting CHRI involvement in police change in East Africa in the future. The conference also led to ongoing discussions with both national human rights institutions in the region and APCOF regarding the potential of developing the meet into a series of annual conferences on police accountability in the region.

In August 2007, CHRI acted as a technical resource for a HURINET-Uganda police training workshop for civil society organisations in Uganda. The invitation to resource this training is recognition of CHRI's past Uganda work, and its continuing involvement in both Government-led and civil society police change processes in the jurisdiction. CHRI presentations focused on civil society's role in police reform and the conceptual framework of policing in Africa. The workshop further extended CHRI's reach in Uganda and strengthened its local Ugandan network.

CHRI's 2007 work in East Africa focused on consolidating its existing work and further developing its partnerships in the region. CHRI has a strong relationship with local civil society organisations (including HURINET-U, also a partner for the Commonwealth Human Rights Forum), regional industry bodies (such as the East Africa Law Society), national human rights institutions (in each jurisdiction) and continental and international groups (the African Police Civilian Oversight Forum and the International Network of Independent Oversight of Policing). CHRI is also developing a strong relationship with the Ugandan police force. This work provides the programme with the strong foundation that it needs to entrench CHRI's work in the region in the next couple of years.

#### ➤ **South Asia**

The programme began its expansion into South Asia with a roundtable on police accountability in the region in March 2007. The roundtable was held in New Delhi and brought together fifty representatives from India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Pakistan, as well as experts from Britain and Northern Ireland. Delegates were from across government, civil society, media, human rights institutions and police organisations. The roundtable was the first time that the key players in policing from across South Asia were given the opportunity to meet and discuss the challenges, commonalities and future of policing in a South Asian context.

The programme worked to develop a South Asian policing network, building from the delegates who attended the regional roundtable. The network was engaged through regular updates on policing issues through electronic medium, including the e-mag Commonwealth PoliceWatch.

The roundtable was followed up with the release of a report into police accountability in South Asia. Advocacy around this report and its findings will form a major component of the work of the programme in South Asia during 2008.

#### ➤ **Pacific Islands**

The police programme planned a closer engagement with police reform issues in the Pacific from 2007, building on the work of the right to information programme. This direct engagement was postponed following feedback from donors and civil society in the region.

CHRI continues to monitor and make use of police-change opportunities as they arise. For example, in July 2007, CHRI made a submission to the New Zealand Police Act Review. CHRI was subsequently invited by the New Zealand Police Act Review Team to contribute to a closed, second generation Police Act Wiki, which involved commenting on proposed police legislation and proposing alternative approaches. In 2008, CHRI will critique the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) and seek to facilitate engagement with civil society in the Pacific around the issue of Australia and New Zealand policing in the Solomon Islands.

### ➤ **CIVICUS World Assembly**

In May 2007, CHRI facilitated an engagement workshop for participants attending the CIVICUS World Assembly in Glasgow, Scotland. The workshop, titled *Police accountability: Practical mechanisms for a just world*, involved a panel presentation and discussion, looking at police accountability mechanisms in Africa, the Caribbean and South Asia.

### ➤ **Commonwealth PoliceWatch Electronic Magazine**

The programme produced two editions of the *Commonwealth PoliceWatch* electronic magazine during 2007. *Commonwealth PoliceWatch* continued to receive a high number of hits to its website (on average around 6000 hits each month), beyond its distribution as an electronic newsletter (to 1400 contacts). The ninth edition of the magazine, which was released in November 2007, just before the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, focused on issues of counter-terrorism and policing, to tie in with the launch of the 2007 CHOGM report and maximise the impact of CHRI's work around CHOGM.

### ➤ **Commonwealth Expert Group**

A Commonwealth Expert Group on Policing had been a major focus for the police team at the end of 2005 and in early 2006. Advocacy on the group was suspended until mid-2007, following advice from the Commonwealth Secretariat that a mandate from the Heads of Government was required to constitute the group.

During the second half of 2007, CHRI staff met with identified national consular staff in UK to push the adoption of an Expert Group at CHOGM. CHRI staff also successfully lobbied to have the Expert Group included in the pre-CHOGM recommendations of the Committee of the Whole and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

### ➤ **India**

The completion of the first decade of the police programme in India has seen a tremendous surge in police reform activity all over the country, spurred by a Supreme Court judgment delivered in September 2006. CHRI's efforts have concentrated on creating a demand for policing that meets the current standards as well as advocating for quality improvement through new and improved systems, structures, laws, policies and procedures.

The programme promotes the principles of accountability, transparency and participation in policing through its public education, media intervention, capacity building of civil society and policy intervention in every known state activity on police reform. The Supreme Court judgment provided a critical and long overdue momentum for the police reform agenda that CHRI has been advocating over the last decade.

### **Raising Civil Society Awareness**

Once the Supreme Court judgment was delivered, CHRI undertook the task of widely publicizing the directives of the Court in a bid to ensure that the impact of the Court's directives is realized across the country. The methods selected for raising awareness were to target civil society in as many states as possible through workshops and media interventions aimed at building the capacity of non state actors and key stakeholders to monitor police reform and police performance in their own states. This was coupled with publicizing the positive features of the Model Police Act 2006.

Over 20 workshops targeting civil society were held for the eight states of the North East, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan, Punjab and one at the national level in Delhi, bringing together representatives from the majority of states and union territories. Most state and regional-level workshops also included a focused media workshop or media conference.

### **Monitoring Compliance with the Supreme Court's Directives**

An integral part of CHRI's advocacy work included a compliance monitoring programme. This programme monitored state and central government's responses to the Supreme Court's directives, and a database of state responses and actions was used to inform media, civil society and the Supreme Court about the current state of police reform nationwide, as asserted by states in their affidavits to the Court. Brief reports on each state's compliance were also prepared for dissemination to the media and civil society. In many states, CHRI's dissemination of information on state government responses to the Court sparked legal and media activity among players who had no access to this information prior to CHRI's release of state compliance reports.

In addition to state compliance reports, material disseminated included a detailed in-depth analytical paper on compliance, and a national overview document that was kept up-to-date with developments on a monthly basis.

### **Building a People's Campaign for Better Policing**

CHRI's endeavours in police reform are geared to policing services meeting the standards that currently exist (laws, procedures) as well as quality improvement through new and improved systems, structures, procedures (such as mandated by the Supreme Court directives). This involves a paradigm shift from a police force to a police service which is people-centred. To move towards people-centred policing, the involvement of people at a number of levels is integral. One of the strategies to create this paradigm shift is to initiate a peoples' campaign for better policing, to build a constituency of assertive users/consumers of policing services (since policing is a state monopoly, people cannot shop around for a better product – they have to assert that the only police they have works better for them), to strengthen good governance principles within the police and to make it more difficult for bad practice to occur/recur.

The state and regional workshops have been a primary method to sow the seeds for the start of a people's campaign for better policing in each state. Other strategies have included the targeting of grass roots activists and NGOs with wide networks in states, to initiate and sustain an ongoing campaign, wherein people exert their influence on the state government. It is recognized that building a people's campaign for better policing is a long-term venture, but it is also acknowledged that ultimately pressure exerted by the people in a democratic country is possibly the only way to compel the state to usher reform when it is resistant. The use of multilingual materials developed by state partners has aided this process. Electronic groups of interested and active people have been set up in many of the states where CHRI has intervened to facilitate communication and collective strategizing on state issues.

### **Advocating for Transparency in Police Act Drafting Activity Nationwide**

One of the impacts of the Supreme Court judgment has been a spate of legislative activity in states that have recently enacted new police laws or are in the process of doing so. The Court directed all governments to implement its instructions immediately until it drafted appropriate state legislation to replace either the archaic and colonial

Police Act of 1861 or the Police Acts of some states, which also have been modelled on the 1861 Act.

Eight states have enacted new police legislation in this period, whilst one is awaiting the assent of the Governor to enact it. In every state that CHRI has intervened, it has made the alarming discovery that legislative activity is conducted in complete secrecy by state governments, with such critical laws of public impact as new police laws being passed with no debate in legislative assemblies.

CHRI has made the need for transparency in police act drafting activities a central theme of its intervention. To further this, CHRI has published numerous articles in mainstream and vernacular media, written to state government functionaries and politicians, urged police act drafting committee members and people's representatives to consult widely and encouraged the use of the Right to Information Act 2005 to elicit information about government activity in this regard.

In states where it is known that police act drafting is underway, CHRI has publicized this information along with details of drafting committee members, analyses of any draft bills and supported state-based action to pressure governments into undertaking wide consultation. This has been an up-hill battle, with many state governments being closed to the notion of community consultation on policing issues.

### **Analysing New State Police Laws and Promoting Public Discussion about Them**

Closely linked to the issue of greater transparency in police act drafting activities is the dissemination of user-friendly information about newly enacted police laws and demystifying the belief that laws can only be read and interpreted by a select few. CHRI has been at the forefront of obtaining recently enacted laws or bills prior to their enactment as a law, critiquing these, and circulating it widely for public discussion and debate. CHRI has analysed the new police laws of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Tripura and Assam vis-à-vis their compliance with the Supreme Court directives and the Model Police Act 2006. Further CHRI has also analysed the Karnataka Police (Amendment) Bill 2007, the Rajasthan Police Bill 2007 and the Punjab Police Act 2007. Comparative analysis of police reform activities or police bills/laws have also been conducted, such as between the four southern states of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala, and the northern states of Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab as a way of leveraging progressive features.

#### **➤ Ghana**

CHRI's police accountability project has already demonstrated effectiveness.

- In its first year, the activities of the Africa office's police accountability programme (public hearings, addressing Parliament and generating media attention for police wrongdoing) resulted in the reappointment of the Police Council, a Constitutional police oversight mechanism which had lapsed with the end of the last Presidential term.
- In its second year, the project focused on
  - lobbying around the drafting of a National Policing Policy for Ghana
  - conducting a series of regional community-police forums
  - putting together a national forum on policing in Ghana's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year
  - releasing a number of legal literacy pamphlets aimed at assisting members of the community to understand and exercise their basic legal rights
  - putting together a major report on police accountability in Ghana (a sibling publication to the East Africa reports and upcoming South Asia report)



## **Police Accountability Report for Ghana**

The police accountability report on Ghana, is titled, “The Police, The People, The Politics: Police Accountability in Ghana” and addresses the pressing issue of police reform in Ghana. Despite a strong foundation on paper, there is still a lack of capacity to effectively monitor police activities and accountability within the police in Ghana. There are two clear reasons for this. The first is that while there are mechanisms in place (such as the Police Intelligence and Professional Standards Bureau) they are undermined, under-resourced or underpowered. The second is that a key component of the accountability web – an independent, empowered civilian complaints authority – has not been put in place in Ghana.

The 2007 report seeks to examine the context of policing in Ghana, by exploring the legislative framework as well as the internal and external accountability mechanisms. It is CHRI’s contention that the Ghanaian police are ready for reform, and that the Ghanaian community is ready for a police service that reflects its role as a model of successful and stable democratic change for other African nations. This document will serve as a comprehensive guide, which will drastically improve information on policing in the public domain and will form the basis of our advocacy and police accountability work in Ghana.

### **Public-Police Forums**

An innovation of the Ghana police accountability project has been the series of public-police forums. The forums, which have taken place in a number of different regions, bring together communities, senior police officers and victims of police misconduct to engage in an open dialogue around policing in the community. This process has allowed the police to understand the community’s experience of policing and also has helped the community to understand the challenges faced by officers working in a difficult environment. The workshops have worked to bring the community and the police much closer together, improving policing for the community and making police work more effective.

### **National Jubilee Lectures on Policing in Ghana.**

CHRI in collaboration with the Ghana Police Service has organised National Jubilee lectures on Policing to commemorate Ghana’s 50 years of independence. The theme for the lectures was “Reflections on 50 years of Post Independence Policing in Ghana: Assessing its impact on Democratic Governance, the Rule of Law and Protection of Human Rights”. Participants included representatives from the GPS, Ghana Armed Forces, Customs Excise and Preventive Service, Ghana Immigration Service, Ghana Fire Service, Bureau of National Investigations (BNI), former IGPs, former Directors of BNI, the media and members of the general public.

### **Advocacy against police brutality**

The frequency of police brutality has necessitated the adoption of education against police brutality. CHRI sees a strong need for a campaign through posters, radio and TV commercials with the aim of creating awareness, educating people on the extent of police brutality that is going on in the Ghanaian society and to name and shame police officers involved in committing such violence.

CHRI also believes that the culpable officers should be prosecuted for their conduct, which is admittedly criminal. To this end, CHRI is collaborating with the Legal Resources

Centre to identify some of the police officers involved during the Anloga disturbance and facilitate their prosecution at the courts of law.

In advocating against police brutality CHRI has recommended improvement in police training. The training programmes are inadequate. Police complain that instead of being taught skills that reinforce their role as community protectors, too much emphasis is placed on non-critical areas, such as parade and fatigue. There is little ongoing training; in many places, members of the police organisation do not even have access to basic documents, such as the Constitution, the Police Service Act or Police Service Instructions.

When its findings so indicate, CHRI also works to build positive community attitudes towards the police. For instance, during its investigations into the Farmer-Herder clashes in the Afram Plains, CHRI representatives along with the police met the community led by their chiefs to educate them about the role of the police in the protection of the community. CHRI called upon the residents to abide by the law in settling their disputes.

## **4.2. Prison Reforms**

### **4.2.1. Overview**

The prisons programme is now a decade old. It is limited to India. Initially, the programme concentrated on effectuating the statutory prison visiting system in the belief that better oversight would improve conditions and ensure that corrupt and illegal practices were halted and, most of all, that there was much better public scrutiny of and involvement in, prison management systems. As prisons are a state subject, the programme has to develop effective interventions state by state. We have had some success in activating the prison visiting system in some states of the country. In addition, our interventions and knowledge of CHRI's scrutiny has changed bad situations in other instances. However, the classic factors that go into making permanent systemic change such as a driving public opinion, political will, and a consistent official responsiveness, remain elusive.

