

## Annual Report 2024-2025

Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), India



# CHRI

Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative  
working for the *practical* realisation of human rights in  
the countries of the Commonwealth

## Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) is registered in India since July 1993 as an independent, non-partisan, non-governmental organisation under the *Societies Registration Act, 1860*.

CHRI believes that the fundamental rights enshrined in India's Constitution are an unequivocal expression of the universal value system of human rights without which a life of dignity is not possible. We advocate for rule-based, participatory, inclusive, open and accountable government. Our work is positioned at the intersection of civil liberties and governance.

CHRI's specialisation in the areas of Access to Justice (ATJ) and Access to Information (ATI) is widely known. Our ATJ programme has focused on Police and Prison Reforms and works to reduce arbitrariness in law enforcement and ensure transparency, while holding duty bearers to account. Our ATI programme has focused on transparent governance and works to empower people to access information of public interest from governments. We do this through evidence-based research; engagement with state institutions for rights-affirming policy reform, systemic change, and better implementation of human rights safeguards; training public sector officials to implement laws with due regard for fundamental human rights; building capacity of stakeholders in the social sector to advocate for reform; educating and supporting marginalised communities to access their rights and entitlements; and partnering at various levels with individuals and institutions that share its vision.

CHRI has special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council and is accredited to the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Executive Committee (India): Wajahat Habibullah, Chairperson, Ashok Ganju, Treasurer, Maja Daruwala, Senior Advisor. Members: B. K. Chandrashekhar, Nitin Desai, Poonam Muttreja, Kamal Kumar, Justice A P Shah (retd.), Kishore Bhargava and Venkatesh Nayak (ex-officio Secretary & Director).

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## **COMMONWEALTH HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVE, INDIA**

### **ANNUAL REPORT** **1 APRIL 2024 – 31 MARCH 2025**

This is a report of activities of Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) registered as a Society in India since 1993. CHRI has developed a specialisation on Access to Justice (Police and Prison Reforms) and Access to Information. It works towards the realisation of the fundamental right to access information and access to justice for all, through evidence-based research, developing resources for public education and training, engaging with state institutions, civil society and oversight bodies.

A report of the main activities undertaken during this period is as below.

#### **ACCESS TO JUSTICE - POLICE REFORMS PROGRAMME**

##### **Police Reforms Programme**

The year 2024-2025 was a year of persistence, learning, and community-driven engagement for CHRI's Police Reforms Programme in Mumbai. Working alongside the City Core Group (CCG), the programme remained committed to making policing more transparent, accountable, and sensitive to people's rights. The work was guided by a simple but powerful principle: policing must protect life and liberty as guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. The broad areas of engagement are a) Research and evidence based on police accountability and reform related issues; and b) Monitoring and advocating for police reforms through CHRI & City Core Group (CCG), Mumbai.

During the reporting period, CHRI collaborated actively with City Core Group (CCG Group), Mumbai and held a number of consultations. CHRI has long advocated for citizen-centric, responsive, transparent and accountable policing. Towards that end it worked with CCG for evidence-based advocacy for reform in the functioning of the police in India with particular focus on the mega-city of Mumbai. The thrust of the activities detailed below is to demand improvement in police performance and effective protection of people's fundamental rights to life and liberty guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution. CHRI and CCG will monitor compliance with relevant statutory obligations of the police and Supreme Court of India's directives for police reform and better protection of people's lives and liberty at the cutting edge of police administration. The implementation of these measures remains poor, requiring the involvement of community-based civil society networks like CCG to continuously engage with the police administration to do better.

Following a series of discussions between CHRI and CCG members, the CCG network partners have identified specific areas of police performance to focus on for monitoring, assessment and advocacy for reform. The proposed evidence-based advocacy initiatives are intended to improve police response to crimes against women and also prevent the abuse of police powers of arrest and detention.

During these discussions, CCG partners were made aware of the Supreme Court Orders and guidelines on the focus areas identified. In addition, CCG members who had volunteered to undertake field visits for the research were trained on how to use the Data Capture Templates for documenting their field visits.

### ***Brief overview of the thrust areas identified***

At least three major preventive measures exist thanks to legislative changes or Supreme Court directives to prevent the abuse of police powers and safeguard individual liberties. These are:

- (1) Installation of closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras at multiple locations in every police station as per the Supreme Court directives in *Paramvir Singh Saini vs Baljit Singh & Ors.*, SLP (Cr) No. 3543 of 2020 judgement dated 02/12/2020 as a preventive measure against custodial torture;
- (2) Displaying in every police station specific guidelines to be complied with by the police while arresting any crime suspect as per the Supreme Court directives in *D K Basu vs State of West Bengal*, W.P. (Crl) No. 539 of 1986, judgement dated 18/12/1986 and supplemented more recently in the matter of *Satender K Antil vs CBI & Anr.*, W.P. (Crl) No. 5191 of 2021 judgement dated 11/07/2022; and
- (3) Displaying on a publicly accessible noticeboard, the name and other details of every person arrested by the police along with the name and designation of the arresting officer at every district level police control room as per Section 41C of the *Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973* (CrPC). CHRI had published a national level compliance study in 2016.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that these guidelines and legislative obligations are complied with more in the breach because of which instances of the abuse of police powers are frequently complained about to human rights commissions and police complaints authorities (wherever established), and courts and reported in the mass media.