### **4.2.2. Activities**

Programme activities this year were concentrated in AP and Rajasthan with some activities in other states such as Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and MP. AP and Rajasthan have seen more activity because our consultants are based there and language and networks pose no problem. In the other states work is sporadic but being built. Karnataka, a new focus state has been added in the middle of this year.

#### **❖ Andhra Pradesh**

Our engagement with prisoners' rights in AP is now three years old. It takes the form of studies, occasional workshops, and constant dialogue with the ministry, judiciary, district magistrates, the state human rights commission, legal aid authority, prisoners and their families. In the course of the year CHRI has:

- Provided constant input of facts, figures, ground level situational analysis to the *amicus curiae* in ongoing litigation before the high court and has shaped the direction of the continuing mandamus orders as well as provided feed back to the court enabling it to monitor prison conditions;

- Intervened in the development of government's revised prison manual. We have been assured that our suggestions will be incorporated into the revised manual;
- Engaged with the district magistrates providing them with literature and assisting them in monitoring prison conditions. The response has not been even, but there is a recognition of the necessity of abiding by their statutory duties;
- CHRI engaged with prison visitors, media, political parties, lawyers' forums, freedom fighters' associations, high court, judicial academy, and prisoners; and held a series of meetings to highlight prison related issues in particular the need to evolve a transparent system and steady criteria for dealing with tough problems like the release of prisoners sentenced to life-terms, as well as the condition of prisons. We also represented prisoners before the State Human Rights Commission. Our continuous engagement with the issue could bring pressure on the government to agree to streamline the process of releasing prisoners and to act upon it;
- Provided constant updates to the Chief Justice about the lack of legal assistance to under-trials and the inability of prisoners to ventilate any grievance;
- Visited prisons in cooperation with the AP State Legal Services Authority, magistrates and judicial officers and held discussions with them on ways of improving their performance. CHRI has consistently reported back to the Authority about the functioning of its cells and on the basis of assessment of performance of these authorities, organized a training workshop on Legal Aid for Prisoners at Hyderabad for Senior Civil Judges;
- Presented a study on increasing deaths in prison to the State Human Rights Commission: The Commission has taken the findings seriously and is impressing upon the government for the implementation of measures suggested by CHRI. Our relation with SHRC continues as we keep bringing the issues of human rights violations, especially torture and solitary confinements, to its notice.

## ❖ **Rajasthan**

Our Consultant in Rajasthan has been conducting programmes of legal awareness for the lower judiciary free legal aid functionaries police lawyers and prison officers along with other civil rights based NGOs such as People's Watch, Academy for Socio-Legal Studies, People's Union for Civil Liberties and Indian Association for Prison, Probation and Aftercare (IAPPA). Four such workshops have been held, one each in Ajmer, Jodhpur, Jaipur and Kota, in which the State Human Rights Commission was represented by the Chairperson.

Discussions focussed on:

- Measures for effective use of Probation of Offenders Act;
- Bail (and bond) provisions and their rational use for dealing with rising prison population;
- Law, rules and SC directives concerning appeals by convicted prisoners;
- Control of undue restraint and torture on prison inmates;
- Prison labour, vocational training, wages and possible rehabilitation of released prisoners;
- Effective reintegration of long term inmates with their family and community; and
- Community participation in prison reforms

The Rajasthan State Legal Services Authority (RSLSA) has co-opted the Consultant of CHRI as a member on the Legal Awareness Committee. This gives us an opportunity to bring before the Authority various issues relating to prisoners legal rights and free legal aid to deserving inmates. On the suggestion of the consultant in a meeting held on October 10, 2007 the President of the RSLSA has issued instructions to all District Legal Service Authorities (District Judges) to physically inspect all prisons within their jurisdiction to ensure that no mentally sick prisoner under judicial remand is kept in the prison without proper treatment and that steps are taken to restore them to their families after release. They have also been directed to ensure that prisoners who suffer from chronic mental sickness should not be held in prisons for a period more than the highest sentence awardable in the offence committed by them and appropriate steps are taken to terminate judicial proceedings against them after such time.

On the invitation of Department of Prisons, CHRI Consultant has helped frame new rules called Rajasthan Prisoners Parole and Leave Rules. These draft rules are pending with the state Government for final approval by the Law Department.

### ❖ **Expansion**

**Into Karnataka:** CHRI has been very active in the state with its study of the conditions and management of prisons having completed its field visits to 40 of the prisons in the state in February. There is ongoing interaction with the Government of Karnataka concerning the findings of this study and the practices being followed in many of the prisons. Following recommendations by CHRI, a number of government orders were issued dated 18/03/2008 regarding; illegal provision of cook-able food to prisoners in a number of prisons; provision of facilities for visitors, and; the exhibition of information regarding visiting and interview rules and appropriate channels for complaint. These circulars have all referred explicitly to CHRI and have seen positive implementation in follow-up visits to Mysore, Medakeri and Tumkur prisons.

**Into Tamil Nadu:** CHRI has done preliminary research on prison conditions using conventional web-based research and requests under the Right to Information Act, 2005. The response of the Tamil Nadu government to the RTI request is positive and in right direction. A workshop on 'Human Rights in Prisons Management' was jointly organised by CHRI, Prisons Department, Government of Karnataka, and Regional Institute of Correctional Administration (RICA) – Vellore, on 29 March 2008 in Vellore, Tamil Nadu for newly recruited prison officers and medical officers. The purpose was to give the new recruits a clear picture of the role of prison officials; essential elements of imprisonment; and logic of prisoners' rights. It also addressed difficulties faced by prison functionaries and getting the best out of prisons for both prisoners and staff.

**In Maharashtra:** CHRI met with the Principal Secretary for Prisons, Government of Maharashtra and has discussed the proposal of studying the functioning of Prison Visiting System in the state. The Secretary has agreed to appoint NOVs of prisons in the entire state with the intervention of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. Once they are appointed, CHRI shall hold orientation workshops for them to impart essential inputs for their effective functioning for betterment of prison conditions.

We have also been asked to review and critique the Prison Management System (PMS), a computerization project in its initial stages that was initiated by IG Prisons – Maharashtra. PMS is an online web-based system to be implemented in prisons across Maharashtra, which will incorporate various modules of prison administration and help manage the data pertaining to prisoners, prison staff as well as the visits made by family

members. This would be an effective tool to monitor the implementation of Prison Visiting System and would ensure that the information recorded is complete, concise and legible.

CHRI along with PRAYAS, an NGO associated with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai and working for the reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners, organized a conference of Probation Officers of the state in Pune on October 2-3, 2007 to discuss measures for an effective use of the provisions of Probation of Offenders Act for the benefit of both, the offenders and the society. CHRI Consultant and Research Associates resourced the workshop and on the basis of suggestions emanating from this conference, the Department of Women and Child Development has instituted measures to streamline the system both in the courts and in prisons.

#### **At National Level:**

- **Scoping Study:** Traditionally, communities have not been much involved with prisons. Yet international practice indicates that it is through long term community interventions, at first humanitarian and then more rights based that institutional changes have been wrought. In India, civil society has never had a role in the management of government run custodial institutions. Nevertheless there is a tradition of charitable and ameliorative work in prisons. CHRI at the encouragement of the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust has been exploring the possibility of bringing together people working in prisons already and providing them with greater capacity to intervene effectively. The first step has been a National Scoping Study, along with Prayas. The study is an attempt to compile a description of the current "Extent and Role of Community Involvement and Participation in Prisons" at various levels – grassroots, policy and funding. The functions and duties of existing NGOs working in the Prisons have been collated in order to assess the role they play and how the community is involved in correctional work.

Between CHRI and Prayas the study looked at prison work in 14 states where our researchers contacted 138 NGOs. CHRI and Prayas have jointly interviewed NGOs/CBOs in Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Goa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal. All the data obtained from them on a commonly agreed question-schedule has been compiled in an easily readable format, and will provide for comparative analysis of the:

- Extent of community involvement across states;
  - Initiatives taken by NGOs;
  - Capacity building requirements of the various NGOs;
  - Perception of prison reform and the area which needs immediate attention according to these NGOs;
  - Concerns and challenges faced by organizations working in this sector.
- **National Roundtable on community participation in Prisons:** Following the completion of the National Scoping Study (conducted in 14 states across India) a national roundtable was organised on 'Community Participation in Prisons – Lessons Learnt & the Way Forward' on 25 March 2008 in New Delhi. The purpose of the roundtable was to bring together people already working in prisons and understand their particular concerns so we can work together better. The need for sustained and responsible civil society involvement that would increase its impact as well as its legitimacy was a major theme of the meeting. The roundtable was successful in initiating a dialogue by providing a platform to all the participating NGOs to share their diverse experiences in the field of prison reforms. It spanned from micro to macro level interventions. It provided an opportunity to know and acknowledge

other existing NGOs in their region doing substantial reform work, which would assist in future coordinated interventions. It also helped identify neglected areas to be addressed in future.

- **Prison Visits to Suggest Strategies for Review of Undertrial Prisoners:** CHRI staff visited prisons in Agra, Ajmer, Jaipur, Kota, Pune and Thane. Discussions with the prison administration on the recent amendments in the Criminal Procedure Code (Cr.P.C) and the various provisions by which undertrials could be released under various provisions of the existing law, has yielded good results, especially in Agra and parts of Rajasthan. CHRI used every opportunity to stress on the importance of coordination between various State agencies including the police, judiciary, legal aid cells, state legal authorities, human rights commissions, representatives in the Home Department and Non Governmental Organizations working towards reforming prisons. We have made suggestions about the provision of phone facilities to prisoners within prisons at a nominal rate, which would facilitate contact between inmates and their family members.

### **4.3. JUDICIAL COLLOQUIA**

The Judicial Colloquia programme lying dormant for a couple of years entered a growth phase in 2006 and has now been reinvigorated. The four years of continued court observation and case watch in Gujarat has evolved to include judicial training and rebuild the judicial colloquia programme. The series begun in the State of Andhra Pradesh after an invitation from the Chief Justice to hold a series of workshops with the subordinate judiciary on “Human Rights in the Administration of Justice.” This exchange came to be particularly designed for Sessions Judges and magistrates which essentially form the backbone of the judicial system.

The first exchange was held with about 45 judges of Chittoor district at Tirupati in February, 2007, which four of the high court judges also attended. As part of the follow up and impact assessment of the workshop, CHRI did a week long court observation in courts of eight mandals of Chittoor district. The trip was made four months after the first orientation workshop and was intended to gather the judge’s impression of the workshop, assess future needs and most of all to ascertain whether the functioning of the judges/judicial officers had incorporated any of the orientation’s learnings. A detailed report of the observation was prepared and submitted to the Chief Justice who took some immediate action and promised to take some remedial measures. The Chief Justice had also suggested that similar observations be done in other districts of the State.

The second exchange was held in Hyderabad in October 2007 with 42 newly recruited judicial officers. The exchange provided these officers an opportunity to discuss the problems they will be expected to grapple with in their courtrooms. The workshop was organized in coordination with the Andhra Pradesh Judicial Academy. We are working with the Judicial Academy on institutionalising the workshops and incorporating the materials into their training materials.

### **4.4. GUJARAT –COURT OBSERVATION AND PARALEGAL TRAINING**

#### **4.4.1. Overview**

The original demonstration project in Gujarat within our Access to Justice Programme is now five years old. In 2002 our energies focused on demonstrating that it is possible even in extremely difficult circumstances for the criminal justice system to deliver. In the last five years we have followed the ten cases that we selected in 2002. As we went along we documented each case inside and outside court and all that we did in detail for

a future record that would indicate the frailties of the system in the context of the poor, minorities and suggest remedies. This is an ongoing activity.

Early on in the project CHRI had realised that in addition to demonstrating the possibility of pursuing remedies at law the key to assured long term access to justice was to ensure that communities were left with embedded permanent legal resources and knew how to demand performance from the system. For this reason, CHRI introduced a paralegal training programme to ensure that people themselves began to demand better service from the police, from the courts and from their local government officials. Our notion was to create such good processes and products that though initially targeted at victim communities they would naturally attract vulnerable groups who suffer the same deprivations of rights and entitlements and that this would make common cause between badly alienated neighbours. We believed that the language of law and rights provides a common matrix upon which to build mutual respect, tolerance and peace. We have been proved right in as much as we have managed in our court programme to assist in bringing in some really valuable verdicts against those seen as impervious to the consequences of their criminal actions and in having Hindu and Muslim communities slowly come together to seek remedies through an understanding of the equalizing effect of law and the sense that it provides a set of rules for fair play that levels the playing field for all.

## **Activities**

### **❖ Legal Assistance**

#### **Case watch**

Hundreds of cases have emanated out of the Gujarat communal riots of 2002. While most people working on this preferred to take the cases directly to the Supreme Court, CHRI chose instead to demonstrate that faceless perpetrators hiding behind the anonymity of mob violence could be brought to book in the local courts.

In the last five years CHRI is following ten cases to observe and assist the more serious cases pertaining to death/murder. From these we selected those where we had assisted the victims/witnesses to lodge their complaints at the police station as well as those where victims and witnesses were sure that they wanted to fight for justice. After almost three years of sustained efforts, four of the cases in which CHRI provided victim/witness support and legal assistance, ended in conviction and life sentences for all the accused. In the fifth case out of a total of 40 accused 11 were convicted but 29 let off. However the main persons have been convicted. Unfortunately one case which had influential persons as accused ended in an acquittal of all 13 persons.

Other cases are ongoing and at different stages of trial. It is also important to mention here that till date none of the witnesses involved have turned hostile. This in itself is an impact because it is near universal for victims and witnesses to be pressurized by the perpetrators and even by their own to cave in and compromise outside court because of threats or the promise of money.

As part of the case watch CHRI has been documenting the entire case process from investigation to trial. This detailed documentation is used to identify areas of the criminal justice system that require systemic change and to create sound arguments for practical reform. In addition, it informs other areas of CHRI's Access to Justice Programme most particularly the judicial training programme where the incidents are used as case studies to question common judicial infirmities and elicit response.

## ❖ Legal literacy

### Trainings

The paralegal trainings with the local communities were started with a view to leave behind a permanent legal resource base within the community. A needs assessment was done in each area, and selections were made on the basis of some set criteria like basic literacy, capacity for articulation, and a demonstrated interest in resolving local concerns through legal means. Care was taken to include men and women of varying age, religion, and caste. The short-list was put before the community, and the final selection was made after community sanction. The year long training progressed from the basics of what is law, to its value and importance, to rights and entitlements, attitudes and how action beyond awareness could change lives. After each three day training session the group is encouraged to test their learning in their localities, identify problem areas and strategise a solution. It worked. With each success they had, the motivation to go from learning to action increased.

Training was followed with continued capacity building of the paralegals. A second round of training has also been completed. The third round of trainings was done with “Gram Mitras” (*Friends of the Village*) – who are village persons selected by the administration to assist in village development schemes. These Gram Mitras showed an active interest in the training as it would directly assist and benefit their work. The intervention is now four years old, there are 30 active paralegals and at least 200 who assist in the process and more getting involved each day, there are two Citizens Advice Centres (CACs) and three newsletters that come out every month and reaches out to about 6000 people across the State.

Paralegals are now intervening in cases, demanding accountability from government departments, making sure that benefits of government sponsored schemes are reaching the beneficiaries, and are even being invited as resource persons by government to train, teach and raise awareness. Such a change within a relatively short period has proven that continued legal education is integral to the access of citizens and communities to the Justice System.

A similar initiative with the Friends of Police was started early this year. ‘Friends of Police’ is a scheme introduced by the state with a view to improving the public perception of the police. Certain people from amongst the community are selected by the police under this scheme. They meet regularly at the police station, but their meetings seldom discuss any issues pertaining to police public relationships. Wanting to know more about citizens’ rights vis-à-vis the police, a group of friends of police approached us for a formal training. After completion of a few trainings the group has taken on their role seriously. They insist that their monthly meetings held at the police station discuss people’s problems pertaining to the police, police malpractices and demands accountability from their police station.

## ❖ Citizen’s Advice Centres

Paralegals trained by CHRI have been quick to see the value of providing legal advice to broader citizenry. For the minority community, to be seen as active and empowered, adds stature and provides safety as well. Within six months of the training, paralegals broached the idea of citizen advice centres. Today two centres not only provide and disseminate information on a broad range of laws and legal concepts and government



schemes. The centres also coordinate with government departments. The uniqueness of these centres lies in the fact that they are completely run by the community. CHRI's role is limited to providing minimal financial support, technical assistance, horizontal linkages and networks and monitoring the functioning of the Centres. The centres are increasingly independent and are intended to be entirely self sufficient and stand alone at the end of the project.

Government has recently offered to give the centres a grant to carry out more legal literacy, and help with making government department functioning more effective. An initiative which started with a group of disparate people coming together because they had been severely affected by the riots has grown into one involving a diverse set of men and women with a common objective of improving their lives and claiming their rights.

#### ❖ **Newsletters**

The monthly newsletters were a natural outcome of the trainings and the centres. The idea to publish these was the result of the paralegals' own evaluation of the community's needs and things they could do to address those needs. Each edition contains current events and real cases within the community demonstrating how the law can be utilized to remedy a wide spectrum of issues. These newsletters and other similar material are widely anticipated and have an avid audience, with as yet unmet demand. They are widely circulated among the community, various government departments, and NGOs.

#### ❖ **Platforms and Further Training**

Paralegal interventions are welcome and wanted in the community at the same time paralegals are viewed as competition by the formal bar. However paralegals need the Bar to help the community. CHRI has acted as a bridge to build confidence between the two. It undertook a series of lectures with the University and with local lawyers to build confidence and demystify what paralegals were doing. It has now built up a small cadre of lawyers who are in touch with paralegals and work with them on a response basis. The relationship is pro bono. But a financial aspect is added when the centres refer cases to lawyers. This initiative has made certain that a formal connection with the legal fraternity has been permanently established. The University has solicited 'real life' lectures. CHRI has undertaken to do this on alternate Saturdays, again as a means of connecting graduate students to the community and bringing some of them into pro bono work. The impact of paralegal training can be seen in the demand for the training which now comes from much further afield, from women's self help groups, development NGOs, local government training institutes, and the Bar.

#### ❖ **Right to Information**

CHRI has a well established Commonwealth wide access to information programme. In India its objective has moved from getting the law passed to ensuring it is widely known and properly implemented. In Gujarat the legal literacy programme added a right to information component relatively recently.

In order to ensure that local government agencies were functioning according to statutory norms and the benefits of development were reaching the poor the paralegals often need to get different types of information from various governments departments. This is never easy. Officials believe that all information belongs to the government and there is no reason that citizens should be entitled to it. The passing of the Right to Information Act in 2005 seemed to provide a solution. CHRI began teaching the law at

the paralegal trainings. This included simplifying the Act, indicating the link of law to life and skills training and dry run exercises in obtaining information.

With first attempts successful, paralegals now use the Act routinely. They tell us that their work has become considerably easier by using RTI. Government held information is now demanded as a right and government had no option but to give information. The first thing our paralegals did was to multiply the knowledge. They trained others, informed more through the newsletters and CHRI helped by providing public education material, and choreographing street plays which they take all over the area.

Knowledge of right to information ignites people. They asked for information on all sorts of issues and it began coming in - not without resistance though. Still it became clear that in a state that prides itself on administrative efficiency, malpractice and corruption is rife. Malpractices are exposed, corrupt officials have been fined and suspended, health care facilities in remote villages improved, ration shops, which are the food life line to a significant number of people, have started to function as per the norm.

With an initial view to demonstrate the effect of concentrated legal interventions throughout its five years in Gujarat CHRI deliberately restricted its geographic area to three towns and its neighbouring villages in one district. In the third year work started to spread. *Today through the paralegals its outreach is 53 villages. The spread is due to the paralegals as the office remains small and catalytic and is an indication of the success of our strategy which includes our own withdrawal out of the area.*

Efforts to promote and spread RTI have been recognized by the administration as well. The district and block administration has availed of CHRI's help to train its officers (Public Information Officers) on the Act. Trainings have been held with the PIOs at the Collector's office, Taluka office, Mamlatdar Office and at the village level with Talatis (village revenue official).

In the course of the year, CHRI has also been invited by the Sardar Patel Institute of Public Administration (SPIPA) for a 3 day training and sensitization programme for government officers and police officials on Human Rights in Good Governance. Thereafter SPIPA has regularly invited CHRI to conduct RTI trainings with public officials in the district of Panchmahals and Narmada. Very recently SPIPA has asked CHRI to submit a proposal to them for targeted RTI work in Panchmahals district on the RTI – spreading and promoting the Act amongst the larger citizenry. This is taken as recognition for the work and sustained efforts the office has put in over the last few years.

#### ❖ **The Legal Literacy Fair (Mela)**

The demand for practical legal information is growing. CHRI is constantly looking out for ways in which to expand our reach and bring the many materials we have developed to a larger number of people all at once. In April this year we held a *Mela (Fair)* which was used to disseminate our materials - legal literacy videos, pamphlets, booklets, games, and interactive plays. The idea was to demonstrate the value of law in everyday life to the ordinary citizenry outside the paralegals and lawyer community. A fair around law and governance had never been attempted before but it attracted over 2000 people over a single day. There were stalls on various issues combined with street plays, videos and games. The most valuable part of the Mela in terms of creating routes for follow up and impact was a Question and Answer session with the district officials. The outcome was a committee that was set up to monitor the working of these government departments. CHRI has now received invitations from several NGOs to assist with such Melas in their respective areas.

## 4.5. Chhattisgarh Project

### 4.5.1. Overview

The Chhattisgarh police reform project began in July 2004 with the objective of making the state police accountable, performance oriented and democratic. In order to work more intensely on this CHRI established a small office in Chhattisgarh. This houses the police team and a consultant working on right to information issues in the state. The programmes complement each other well. However, early experiences in training police and interacting with the administration and the human rights commission convinced us that the possibilities of improving police practice and policy in Chhattisgarh would require larger interventions involving a) strategic interventions at the level of officials and key institutions and b) the creation of public opinion through legal literacy efforts and coaxing newer constituencies that are presently uninvolved to become activated in the cause of human rights. The activities of the intervention have thus expanded from training police to engaging with a much larger audience while continuing to retain the centrality of police reform as an objective. The project has had to take account of the situation on the ground in Chhattisgarh, as the state has become mired in large-scale civil conflict. The focus of the administration is to quell naxalism, through any means. The administration's encouragement of such counter-forces as *salwa judum* has encouraged lawlessness and impunity. There is little enthusiasm for experimenting with democratic policing. Nevertheless the Supreme Court's directives on police reforms provide a space to push for police reforms and to assist the government in creating a better police for the state.

### 4.5.2. Activities

With the passing of the Supreme Courts directions in Prakash Singh's case CHRI has emphasised efforts to ensure that the State's laws and those of neighbouring Madhya Pradesh reflect the beneficial provisions suggested in the judgement and involve public consultation. In addition, the Chhattisgarh office has continued with activities that educate the public about the issues surrounding better policing.

#### Police Reforms in Chhattisgarh

Prior to the tabling of Chhattisgarh's new policing law, CHRI began a campaign, and organized three workshops in Bilaspur, Ambikapur, and Jagdalpur to inform civil society about the new police act and to put their own demands to the government. The workshops accessed over 100 Civil Society Organizations and were widely covered by the print and television such as Sahara, ETV and BTV – all popular local channels.

Outcomes of the workshops included:

- A memorandum on Police Act was submitted from civil society and media to the Chief Minister, Home Minister, Chief Secretary and Director General of Police of Chhattisgarh.
- A list of names from civil society was suggested to the home minister to be included in the police act drafting committee.
- A postcard and signature campaign was launched through our regional partners.
- Plans were charted out for advocacy with elected representatives during the preparation of the Bill.

In order to amplify concerns about some of the contents of the proposed act, CHRI then organised a state level workshop on Chhattisgarh Police Act, 2007 and Police Reforms at Raipur in November, 2007. Prominent citizens participated. This group submitted a memorandum to the government for proposed amendments and formed a state level Chhattisgarh police watch committee.

In an atmosphere where the Supreme Court directives have been vehemently opposed by a number of states in India the sustained advocacy of CHRI over few years in Chhattisgarh seems to have worked to some extent as the Chhattisgarh Police Act contains several progressive provisions including civil society representation on the State Police Commission and State Police Accountability Authority. The Chhattisgarh government has also complied with five out of the six directives given by the Supreme Court. This is not the case with many other states where there has been little civil society activity in regard to ensuring that states obey the Supreme Court's mandate.

### **Police Reforms in Madhya Pradesh**

As the Madhya Pradesh government was to table the new state police bill in the assembly, the Chhattisgarh team extended its advocacy to Madhya Pradesh. CHRI identified civil society members including media and few legislators region wise and launched the campaign. Four regional workshops were held. A core committee was formed in every region. All the four regional core committee members met in Bhopal on 30/8/07 to decide on future deliberations. The core committee was named "MP police watch co-ordination committee". Active individuals in particular an old press hand in MP have been diligent in furthering the reform agenda.

Outcomes of the workshops included:

- Wide publicity in print and TV coverage including features on news shows on Sahara (Gwalior, Bhopal and Jabalpur workshops).
- A civil society and media memorandum on Police Act submitted to the Chief Minister, Home Minister, Chief Secretary and Director General of Police of Madhya Pradesh.
- A list of names from civil society suggested to the Home Minister to be included in the police act drafting committee.
- A core committee called "MP police watch co-ordination committee" was formed at Bhopal on 30/8/07.
- New working partners identified in Madhya Pradesh.
- The possibility of the formation of a permanent group of experts to monitor the workings of the new Act has been seeded.

Apart from local advocacy campaigns on police reforms the MP Police watch committee is scheduled to organise a civil society-MLA interface in Bhopal on proposed MP Police Act before the opening of the next session of parliament.

### **Human Rights Day Campaign**

As part of its efforts to create a human rights network with the youth of Raipur, CHRI organised a 'STAND FOR YOUR RIGHTS' campaign 'from 3-10 December 06, in collaboration with Pandit Ravishankar Shukla University, the largest university of Chhattisgarh.

## **Intervention relating to the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act**

CHRI's advocacy prior to participating in the national convention on Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA) led to an executive order by the DGP, Chhattisgarh instructing all the IG (Zone) to inform the Station House Officers about the act and to ensure that Protection Officers (as mentioned in the act) have been appointed at every police station.

## **Community Policing Project at Mana**

For three years now CHRI has, in cooperation with the police chief of the state, led a demonstration project at the Mana Police station. The project involved creating awareness of constitutional rights and duties within the police and a select group of local people, creating police liaison groups and convening platforms for dialogue. The project is intended to show that close public involvement with policing can reduce the load on short staffed police stations, increase police efficiency, and play a much greater part in ensuring crime is prevented or decreased. The groups are in place and there have been demonstrable improvements in community relations with police and even in crime prevention and public satisfaction. Community policing meetings have been less frequent this year, owing to a variety of reasons. However, we are keen to ensure that on our planned exit by the end of the year, the Community liaison Groups will become self-activated and continue to hold regular meetings and evaluations of policing in the Mana area.