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4) Another law enforcement measure that has been put in place recently by the Mumbai Police to act as a check against the rising trend of crimes against women is- Nirbhaya Squads (team of 4 police officers making up a special women safety cell in every police station) with a dedicated central complaints hotline set up by the Mumbai police.

After an incident of brutal rape Incident at Sakinaka, Mumbai in September 2021, recalling the horrific 2012 Nirbhaya Gang rape case in Delhi, the Maharashtra Chief Minister announced the setting up of Nirbhaya Squads or Special Women's Safety Cells in January 2022. Very little information about their roles and responsibilities, budget sanctioned and utilised is available in the public domain except in the form of occasional media reports.

One such media report indicated that the Mumbai Police had diverted monies from the Nirbhaya Fund set up in 2013 for providing compensation to women victims of sexual violence, for the purpose of purchasing vehicles to equip the Nirbhaya Squads. Once again, anecdotal evidence from CCG network members indicates that they are not performing well. CHRI and CCG plan to study the compliance of Mumbai Police with regard to all these preventive measures performance across police Stations in Mumbai in order to identify the implementation challenges.

Seventeen members of our CCG Network have volunteered to be part of the field visits to cover the Police Control Rooms and our target is also do our best to cover the 91 police stations over the period of a year.

Using evidence obtained through field-visits and RTI interventions, we will advocate with the Mumbai Police and the Maharashtra Government to address these challenges effectively and improve the quality of policing and ensure a higher degree of safety for citizens. This will be our contribution to the effective implementation of the government's Safe City Project in Mumbai which is currently more focused on increasing citizens' surveillance capabilities of the police and techno-managerial solutions to reducing crime.

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CHRI in collaboration with the CCG-Mumbai is working out various strategies to achieve its avowed objectives of police reforms through the following approaches:

## 1. Collective Discussions and Training

Regular meetings with CCG partners were held throughout the year to discuss key issues in policing. These meetings were not merely formal reviews, but open spaces where members could share their experiences of dealing with the police, their concerns about safety in the city, and ideas for change.

Two themes kept returning in these conversations: the understanding of Nirbhaya squads the frequent misuse of arrest and detention powers.

To respond to these concerns, CHRI conducted training sessions for volunteers and community leaders. Participants were introduced to Supreme Court directives such as the D.K. Basu guidelines on arrest and the judgment in Paramvir Singh Saini on CCTV installation. They were also trained to use Data Capture Templates, a simple but effective tool for documenting field visits to police stations.

The trainings were designed to be practical. Volunteers learned not only what the law requires, but also how to speak with police officers, what to observe inside a police station, and how to record information systematically. Many participants expressed that this knowledge gave them confidence to question police practices and to advocate for citizens' rights in a respectful but firm manner.

## 2. Field Visits to Police Stations

Between August and November 2024, CHRI-CCG teams visited 37 police stations across Mumbai. The purpose was to see whether the police were following three specific requirements: CCTV Cameras – to be installed at all important points inside police stations, including lock-ups and entry/exit points, to prevent custodial violence.

Arrest Guidelines – to be displayed prominently so that people know their rights when they or their loved ones are taken into custody.

Public Disclosure of Arrests – names of arrested persons and the names of the arresting officers to be displayed in District Police Control Rooms as required by Section 41C of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

The visits showed mixed results. In some stations, CCTV cameras were installed and working. In others, cameras were either absent, not working, or installed only in limited areas. In many stations, the arrest guidelines were missing or displayed in places where citizens could not easily see them. Information about arrests was also not consistently displayed at the control rooms.

These findings confirmed what community members had often expressed: that legal safeguards are more often ignored than followed. They also reinforced the need for constant monitoring and pressure from outside the system to ensure compliance.

### **3. Using the Right to Information (RTI) for Accountability**

One of the strongest tools used this year was the Right to Information Act. RTIs were filed to bring clarity on several issues, including CCTV installation, oversight committees, and Nirbhaya squads in police stations.

#### **a) Gathering CCTV Footage**

To strengthen field findings with direct evidence, 12 RTI applications were filed at selected police stations requesting CCTV footage of the days when monitoring visits were conducted. The process was not simple. The members of CCG-CHRI group personally visited each police station to submit pen drives for copying the footage and later revisited them to collect the material.