## **5. ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

### **5.1. Overview**

During the year, CHRI has made significant contributions to entrenching right to information laws in the Commonwealth. In particular, CHRI expanded its network further into the African, South Asian and Pacific regions, and actively provided technical support and strategic advice to our current partners in the Caribbean and Europe. CHRI's role as an international organisation committed to the promotion of information access laws received due recognition during the year. The Director was invited to deliver a keynote address at the fourth International Conference of Information Commissioners held in Wellington, New Zealand. CHRI's role in the campaign for the information access law in India was the subject of a case-study presented at a two-day conference of CSOs and academics organised by the Economic and Social Research Council and the Institute of Commonwealth Studies in London.

CHRI had a unique opportunity to collaborate with the Constitutional and Legal Affairs Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat on a joint project to the development of a Freedom of Information Bill for Swaziland. CHRI provided technical assistance at each stage of the Bill's development. Further, at the Secretariat's request, CHRI also submitted a paper to the Corporate Services Division advising them on the development of their Voluntary Disclosure Policy. A CHRI resource person sat on a panel of experts at the United Nations conference on the implementation of the Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC). CHRI presented a workshop on the value of having guaranteed access to information laws at the Civicus World Assembly 2007, in which the Pacific Centre for Public Integrity (PCPI) and Article 19 also made presentations. We have put together a collection of success stories from around the globe where CSOs have used information access laws for the protection and promotion of human rights guarantees for various sections of society.

## 5.2. Activities

### ➤ Pacific

CHRI has continued to deepen its networks and build its presence in the Pacific. In May CHRI was invited to speak at the PINA (Pacific Islands News Association) conference in the Solomon Islands. CHRI presented a paper on the value of RTI to the Pacific Media and gave two radio interviews. In October 2007, CHRI attended the Pacific Regional CSO Forum in Tonga and presented a paper on the importance of RTI at the Forum Islands Secretariat Media conference, also in Tonga. These visits provided an opportunity for CHRI to expand its contacts with regional CSOs and media organisations. In particular, CHRI has strengthened its relationships with national 'umbrella' NGOs such as SUNGO (the Samoan Union of NGOs) and Pan-Pacific CSO bodies such as PIANGO (the Pacific Island Association of NGOs) and the Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific. These organisations will be key to CHRI's ongoing RTI work in the region as they have significant influence amongst local CSOs. CHRI has to engage with civil society groups and governments carefully as international organisations are viewed as being donor agenda-driven. However the value and significance of RTI will ensure that such suspicions will be set aside and CHRI will be welcomed as a useful partner in the region.

### ➤ Africa

CHRI has been active in the promotion of RTI and has provided ongoing advocacy and capacity building support to partners in the region. CHRI's Africa office in Accra, Ghana, is an active member of the African Freedom of Information Coalition and this year held a Right to Information regional conference funded by the Commonwealth Foundation. A member of the RTI team in Delhi attended and helped to facilitate the conference. In Southern Africa, CHRI has cemented partnerships with our long standing partners – the Media Institute for Southern Africa (MISA) – by hosting their FOI Officer for a two-week capacity building visit to our offices in Delhi. CHRI assisted MISA in the development of their Model Freedom of Information Law which was released earlier this year. MISA hopes to hold a regional workshop for their partners in Southern Africa some time next year and has asked CHRI to co-facilitate the workshop. A number of African countries have made significant progress in the development of transparency laws and policies this year.

In **Swaziland**: the Government released a draft Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Bill which CHRI critiqued and commented upon. The Bill had been developed in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat who consulted an external drafter at the request of the Government of Swaziland. CHRI continues to consult with the Commonwealth Secretariat's Legal and Constitutional Affairs Department on the developments around the draft Bill. Many of CHRI's recommendations for strengthening various provisions have been incorporated into the draft Bill; including the separation of the issues of disclosure and privacy. The Bill is due to undergo public consultation in Swaziland.

In **Uganda**: Following the February workshop on Access to Information Act organized by the Ugandan Ministry of Information, CHRI was approached by the Government to assist them in the development of the Access to Information Regulations. CHRI has provided the Government with detailed recommendations for simplifying access procedures under the law.

In **Namibia**: the Government released a very positive Revised Information Policy 2006 containing a number of FOI provisions. CHRI provided a detailed critique of the Policy and encouraged the Government to develop a separate law to protect the people's right to information. The Information Policy was primarily concerned with the promotion of a free

and independent media, although there were also some progressive freedom of information provisions. We are monitoring the developments on the Policy.

In **Nigeria**: CHRI has been supporting local partners Media Rights Agenda in their advocacy efforts to encourage the President to give his assent to the Freedom of Information Bill which was passed by Parliament. Before the Presidential elections we strategically campaigned for the Bill to become law, writing to the President as well as other influential heads of government in Africa and representatives at the World Bank. Although the Bill was not passed this year, thanks to a recent Constitutional amendment the current President need only give his assent for the Bill to be passed into law and the Bill does not have to secure parliamentary approval once again.

In **Tanzania**: the Government has released a Freedom of Information Bill which covers a vast amount of material from the right to information to media standards, libel and privacy. Civil society in the country responded by rejecting the Bill which was seen as regressive and formed a coalition to draft an alternative stakeholder Bill. CHRI was invited to be a member of the coalition and has provided technical advice on the development of the alternative Bill which is currently being considered by parliament. We are monitoring the developments closely.

In **Kenya**: CHRI has provided technical input into the FOI network's draft Freedom of Information Bill which is currently being considered by Parliament. The Bill has gone through the first stage of reading and appears to have the support of the Government. CHRI has continued to work closely with the Kenyan Commission of Jurists who are currently drafting regulations to accompany the law.

In **Ghana**: CHRI's Africa office has spearheaded a coalition of NGOs to lobby the Government for a right to information law and have been very active in promoting RTI throughout the whole region.

### **African Freedom of Information Centre- Interim Steering Committee Meeting**

CHRI held a two day workshop for the Interim Steering Committee of the Africa Freedom of Information Centre. In attendance were representatives from Ghana (CHRI), Nigeria (OSIWA and MRA), Kenya, Senegal and Uganda. The Steering Committee was elected as an outcome of the Regional Workshop on Freedom of Information in Africa held in Lagos Nigeria in 2006.

The purpose of the meeting was to develop the terms of reference for the African Freedom of Information Centre, the meeting also identified framework for operations of the centre and fundraising strategies. The meeting was concluded with the agreement that the centre be registered and hosted by Media Rights Agenda in Nigeria.

### **African Regional Conference on Freedom of Information**

In July 2007, CHRI held an Africa Regional Freedom of Information Conference under the theme; **'The Right to Information in Africa – the road towards open governance'**, supported by the Commonwealth Foundation and Ford Foundation.

Initially targeted for Commonwealth West African states it was subsequently extended to cover other Commonwealth African countries. This was based upon the realisation that despite the relevance of Freedom of Information as a facilitative tool for good and democratic governance, several African States have not yet protected this right through the passage of specific legislation. Forty-seven delegates from throughout the Commonwealth in Africa, as well as the United Kingdom and India, convened to reflect on FOI trends and

challenges, share experiences, and build up capacity of civil society to advocate strongly for FOI legislation and work in tandem with each other and so facilitate the campaign for instituting FOI legislations Africa wide. The Conference was born out of the need for a refreshed advocacy strategy. Given the relevance of FOI laws to democracy, it is deemed essential for advocacy campaigns to take up this cause. The recommendations of the Conference participants on the way forward were specifically set out in a Mission Statement.

The Conference also publicised the new African Freedom of Information Centre, which was created in 2003 with open membership to all FOI Advocates particularly in Africa. All participants were encouraged to join. The centre is progressively increasing membership.

### **Advocacy Around Right to Know Day**

This year is Ghana's 50th Independence anniversary, and yet the government has not provided its citizens with guaranteed access to information. In 2002, the Freedom of Information Bill was prepared and reviewed in 2003 and 2005. Delays continue as Government fails to take the Bill to Parliament. In light of this, the Coalition for Right to Information in Ghana used the International Right to Know Day to urge government to pass the Freedom of Information Bill as a significant step toward strengthening democracy in Ghana. The Ghana Coalition for the Right to Information also met with Justice V.C.R.A.C Crabbe, former Justice of the Supreme Court of Ghana who has been appointed by Government as an advisor on Right to Information (RTI) Bill, and presented to him the Coalition's position on the text of the RTI Bill.

The Coalition is also engaged in talking with government executive officials and Parliamentarians with the view to creating support for the Bill. The members of the RTI coalition addressed a well-attended press conference (TV Africa, the Daily Guide, Metro TV among others) after the discussion with Justice Crabbe.

In the **Caribbean and Europe**: CHRI took part in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's workshop on Freedom of Information in the Caribbean last December. At the workshop held in Dominica, CHRI chaired three sessions and gave two presentations on the components of a good RTI law and stories of successful use of RTI in India and other countries. Thanks to this visit, CHRI has been able to identify potential partners in government and civil society in the region and has significantly broadened its network in the region.

In **St Kitts and Nevis**: The Government of St. Kitts and Nevis drafted a Freedom of Information Bill (FOI Bill) and announced an open and wide public consultation. This sets a very positive precedent for other governments in the region working on FOI legislation. CHRI participated in the discussions electronically and sent its recommendations to ensure that the Bill is in accord with international best practice principles of openness.

In the **Cayman Islands**: The Freedom of Information Act was passed in August 2007. This is a great success for CHRI as we have provided guidance and technical advice to the Cabinet office on the development of their law. The officials who attended CPA's training workshop in Dominica claimed that the inputs received from CHRI regarding appellate mechanisms helped them rethink the system of court based appeals they had initially proposed. The Freedom of Information Coordinator appointed for planning and overseeing implementation has asked CHRI to help train public officials on their responsibilities under the new law.

In **Jamaica**: CHRI has written to the Prime Minister on two occasions – once to urge the Government to repeal the Official Secrets Act which continues to contradict the



transparency provisions of Access to Information Act and confuse public officials as to their duties under the respective laws. In our second letter CHRI called for the recommencement and completion of the review of the Access to Information Act 2002 which is required by law within a two-year period of the Act coming into force.

In **Antigua and Barbuda**: following the RTI Coordinator's meeting with A&B Information Commissioner Mrs Millicent David at the CPA workshop in Dominica, CHRI have been invited to send a resource person to assist with the training of officers on the implementation of A&B's Freedom of Information law. This is scheduled to take place in January-February 2008. We have also promised the Commissioner, assistance to plan awareness raising activities and develop public education materials for use on the islands.

In the **United Kingdom**: CHRI has been closely following the Government's attempts to curtail access to information through restrictive amendments to the Freedom of Information Act and has a measure of satisfaction that these attempts did not succeed. CHRI made two submissions to the Department for Constitutional Affairs in response to their Draft Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2007 advising them to reconsider the amendments which would have placed severe restrictions of the ability of the media and civil society to access information. The amendments were dropped following the second consultation. CHRI also advised against the draft Private Members amendment bill which would have exempted MPs from the scope of the Act. Again, the amendments were dropped due to pressure from civil society.

In **Malta**: The Government released a draft Freedom of Information Bill and white paper on transparency and accountability in Government in early 2007. CHRI provided a critique for both documents. In July the Government re-released the paper and a revised Bill for consultation, acknowledging CHRI's input and thanking us – the new Bill incorporated a number of CHRI's recommendations. We have since written to the Government highlighting areas where the Bill still requires amendment to bring it into line with international best practice.

In **South Asia**: CHRI made significant progress in extending its networks and promoting the right to information in the region despite the political instability in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Nepal passed its Right to Information Act in June 2007. Prior to its enactment CSO members in Nepal invited CHRI to resource a workshop to sensitise them on the provisions of the law and be adept with this knowledge to monitor its effective implementation. CHRI also contributed an article to a widely circulated CSO magazine in Nepal advising transparency advocates to strengthen their law further. In March 2008, CHRI collaborated with PAC (The Public Affairs Centre) and Transparency International Sri Lanka, on a right to information training workshop for Sri Lankan and Pakistani CSOs. The workshop organised in Colombo provided an opportunity for CHRI to expand its CSO networks in Sri Lanka and Pakistan. CHRI has interacted at many such workshops and conferences on the right to information over the years and has identified the need for an ongoing forum to facilitate the provision of mutual support amongst RTI advocates as well as resource and expertise sharing. Therefore, CHRI launched the South Asia Right to Information Advocates Network (SARTIAN) to promote regular interaction with each other across the region, build solidarity among networks of advocates from civil society and the media, and benefit from discussions, debates, experience, wisdom, and to give each other advice and support when we come across a stumbling block. Membership of this group is growing and members are contributing content on transparency related issues for circulation.

In **Sri Lanka**: During the year, CHRI has significantly consolidated relationships with long-standing partners and identified new organisations with which to work. We have worked closely with the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) to develop a basic language right to

information pamphlet specific to the Sri Lankan context to disseminate awareness about this right amongst CSOs. CPA has translated the pamphlet into Sinhala and Tamil for dissemination amongst grassroots CSOs and through the local media. CHRI intends to continue its collaborative efforts with CPA, reenergizing advocacy for RTI at the government level and developing a range of advocacy materials.

In **Pakistan**, CHRI has been working with the Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI), to popularise RTI in Pakistan. CHRI helped CPDI to prepare various case studies on the use of RTI to sensitise journalists on potential use of the FOI Ordinance, 2000. CPDI has also assisted CHRI in the preparation of basic right to information pamphlet in Urdu explaining the value of RTI and providing background information on the Pakistan Ordinance. Following the Colombo conference, The Society for Human Rights and Prisoners Aid invited CHRI to participate in a seminar to share our experiences with the implementation of the RTI Act in India. Unfortunately, visa problems cost us a valuable opportunity to interact with CSOs in that country. Similarly our efforts to bring a media intern from Pakistan for a familiarisation visit to interact with Indian groups working on RTI were also frustrated by visa refusal.

In **Bangladesh**: CHRI has an ongoing partnership with the Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) to create civil society demand for a legally guaranteed access to information regime. In October 2006 two journalists from two leading Bangladeshi newspapers visited CHRI offices to understand the crucial role that media had played in the pushing the government for the enactment of the RTI Act. They met with journalists from the print as well as the electronic media. Articles were written by them in their newspapers based on the learning from their trip to India. An year later in October 2007, CHRI organized another exposure visit for 5 mid-career journalists from the print and electronic media, namely, Bhorer Kagoj (Bengali daily), The New Age (English daily), Bangla Vision and Channel I. During this visit CHRI organised meetings with the Chief Information Commissioner, government officers tasked with implementation of the Act in India, master trainers conducting RTI training for officers and CSOs which are using RTI to expose corruption and bring about accountability in governance.

Later in October CHRI and MJF organised a 3-day intensive capacity building workshop for CSOs in Dhaka with the objective of equipping them with the technical skills to advocate for the adoption of an RTI law. MJF has developed a draft RTI Bill and presented it to the Government. The Bill is stronger and more progressive than the Law Commission's proposals on the subject. CHRI has provided advice to MJF to strengthen the Bill further based on its experience of implementation difficulties experienced in India. MJF is working on these additional ideas along with its team of lawyers. Meanwhile the Institute of Governance Studies attached to BRAC University has invited CHRI to co-author a policy-paper on RTI with the objective of highlighting the positive features contained in both proposals and strengthening the weaker provisions such as those relating to penalties and monitoring of the law.

MJF has translated and widely disseminated CHRI's 2003 CHOGM report 'Open Sesame' into Bengali with the title - "Tottho Odhikar". The book was launched at Dhaka in April.

In the **Maldives**: CHRI received a copy of the Government's draft Freedom of Information Bill for advice on strengthening it. CHRI critiqued the contents of the Bill and sent it to the Government with several recommendations for strengthening it. CHRI has since been following up to find out what next steps the Government will take with the Bill. CHRI was assured by the Ministry of Information that the draft Bill is being debated in Parliament and the detailed recommendations made for this bill will be discussed when the Bill is referred to a parliamentary committee for detailed examination.

## ❖ India

The work in India has primarily concentrated on engaging with duty-holders under the Central Right to Information Act to implement the law better, training civil society groups to make use of the law in public interest, training officers to deal with information requests and tracking the progress in the implementation of the law. The experience gained in India has informed our advocacy efforts and sharing of technical expertise in other parts of the Commonwealth.

**Advocacy for Better Implementation of the RTI Act:** CHRI has been regularly providing recommendations for better implementation of the RTI act to the nodal agency for implementation of the Act in India, the Department of Personnel & Training. Recent recommendations include: a) DOPT should list all public authorities covered by this Act as there is a lot of confusion about the status of private bodies that receive government funding b) increase the list of Post Offices that will serve as single window systems for receiving information requests for all public authorities under the Central Government. The DOPT has promised to issue the necessary instructions to implement these and a few other recommendations made by CHRI.

CHRI was invited by the Central Government's Department of Food and Public Distribution to advise them for preparing a public education manual on RTI in the public distribution system. Our recommendations for increasing openness in the system have been well received by the Secretary and other senior officials.

CHRI has done a sample survey of the implementation of the RTI Act in Panchmahals district of Gujarat. The findings are being tabulated, and the report will be published in a few months.

**Training and sensitisation of government officials and senior executives of public sector enterprises:** CHRI has been recognized as a premier resource organisation for conducting trainings for government officials in different parts of the country. During the year, CHRI entered into an informal collaborative arrangement with the State Information Commission (SIC) of Punjab to conduct sensitisation workshops for government officers in different departments. We held four workshops with senior state government officers in six months. We conducted a sensitization workshop for senior and middle level officers of the Punjab Police and made several recommendations for improving implementation of the Act within the department. In Meghalaya the Government has invited us to conduct district level training seminars for officers and NGOs. Besides these two states, CHRI continued to conduct sensitization workshops for government officials and executives of public sector enterprises in Delhi, Karnataka, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. In Madhya Pradesh we conducted a joint training workshop on RTI for elected members of Gram Panchayats and officials along with Mahatma Gandhi State Institute for Rural Development. Recognising our resourcefulness they have agreed to sign an MoU with us.

We have begun conducting specialized thematic training sessions for officers and managers of public sector enterprises on specialised topics like 'public interest' and 'fiduciary relationship' in the context of RTI. Our training materials on these topics are being used by government training institutions. We hope to publish guidance notes on these topics next year for the benefit of officers and executives. So far, we have sensitized or trained more than 6,000 officers and close to 600 senior and middle level executives of public sector enterprises.

We continue to be treated as partners of the National Implementation Agency, which is tasked with developing capacity of government training institutions for training officers on

RTI. We have been invited to their training programmes as resource persons. We have initiated a dialogue with three other national level training institutions to develop a CD-based e-learning training module on RTI for officers. This resource is likely to be ready by the middle of next year.

**Monitoring the work of Information Commissions:** CHRI has critiqued the management regulations notified by the Central Information Commission, as part of its ongoing work of monitoring the performance of Information Commissions. These regulations would have caused considerable inconvenience to citizens approaching the Commission for adjudication on information access related disputes. In its critique, CHRI made several recommendations to the Central Information Commission to simplify the appeals procedures mentioned in the regulations. CHRI also disseminated these recommendations to all State Information Commissions urging them to avoid such cumbersome procedures when they came up with their own regulations. Impressed by our analysis and recommendations, the State Information Commissions of Uttarakhand and Assam sent us their draft regulations for critique and advice. We analysed the draft regulations in detail and made several recommendations for creating greater convenience of citizens approaching them with grievances. These recommendations have been received positively. We also circulated these recommendations through email discussion groups so that civil society advocates may add their voice of support.

We are working on an analysis of the major decisions of the Central Information Commission which interpret different provisions of the RTI Act. This work is likely to be completed in 2008 and we hope that this will serve as a useful resource to public information officers, appellate authorities and civil society groups. We plan to monitor the performance of at least a few State Information Commissions in greater depth next year.

**Advocacy in Jammu and Kashmir:** CHRI decided to work intensively in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) after a disappointing response of the State Government to our advocacy efforts.

In September 2007, we had been able to build pressure on the Governor to advise the State Government to reconsider the weak J&K RTI Amendment Bill. Our efforts included legislative brief on the shortcomings of the amendments; a detailed note on the shortcomings of the principal Act and the amendment bill; a public consultation in collaboration with the University of Jammu; a media campaign.

The State Government convinced the Governor in a tactical move that it would make further amendments to the law and that he could not refuse to sign the amendment Bill as it was passed as a Money Bill. We drafted and circulated a legal opinion after careful research and consultation pointing to the violation of constitutional procedures and norms on more than one occasion during the enactment of the Amendment Bill. Despite promising to bring the state law at par with the Central RTI Act on many occasions the Government has done precious little. CHRI has worked intensively to bring civil society and media influence to bear on the State Government to deliver on its promise during an election year. We will continue to work with our partners in J&K to realise our objective of bringing the state RTI law at par with the Central law.

**Capacity Building of CSOs on RTI:** During this period, CHRI increased its outreach geographically and sectorally in terms of building capacity of large NGO networks to use RTI. In keeping with our strategy of working with large network organisations to seed awareness about RTI, we collaborated with the DfID supported Poorest Areas Civil Society (PACS) Programme and conducted six cluster level workshops for their CSO partners in Bihar and Jharkhand between May and July 2007. The quality of these workshops impressed many participants and we were compelled to conduct another workshop for other

CSOs who could not participate in these workshops. We hope to go back to these two states in the next year to document the outcome of our training programmes.

In early 2007, we signed a MoU with a large networked organization called CASA (Churches' Auxiliary for Social Action). We conducted two state level workshops for CASA partners, grassroots activists and elected representatives of local government bodies in the states of Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand and also organised a national level training of trainers' workshop for CASA staff at Lucknow. Workshops were also conducted with the CUTS network in Rajasthan which focused on consumer rights and governance improvement. We have conducted workshops with Janadesh in Bihar and are looking into the possibility of developing an RTI hub there. Our publications are in considerable demand from civil society organisations who have reproduced some of our public education materials in their own publications with due acknowledgement.

**Development of RTI Hubs:** An avowed objective of our strategy of promoting RTI in India is to create **hubs which will replicate our work** at the state level, share our vision and partner with us to create a strong sustainable movement that protects this right. We have been in partnership with external collaborators in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Karnataka as part of this strategy. Each of these is further along the line toward independent operations. Their technical expertise is increasingly being relied upon by private individuals, CSOs and government officers tasked with implementing the RTI Act. They are conducting a series of public education events as well as building and strengthening networks of NGOs, catalyzing them to work on issues around RTI. Our external collaborators have started focusing on checking compliance of the public authorities with their proactive disclosure obligations under the RTI Act. We have created a new hub in Jammu & Kashmir since January 2008, and are looking to create two more hubs.

**Madhya Pradesh:** During this year the *Madhya Pradesh Suchna Adhikar Abhiyan (Right to Information campaign)* conducted an advanced capacity building workshop for its members. This workshop yielded positive results. A survey conducted by members of the network unearthed many irregularities in the implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. After the local media highlighted the findings, the administration was compelled to conduct its own investigation. The Gram Sabha (village general body) passed a resolution requiring the Gram Panchayat (elected rural self-governing body) to keep all its records for free inspection by the public on one Sunday every month.

As a part of the task of checking compliance of the public authorities with regard to proactive disclosure of information, our network in this state conducted a survey of the contents of documents proactively disclosed by various public authorities in five districts. Where shortcomings were visible the external collaborator and his partners have been able to impress upon the district administration to make the content of these documents more comprehensive.

Our external collaborator in the state resourced several workshops on RTI organised by CSOs and the government. The RTI hub has also been providing trouble-shooting advice to information requesters who face difficulties while accessing information from public authorities. The intensive public education programmes and the monitoring of RTI implementation have yielded positive results. Several success stories have been collected and disseminated through the print and electronic media. Some of the prominent success stories find mention on the website of the Central Information Commission. One success story relating to RTI and villagers' access to water has been picked up by Transparency International for publication in its report for the year 2008.

**Chhattisgarh:** The RTI hub in Chhattisgarh similar is increasingly being relied upon for capacity building as well as technical support by the government, the Information Commission, the administrative training academy and citizens' groups. During this year CHRI's external collaborator was called upon by other NGOs to provide training to their staff and partners resource their on-going training programmes. He also resourced several workshops organized by the Chhattisgarh Academy of Administration for PIOs of different departments.

As a part of his advocacy efforts he was able to convince the Chhattisgarh Information Commission to issue an order directing public authorities not to charge application fee for providing information that is voluntarily disclosed. This order will ensure that a practice in violation of the letter and spirit of the Act will stop.

During this year the RTI hub has become a resource centre for CSOs and citizens who seek information and guidance about the transparency law. A radio programme on RTI which was produced by our external collaborator was found to be very instructive by listeners. The Chhattisgarh Academy of Administration has sought permission to rebroadcast the programme throughout the state's radio transmission network. In recognition of CHRI's work in the state the popular TV channel – DD News telecast eight episodes narrating RTI success stories from Chhattisgarh.

**Karnataka:** CHRI's external collaborator has been very active in spreading public awareness about this Act, sensitising government officials about their roles and responsibilities under this law and writing about the status of implementation of the Act in Karnataka. He has also been invited to advise two prominent state-owned public transport corporations to prepare their proactive disclosure documents under the Act.

The most recent highlight is the immense popularity gained by the Kannada translation of the RTI User Guide. This book was published in collaboration with a local book distributing agency with a state wide outreach and made it to the top of the best seller list in Bengaluru, the capital city in March 2008.

Another important development has been the amendment of the Karnataka RTI rules, which introduced a new rule which restricted people's access to information. CHRI and CREAT strongly criticised this, made a submission to the government to remove this rule with immediate effect.

As a part of the task of monitoring compliance regarding voluntary disclosure of information, the Karnataka network conducted an audit of the status of RTI in 15 departments in more than 20 districts. The report was released in the presence of the State Information Commissioner and some senior officials of the State Government.

The external collaborator resourced training workshops for CSOs, college students, government officials, and media at different places in the state throughout this period. He has also written and published a series of articles on issues related to RTI to encourage debate on the performance of public authorities under the RTI Act. The articles deal with case studies, implementation status of RTI in departments and important decisions of the Information Commissions at the Centre and the State. He has also been assisting RTI applicants by way of supplying documents, case studies, application formats, address details of PIOs and Information Commissions.

#### **5.2.1. Developing and Disseminating Publications**

In keeping with our commitment to increasing awareness about RTI Act amongst Indian citizens, we published three regional language translations of one of our key publications: a

user guide on RTI –“Your Guide to Using the Right to Information Act, 2005”. Along with our partners this book was published and disseminated in four languages namely, Hindi, Gujarati, Assamese and Kannada. The RTI User Guide has also been translated into Oriya and Bengali.

An educational pamphlet on RTI in the popular dialects was produced for the states of Chhattisgarh (in Chahttisgarhi dialect), Jharkhand (in Kurukh dialect) and Manipur (in Manipuri). This is part of our commitment to reach out to vulnerable and disadvantaged communities through our public education efforts. Pamphlets were also produced for the states of West Bengal, Tripura, Bihar, Nagaland, Manipur and Uttarakhand during this period. The pamphlet for Nagaland in English has been prepared in collaboration with YouthNet a group of youth volunteers who are committed to spreading awareness about RTI in their state. The pamphlets are being disseminated through civil society networks in that state.

We have also published a specialised booklet on RTI and Panchayati Raj institutions in Uttar Pradesh which will serve as an important resource for training of elected representatives and CBOs working on rural local self governance. We have published a pamphlet in Gujarati focusing on RTI on the eve of the Panchayati Raj elections aimed at educating the voter about the use of RTI to hold these institutions accountable.

A 30-second audio-visual slide-show highlighting the significance of RTI and the procedure of obtaining information was exhibited at cinema halls in more than 200 towns in 9 Hindi speaking states.

We will soon publish the Hindi translation of our booklet on RTI and Panchayati Raj institutions in Uttar Pradesh.

We are working on guidance notes on specialised topics in relation to the Indian RTI Act which will be of use to officers and transparency advocates alike. We are also doing a survey of the rules and regulations passed by the legislatures and the high courts in the states for implementing this law. As some of these entities have notified restrictive rules and procedures we hope to pick up on our advocacy efforts to change these regulations in the coming year.

## 6. INSTITUTIONAL

### 6.1. Governance

#### **CHRI'S INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COMMISSION**

S. No.	Name	Designation	Sex	Country
1.	Sam Okudzeto	Chair (also Chair – EC Ghana)	Male	Ghana
2.	B. G Verghese	Chair – EC India	Male	India
3.	Neville Linton	Chair – EC UK	Male	UK
4.	Alison Duxbury	Member	Female	Australia
5.	Eunice Brookman- Amissah	Member	Female	Kenya

6.	Murray Burt	Member	Male	Canada
7.	Yash Ghai	Member	Male	Kenya
8.	Zohra Yusuf	Member	Female	Pakistan
9.	Maja Daruwala	Secretary	Female	India

**CHRI'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, HEAD QUARTERS, INDIA**

S. No	Name	Sex	Occupation
1.	B.G. Verghese (Chair and pro-tem Treasurer)	Male	Columnist and Author, Visiting Professor at the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi
2.	Anu Aga	Female	Director, Thermax group of Companies
3.	K.S. Dhillon	Male	Visiting Professor, Barkatullah University, Bhopal, former Director General of Police, Punjab
4.	R.V. Pillai	Male	First Secretary-General of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Member of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
5.	Harivansh	Male	Chief Editor, Prabhat Khabar
6.	Prof. B. K Chandrashekar	Male	Former Chairman, Karnataka Legislative Council. Former Professor of Law at Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore
7.	Poonam Muttreja	Female	Director for the MacArthur Foundation's Population and Reproductive Health program in India
8.	Bhagwan Das	Male	Lawyer, activist, President Indian Buddhist Council (North)
9.	Sanjoy Hazarika	Male	Managing Trustee, Centre for North East Studies and Policy Research (C-NES); Consulting Editor, The Statesman and visiting Professor, Centre for Policy Research.
10.	Nitin Desai	Male	Formerly convenor of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, UN Secretariat, Deputy secretary-general of the United Nations Conference on Environment and



			Development
11.	Justice Ruma Pal	Female	Retd. Judge, Supreme Court of India. Member, International Forum of Women Judges
12.	Maja Daruwala	Female	Human rights lawyer. Director, CHRI

#### **CHRI'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, AFRICA OFFICE, ACCRA**

S.No	Name	Sex	Occupation
1.	Sam Okudzeto (Chair) Also Chair, CHRI International Advisory Commission	Male	Columnist and Author, Visiting Professor at the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi
2.	Neville Linton Also Chair, Executive Committee, CHRI United Kingdom	Male	Consultant on political affairs, specialises in democratisation and human rights issues in transition societies
3.	B. G. Verghese Also Chair, Executive Committee, CHRI Head Quarters, India	Male	Visiting Professor at the Centre for Policy Research, Columnist and author
4.	Anna Bossman	Female	Acting Commissioner, The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, Ghana.
5.	Maja Daruwala	Female	Human rights lawyer. Director, CHRI

#### **CHRI'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, UNITED KINGDOM**

In June 2007, the Trustee Committee reconstituted itself as an Executive Committee, United Kingdom. Dr. Neville Linton was appointed Chair and Lindsay Ross was appointed Deputy Chair and Company Secretary.

S.No	Name	Sex	Occupation
1.	Neville Linton (Chair)	Male	Consultant in Political Affairs, specialises in Democratisation and Human Rights issues in transition societies.
2.	Lindsay Ross (Deputy Chair)	Female	Executive Director, Commonwealth Press Union

3.	Austin Davis	Male	Member from Commonwealth Legal Education Association (CLEA) <i>Former</i> Justice of Supreme Court - Bahamas.
4.	Claire Martin	Female	Secretary General, Commonwealth Lawyers Association
5.	Derek Ingram	Male	OBE: President Emeritus of the Commonwealth Journalists Association, founder-Editor of Gemini News Service
6.	Elizabeth Smith	Female	OBE: Secretary-General, Commonwealth Broadcasting Association. Formerly Controller (Director) of English Programmes for the BBC World Service
7.	Meenakshi Dhar	Female	Assistant Director, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)

## 6.2. Staff

### Director: Ms. Maja Daruwala

Maja Daruwala has been working to advocate for rights and social justice for over 20 years. A barrister by training, she has been the Director of Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative since 1996. Maja has lived and worked in India, England, Singapore and Sri Lanka. Maja's interests lie particularly in the area of systemic reforms. She has focused her energies on issues of accountability and participation, which she believes are essential underpinnings for good governance and the realisation of human rights.

#### 6.2.1. Head Quarters

##### **DIRECTOR'S OFFICE**

Mr. Mohan Sundaram  
Ms. Vinu S

##### **HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY PROGRAMME**

Ms. Lucy Mathieson  
Mr. R. Iniyan Ilango  
Mr. Zachary Abugov

##### **MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION UNIT**

Ms. Aditi Datta  
Ms. Swati Kapoor

## **ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROGRAMME**

Mr. Venkatesh Nayak  
Ms. Sohini Paul  
Ms. Reshmi Mitra  
Ms. Claire Cronin

### ***External Collaborators***

Mr. Y. G. Muralidharan  
Dr. Rakesh Ranjan  
Mr. Prateek Pandey  
Dr. Muzaffar Bhat

## **ACCESS TO JUSTICE PROGRAMME**

### ***a) Police Reforms programme***

Ms. Shobha Sharma  
Mr. Sanjay Patil  
Mr. Pushkar Raj  
Ms. Ebba Martensson  
Mr. Arif Virani  
Ms. Gudrun Dewey  
Ms. Louise Edwards

### ***b) Chhattisgarh Project***

Mr. Sumit Kumar  
Mr. Anshuman Jha  
Mr. Shashank Thakur

### ***c) Gujarat Project***

Ms. Navaz Kotwal  
Ms. Prajakta Sarpotdar  
Mr. Moinuddin Sikandershah Diwan  
Mr. Prakash Oza

### ***d) Prison Reforms programme***

Mr. R.K. Saxena  
Dr. Murali Karnam  
Ms. Priti Bhardwaj

## **ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE & ACCOUNTS**

Mr. H. Nadkarni  
Mr. K S Rautela  
Mr. Swayam Cheta Mohanty  
Mr. Ravi Shankar  
Mr. Chenthil Kumar Paramasivam  
Mr. Subhash Kumar Patra  
Ms. P. Ajay Babu  
Ms. R. Rajeshwari

Mr. Sunil Kumar Chhattriya

➤ **Staff departures during the year**

**ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROGRAMME**

Ms. Madhumita Mitra  
Mr. Indra Jeet Mistry  
Ms. Cecelia Burgman  
Ms. Gitanjali Gurung  
Ms. Rashmi Jalota

**ACCESS TO JUSTICE PROGRAMME**

**a) Police Reforms**

Ms. Caroline Avanzo  
Ms. Swati Mehta  
Ms. Devika Prasad  
Mr. Daniel Woods

**b) Chhattisgarh Project**

Dr. Rajan Kumar

**c) Gujarat Project**

Ms. Sonal Thakkar  
Ms. Vandana Solanki  
Mr. Hanif Sheikh

**d) Prison Reforms**

Mr. Sanjay Joshi

**ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE ACCOUNTS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

Mr. N.P. Ramachandran  
Mr. Vikas Agrawal  
Mr. Ranjan Kumar Singh  
Ms. Anshu Tejpal

**6.2.2. Africa Office**

**Ms. Nana Oye Lithur:** *Regional Co-ordinator*

**ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE & ACCOUNTS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

Mr. Joseph Kingham Ochill  
Mr. Charles Acquaye  
Mr. Robert Amofo

**ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

**Mr. Edmund Acquaye**

**ACCESS TO JUSTICE**

**a) Police Accountability**

Ms. Wilhelmina Mensah

**b) Monitoring**

Ms. Florence Emily Nakazibwe

➤ **Staff departures during the year**

**ACCESS TO JUSTICE**

**a) Police accountability**

Mr. Edmund Amarkwei Foley

**6.2.3. London Liaison & Programmes Office**

Ms. Uttara Shahani: *Liaison Officer*

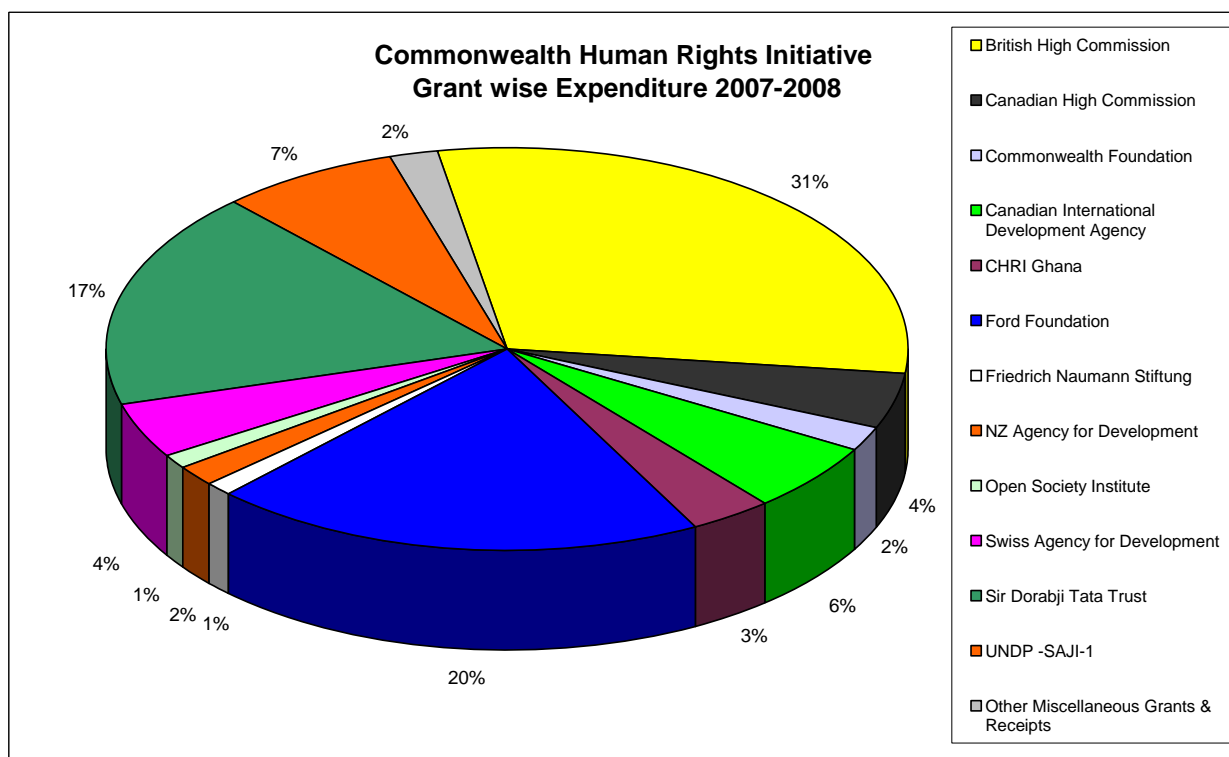
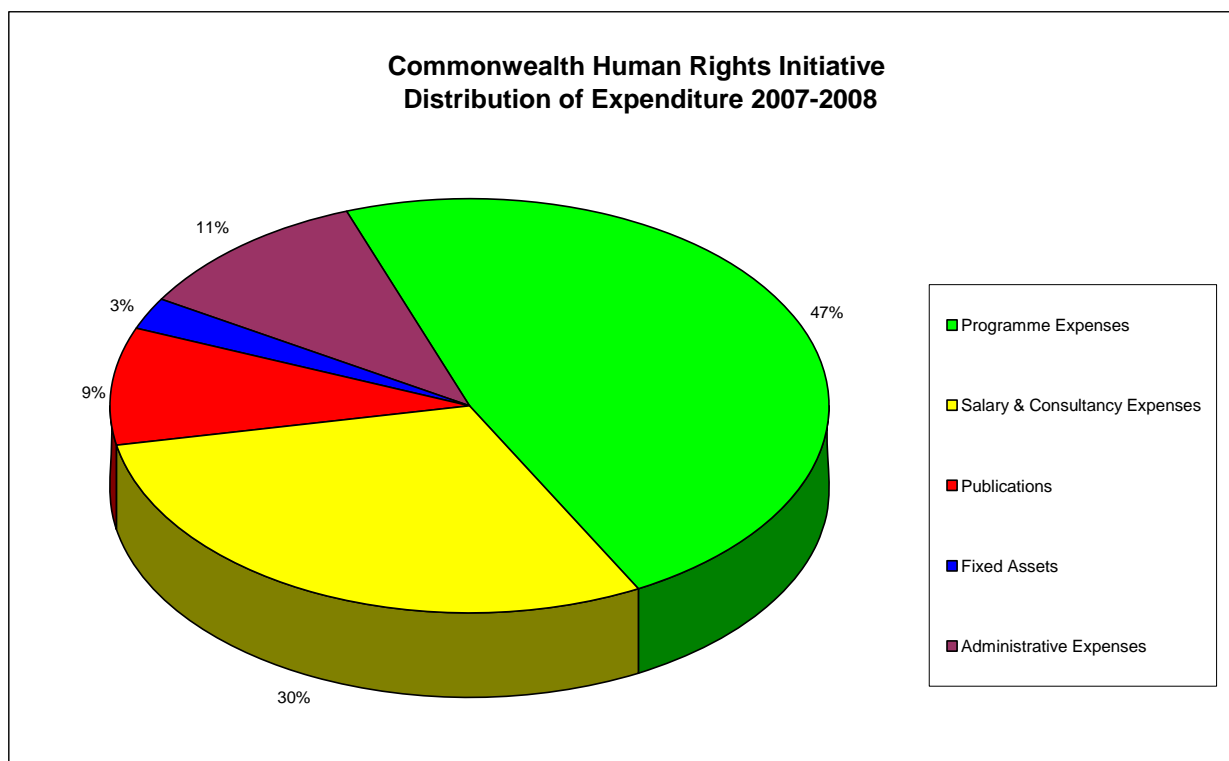
Ms. Divya Khanna

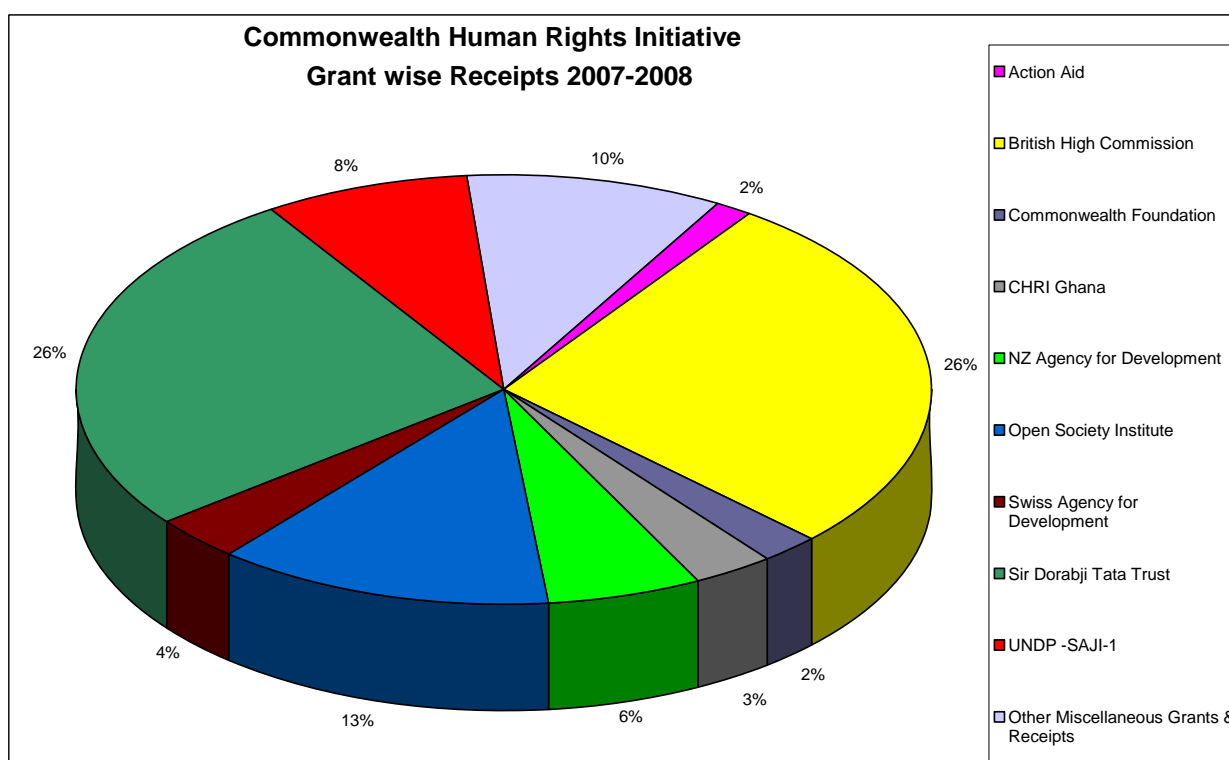
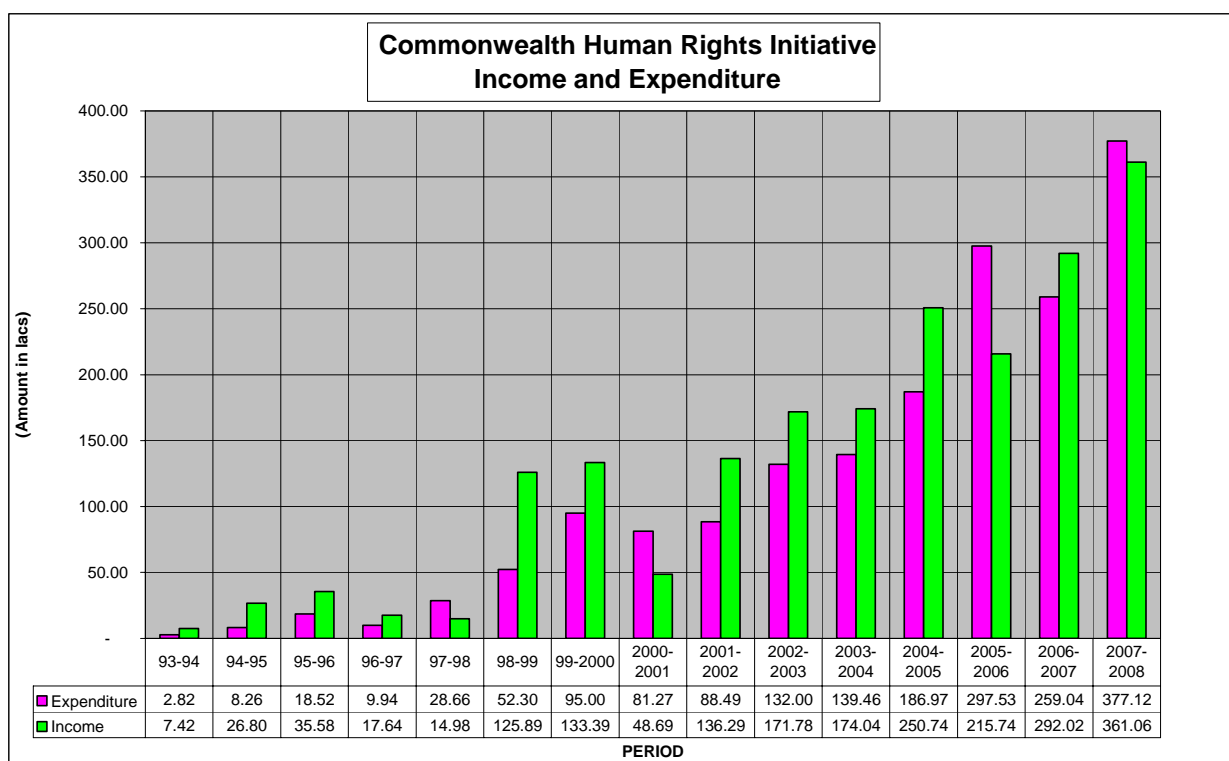
➤ **Staff departures during the year**

Ms. Stephanie Aiyagari

Mr. Justin Foxworthy

### 6.3. Finances - Head Quarters - India





**Audit Report under section 12A(b) of the Income Tax Act, 1961**

We have examined the consolidated balance sheet of Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative as at 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2008 and the income and expenditure account for the year ended on that date which are in agreement with the books of account maintained by the said Society.

We have obtained all the information and explanations which to the best of our knowledge and belief were necessary for the purposes of the audit. In our opinion, proper books of account have been kept by the Head Office of the above named Society visited by us so far as appears from our examination of the books, and proper returns adequate for the purposes of audit have been received from branches/offices not visited by us subject to the comments given below :

In our opinion and to the best of our information, and according to the explanations given to us, the said accounts give a true and fair view:-

- (i) in the case of the balance sheet, of the state of affairs of the above named Society as at 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2008 and
- (ii) in the case of the income and expenditure account, of the deficit of its accounting year ending on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2008.

The prescribed particulars are annexed hereto.



for AWATAR & CO.  
Chartered Accountants

*Sanjay Agrawal*

( SANJAY AGRAWAL )  
Partner

Place : New Delhi

Date : 11/08/2008



**ANNEXURE**  
**STATEMENT OF PARTICULARS**  
**COMMONWEALTH HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVE, NEW DELHI**  
**ASSESSMENT YEAR 2008-09**

- I. Application of income for charitable or religious purposes**
1. Amount of income of the previous year applied to charitable or religious purposes in India during that year. Rs. 3,61,15,607-
2. Whether the trust/institution\* has exercised the option under clause (2) of the Explanation to section 11 (1)? If so, the details of the amount of income deemed to have been applied to charitable or religious purposes in India during the previous year. NO
3. Amount of income accumulated or set apart\*/finally set apart for application to charitable or religious purposes, to the extent it does not exceed 15 per cent of the income derived from property held under trust wholly\*/in part only for such purposes. NIL
4. Amount of income eligible for exemption under section 11(1)(c) [Give details] NIL
5. Amount of income, in addition to the amount referred to in item 3 above, accumulated or set apart for specified purposes under section 11(2) NIL
6. Whether the amount of income of mentioned in item 5 above has been invested or deposited in the manner laid down in section 11(2)(b)? If so, the details thereof. Not Applicable
7. Whether any part of the income in respect of which an option was exercised under clause (2) of the Explanation to section 11(1) in any earlier year is deemed to be income of the previous year under section 11(B)? If so, the details thereof. NIL
8. Whether, during the previous year, any part of income accumulated or set apart for specified purposes under section 11(2) in any earlier year :-
  - a. has been applied for purposes other than charitable or religious purposes or has ceased to be accumulated or set apart for application thereto, or NO
  - b. has ceased to remain invested in any security referred to in section 11(2)(b)(1) or deposited in any account referred to in section 11(2)(b)(1) or section 11(2) (b) (iii) or NO
  - c. has not been utilised for purposes for which it was accumulated or set apart during the period for which it was to be accumulated or set apart, or in the year immediately following the expiry thereof? If so, details thereof. NO





II. Application or use of income or property for the benefit of persons referred to in section 13 [3].

9. Whether any part of the income or property of the \*trust/institution was lent, or continues to in section 13(3) [hereinafter referred to in this Annexure as such person]? If so, give details of the amount, rate of interest charged and the nature of security, if any. NIL
10. Whether any land, building or other property of the \*trust/institution was made, or continued to be made, available for the use of any such person during the previous year? If so, give details of the property and the amount of rent or compensation charged, if any. NO
11. Whether any payment was made to any such person during the previous year by way of salary allowance or otherwise? If so, give details. NO
12. Whether the services of the \*trust/institution were made available to any such person during the previous year? If so, give details thereof together with remuneration or compensation received, if any. NIL
13. Whether any share, security, or other property was purchased by or on behalf of the \*trust/institution during the previous year from any such person? If so, give details thereof together with the consideration paid. NIL
14. Whether any share, security, or other property was sold by or on behalf of the \*trust/institution during the previous year to any such person? If so, the details thereof together with the consideration received. NIL
15. Whether any income or property of the \*trust/institution was diverted during the previous year in favour of any such person? If so, give details thereof together with the amount of income or value of property so diverted. NIL
16. Whether the income or property of the \*trust/institution was used or applied during the previous year for the benefit of any such person in any other manner? If so, give details. NIL

III. Investment held at any time during the previous year(s) in concerns in which persons referred to in section 13(3) have a substantial interest.

Sl. No	Name and address of the concern	whether the concern is a company No. and class of shares held	Nominal value of the investment	Income from the investment	Whether the amount in Col. 4 exceeded 5% of the capital of the concern during the previous year-say. Yes/No
1	2	3	4	5	6
	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
Total					



For AWATAR & CO.  
Chartered Accountants

*Sanjay Agrawal*  
( SANJAY AGRAWAL )  
Partner

Place : New Delhi

Date : 11/08/2008



# COMMONWEALTH HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVE



BALANCE SHEET AS ON MARCH 31, 2008  
(Consolidated)

LIABILITIES				ASSETS			
Previous Year	Particulars	Amount Rs.		Previous Year	Particulars	Amount Rs.	
27,049,237	<b>General Fund</b>			2,846,600	<b>Fixed Assets</b> (As per Schedule-1)		3,784,903
	Balance as per last year	27,049,237					
	Add: Fixed Assets purchased during the year	988,153					
	Less: Excess of Expenditure over Income	2,085,970	25,951,420		<b>Current Assets</b>		
					<b>a) Fixed Deposits</b>		
				2,894,508	- HDFC Bank	-	
				9,597,833	- State Bank of India	731,215	
				10,289,473	- ICICI Bank Ltd	11,115,479	11,846,694
					<b>Investment in Mutual funds</b> (As per schedule -3)		3,500,000
					<b>b) Bank Balances</b> In accounts with:		
				162,022	- Bank of India - UNDP	2,475	
				409,129	- State Bank of India	2,992,559	
				292,149	- Bank of India	153,604	
				-	- Bank of India - SDTT	3,088,170	
				453,297	- HDFC Bank Ltd	286,041	6,522,850
27,049,237	Total c/f		25,951,420	26,945,011	Total c/f		25,654,447





LIABILITIES			ASSETS			
Previous Year	Particulars	Amount Rs.	Previous Year	Particulars		Amount Rs.
27,049,237	Total b/f	25,951,420	26,945,011	Total b/f		25,654,447
	<u>Current Liabilities :</u>			<u>c) Cash Balances</u>		
1,138,780	Sundry creditors for expenses	1,809,177	58,163	- Cash in hand	113,300	
			205,351	- Foreign Currency in hand	177,754	291,053
			49,233	d) Tax Deducted at Source		203,815
			930,259	e) <u>Sundry Debtors</u> Receivable in - cash or in kind (considered good)		1,611,282
28,188,017	Total	27,760,597	28,188,017	Total		27,760,597

As per our report of even date

For Awatar & Co  
Chartered Accountants

*Sanjay Agrawal*

(Sanjay Agrawal)  
Partner M. N. 087786



For and on behalf of Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

*Chairperson*  
Chairperson & Treasurer

*Director*  
Director

Place : New Delhi

Date : 11 AUG 2008



# COMMONWEALTH HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVE

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2008

(Consolidated)



Previous Year	Expenditure	Amount Rs.	Previous Year	Income	Amount Rs.
	<b>Grantwise Expenses - As per Schedule -2</b>			<b>Grant Receipts</b>	
7,084,811	British High Commission - Effective Implementation of RTI Laws in India	7,104,820	-	Action Aid-Developing Capacity & Resource on Right to Information	549,815
3,679,458	British High Commission-Access to Justice-Gujarat	3,675,203	140,000	Administrative Reforms Commission - Roundtable on policing and public order	-
39,727	Canadian High Commission-Radio Series on Police Public Interface	1,655,273	7,854,552	British High Commission - Effective Implementation of RTI Laws in India	6,014,460
-	Commonwealth Foundation - CHRF Meeting	791,225	3,531,538	British High Commission-Access to Justice Gujarat	3,831,614
-	Canadian International Development Agency - CHRF Meeting	2,082,558	163,650	British High Commission - National Conference on Right to Information	-
974,945	Friedrich Naumann Stiftung - Building Awareness on Right to Information	402,562	1,695,000	Canadian High Commission-Radio Series on Police Public Interface	-
6,846,440	Ford Foundation - New York - Institutional Grant	6,977,011	775,500	Commonwealth Foundation - CHRF Meeting	806,300
84,180	Ford Foundation- India -Constitutional Reforms	538,576	1,362,783	Friedrich Naumann Stiftung - Building Awareness on Right to Information	14,724
-	Institute of International Education- CHRF Meeting	120,285	5,730,515	Ford Foundation - New York - Institutional Grant	-
23,970	INTERIGHTS - Judicial Colloquium	-	1,339,470	Ford Foundation- India -Constitutional Reforms	-
436,772	Melbourne Development Institute PTE Ltd.- RTI module for Pacific Media	-	-	Institute of International Education- CHRF Meeting	120,285
361,787	NZ Agency for International Development- RTI Programme- Pacific	623,244	857,152	Melbourne Development Institute PTE Ltd.- RTI module for Pacific Media	-
64,136	General Expenses	202,960	-	NZ Agency for International Development- RTI Programme- Pacific	2,111,334
			-	Open Society Institute Institutional Grant	4,540,230
19,596,226	Total c/f	24,173,717	23,450,160	Total c/f	17,988,762



*[Signature]*



Expenditure			Amount Rs.	Previous Year	Income			Amount Rs.
19,596,226	Total b/f	24,173,717		23,450,160	Total b/f	17,988,762		
-	Open Society Institute - Institutional Grant	407,032		-	PACS- - Capacity Bulding for Civil Socitey Organisation on R T I	453,000		
-	PACS- - Capacity Bulding for Civil Socitey Organisation on R T I	242,943		1,500,538	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation-Police Reforms- Chattisgargh	1,279,544		
2,088,840	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation-Police Reforms- Chattisgargh	1,616,802		-	CHRI Ghana- AC Meeting and CHOGM Expenses Reimbursement,	1,158,607		
1,233,040	Trustee Committee - East Africa Project	3,390		220,000	United Nations Development Programme-SAJI-1 - Legal Literacy through Media	2,780,000		
-	CHRI Ghana - AC Meeting & CHOGM Expenses	1,232,860		2,450,000	Sir Dorabji Tata Trust -Institutional Grant	9,500,000		33,159,913
64,284	United Nations Development Programme- SAJI-1 - Legal Literacy through Media	2,695,878						
2,205,245	Sir Dorabji Tata Trust -Institutional Grant	6,351,982			<b>Other Receipts :</b>			
100,000	Administraive Refoms Commission -Roundtable on policing and public order	-		-	Interest on :			
355,000	Ministry of Home Affairs - Spreading awareness of Human Rights	-	36,724,604	1,329,426	- Fixed Deposits ( TDS - 153036.71)	1,373,913		
(650,000)	Less : Amount utilised out of Special Project fund u/s 11 (2)	-	-	78,763	- Saving Bank Accounts	130,405		
225,570	Fixed Assets transferred to Balance Sheet out of Grants- As per contra Schedule-1		988,153	-	-Dividends	915,627		
36,260	Loss on sale of Assets		40,350	62,408	-Miscellaneous Receipts	381,350		
-	Refund of Grant-PACS &UNDP		438,970	108,917	-Sale of Publications	144899		2,946,194
3,945,747	Excess of Income over Expenditure transferred to General Fund		-	-	Excess of Expenditure over Income transferred to General Fund			2,085,970
29,200,212	<b>Total</b>		<b>38,192,077</b>	<b>29,200,212</b>	<b>Total</b>			<b>38,192,077</b>

As per our report of even date

For Awatar & Co  
Chartered Accountants

*Sanjay Agrawal*

(Sanjay Agrawal)  
Partner M. N. 087786



For and on behalf of Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

*[Signature]*  
Chairperson & Treasurer

*[Signature]*  
Director

Place : *New Delhi*

Date : 11 AUG 2008



## COMMONWEALTH HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVE

## RECEIPTS &amp; PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2008



Previous Year	Receipts	Amount Rs.	Previous Year	Payments	Amount Rs.
	<b>Opening Balance :</b>		-	Audit Expenses	1,635
2,233,559	State Bank of India	409,129	-	Advertisement Expenses	3,025
157,032	Bank of India	292,149	838,578	Broadcasting Expenses	5,264,005
-	Bank of India - UNDP	162,022	19,218	Bank Charges	25,581
309,243	HDFC Bank	453,297	2,812,766	Boarding & Lodging Expenses	2,833,112
45,293	Cash in hand	58,163	46,543	Books & Periodicals	71,603
16,307	Foreign Currency in hand	205,351	3,926,899	Consultancy Charges	5,302,077
18,243,778	Fixed Deposits	22,781,814	799,969	Conveyance Expenses	812,834
<b>21,005,212</b>		<b>24,361,925</b>	258,679	Electricity & Water Charges	353,458
	<b>Grants Received :</b>		201,598	Equipment Hire Charges	353,955
3,531,538	British High Commission-Access to Justice-Gujarat	3,831,614	222,412	Honorarium	362,382
8,018,202	British High Commission - Effective Implementation of RTI Laws in India	6,014,460	78,490	Insurance Expenses - Staff	104,585
1,695,000	Canadian High Commission-Radio Series on Police Public Interface	-	6,448	Insurance Expenses- office	5,861
-	Action Aid-Developing Capacity & Resource on Right to Information	549,815	254,652	Internet Expenses	342,883
775,500	Commonwealth Foundation - CHRF Meeting	806,300	162,190	Leave Encashment	107,000
1,362,783	Friedrich Naumann Stiftung - Building Awareness on Right to Information	14,724	85,268	Legal & Professional Charges	496,444
5,730,515	Ford Foundation - New York - Institutional Grant	-	16,222	Miscellaneous Expenses	11,190
1,339,470	Ford Foundation- India -Constitutional Reforms	-	-	Medical Expenses	15,215
-	Open Society Institute - Institutional Grant	4,540,230	5,785	Membership & subscription	-
1,500,538	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation-Police Reforms- Chattisgarh	1,279,544	-	Meeting Expenses	174,626
857,152	Melbourne Development. Institute PTE Ltd.- RTI module for Pacific Media	-	213,845	Office Expenses	296,955
140,000	Administrative Reforms Commission -Roundtable on policing and public order	-	607,975	Postage & Telegrams	478,608
-	NZ Agency for International Development- R T I Programme- Pacific	2,111,334	41,400	Per-diem Expenses	280,658
-	PACS- - Capacity Bulding for Civil Socitey Organisation on R T I	453,000	4,213,370	Printing & Publications	3,432,152
-	CHRI Ghana- AC Meeting and CHOGM Expenses Reimbursement	1,158,607	856,750	Rent,Rates & Taxes	1,427,900
-	Institute of International Education- CHRF Meeting	120,285	22,104	Recruitment Expenses	6,504
220,000	United Nations Development Programme- SAJI-1 - Legal Literacy through Media	2,780,000	383,295	Repair & Maintenance	380,558
2,450,000	Sir Dorabji Tata Trust -Institutional Grant	9,500,000	5,094,817	Salary & Benefits	5,939,553
<b>27,620,698</b>		<b>33,159,913</b>	76,572	Staff Training Expenses	25,050
<b>48,625,910</b>	<b>Total c/f</b>	<b>57,521,838</b>	<b>21,245,845</b>	<b>Total c/f</b>	<b>28,909,409</b>





Previous Year	Receipts	Amount Rs.	Previous Year	Payments	Amount Rs.
48,625,910	Total b/f	57,521,838	21,245,845	Total b/f	28,909,409
	<b>Other Receipts</b>				
	Interest :				
1,329,426	- On Fixed Deposits	1,373,913	68,475	Security Expenses	75,900
78,763	- On Savings Bank Accounts	130,405	455,179	Telephone Expenses	411,276
62,408	Miscellaneous Receipts	381,351	3,656,721	Travelling Expenses	7,176,654
108,917	Sale of Publications	144,899	209,115	Venue Charges	151,365
6,490	Sale of Assets	9,500	11,350	Air Conditioner	-
-	Dividend From Mutal Funds	915,627	76,200	Computer and Printers	539,050
			22,450	Furniture & Fixture	137,009
			16,820	Office Equipment	16,194
			98,750	UPS & Invertor	265,900
			7,300	Software	30,000
1,586,004		2,955,695			
255,616	Increase/Decrease in Sundry Creditors	670,397	237,399	Increase/Decrease - debtors	835,606
			-	Refund of Grant	438,970
				<b>Closing Balance :</b>	
			409,129	State Bank of India	2,992,559
			292,149	Bank of India	153,604
			162,022	Bank of India- UNDP	2,475
			-	Bank of India - SDTT	3,088,170
			453,297	HDFC Bank	286,041
			58,163	Cash in hand	113,300
			205,351	Foreign currency in hand	177,754
			22,781,815	Fixed Deposits	11,846,694
			-	Investment in Mutal Funds	3,500,000
50,467,530	Total	61,147,930	50,467,530	Total	61,147,930

As per our report of even date

For Awatar & Co.,  
Chartered Accountants

*Sanjay Agrawal*

(Sanjay Agrawal)  
Partner M. N. 087786



For and on behalf of Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

*Chairperson & Treasurer*      *Director*

Chairperson & Treasurer

Director

Place : New Delhi

Date : 11 AUG 2008



# CHRI Programmes

CHRI's work is based on the belief that for human rights, genuine democracy and development to become a reality in people's lives, there must be high standards and functional mechanisms for accountability and participation within the Commonwealth and its member countries. Accordingly, in addition to a broad human rights advocacy programme, CHRI advocates access to information and access to justice. It does this through research, publications, workshops, information dissemination and advocacy.

**HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY:** CHRI makes regular submissions to official Commonwealth bodies and member governments. From time to time CHRI conducts fact finding missions and since 1995, has sent missions to Nigeria, Zambia, Fiji Islands and Sierra Leone. CHRI also coordinates the Commonwealth Human Rights Network, which brings together diverse groups to build their collective power to advocate for human rights. CHRI's Media Unit also ensures that human rights issues are in the public consciousness.

**ACCESS TO INFORMATION:** CHRI catalyses civil society and governments to take action, acts as a hub of technical expertise in support of strong legislation, and assists partners with implementation of good practice. CHRI works collaboratively with local groups and officials, building government and civil society capacity as well as advocating with policy makers. CHRI is active in South Asia, most recently supporting the successful campaign for a national law in India; provides legal drafting support and inputs in Africa; and in the Pacific, works with regional and national organisations to catalyse interest in access legislation.

## ACCESS TO JUSTICE

**Police Reforms:** In too many countries the police are seen as oppressive instruments of state rather than as protectors of citizens' rights, leading to widespread rights violations and denial of justice. CHRI promotes systemic reform so that police act as upholders of the rule of law rather than as instruments of the current regime. In India, CHRI's programme aims at mobilising public support for police reform. In East Africa and Ghana, CHRI is examining police accountability issues and political interference.

**Prison Reforms:** The closed nature of prisons makes them prime centres of violations. CHRI aims to open up prisons to public scrutiny by ensuring that the near defunct lay visiting system is revived.

**Judicial Education:** CHRI facilitates judicial exchanges focusing on access to justice for the most vulnerable. Participating judges get a rare opportunity to hear from activists and experts, focus on pressing issues specific to their region and familiarize themselves with recent legal and procedural, as well as social and scientific, developments relevant to their judicial work. The work was begun with INTERIGHTS some years ago. CHRI now works independently to orient lower court judges on human rights in the administration of justice.