At several stations, officers asked for clarifications. In such situations, the applications were revised and re-submitted with clearer wording. The purpose of the requests was also explained in person, so that officials understood that the effort was to strengthen accountability rather than to target individuals. These repeated visits required time and patience, but they created opportunities to build dialogue with police personnel while also pressing for transparency.

#### **b) Nirbhaya Squad RTIs**

Recognising the lack of clarity around the functioning of the Nirbhaya Squads (special women's safety cells created after the 2021 Sakinaka rape case) six RTI applications were submitted to the Home Department and the Mumbai Police Commissionerate. These sought copies of government resolutions, orders, and budgets related to the squads, as well as details of their responsibilities.

The replies received were incomplete and unsatisfactory. To ensure that the issue was not left unresolved, appeals were filed for each RTI. The CHRI police team attended the appeal hearings in person, explained the importance of the information, and urged the authorities to provide proper responses. This process demonstrated not only the slow pace of transparency in the system but also how persistence can push institutions to take citizen demands seriously.

#### **4. Experiences from the RTI Appeals Process**

The appeal hearings were more than procedural steps, they became spaces where the very idea of accountability was tested. By appearing before the First Appellate Authority, CHRI and CCG showed that citizens can and will follow through on their right to information.

While responses were still limited, the act of questioning, explaining, and re-engaging repeatedly had its own impact. It reminded officials that community members are watching, and that the questions being asked about CCTV surveillance, arrest transparency, and women's safety are matters of public importance, not technical formalities.

#### **5. Case Interventions by CCG Partners**

Alongside systemic monitoring, CCG members continued to support individuals whose rights were at risk. A few significant interventions included:

A successful conviction in a POCSO case, ensuring justice for a young survivor.

The rescue and safe repatriation of a trafficked woman, who was eventually placed in a protective home in Nepal.

Shelter and reintegration for a 17-year-old girl who had left home to marry, preventing early marriage and restoring her to her family.

Support for an elderly auto driver who had been mistreated by his own daughter, enabling him to regain access to his home and basic dignity.

These stories showed the value of combining community-level work with broader reform. They reminded us that behind every statistic or legal directive is a human life, and the role of civil society is to ensure that these lives are protected.

#### **6. Reflections and Looking Ahead**

The year's work made one reality very clear: legal safeguards exist, but they are often not visible in practice. CCTV cameras remain non-functional in many places, arrest rights are not displayed for citizens, and public disclosure of arrest details is patchy. Information about Nirbhaya Squads, despite repeated requests, remains largely unavailable. Yet, the persistence of CHRI and CCG partners, through field visits, RTI applications, follow-ups, and appeals ensured that these issues remained alive in the system. The very act of asking questions, documenting gaps, and insisting on answers is a form of reform in itself.

Looking ahead, CHRI and CCG plan to: Continue pressing for full disclosure on the functioning and funding of Nirbhaya Squads.

Strengthen partnerships with legal services authorities to support citizens in accessing justice.

Use findings from visits and RTIs to advocate for reforms at both the city and state levels.

The Police Reforms Programme in 2024-2025 showed that change does not happen through single actions, but through consistent, small, and determined steps. Whether it was carrying a pen drive to a police station to collect CCTV footage, redrafting an RTI application to make it clearer, or attending an appeal hearing, each act contributed to building accountability.

The year also highlighted that reform is about people. It is about the survivor of violence who seeks justice, the elderly driver who needs dignity, the young volunteer who learns to document a police station visit, and the official who is reminded of their duty to the Constitution. Through these combined efforts, CHRI and CCG continue to work towards a vision of policing that is not only efficient, but also just, transparent, and respectful of every citizen's rights.

## ACCESS TO JUSTICE - PRISON REFORMS PROGRAMME

### INTRODUCTION

CHRI continued its work on prison reforms with an increased focus on improving prison administration and prison conditions in Haryana, Karnataka and Punjab, in furtherance of the in-depth prison conditions studies. CHRI also focused on engaging with judicial officers to strengthen pre-trial decision through capacity building sessions on role of magistrates at first production. Another area of increased focus was documenting issues pertaining to menstrual hygiene management in prisons, and undertaking activities to raise awareness on the

importance of this issue. It continued its engagement towards improving access to quality legal services, through engagements with the National Legal Services Authority and various State Legal Services Authorities. CHRI also continued its partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in ensuring legal support and assistance to refugees and asylum seekers who are in detention in India.

## MAIN ACTIVITIES

CHRI engages with a range of mandate-holders of the criminal justice system to better fulfil their respective mandate in relation to prisoners and push for better coordination. It seeks to strengthen prison oversight mechanisms, improve prison conditions, reduce use of pre-trial detention, ensure effective access to legal aid for prisoners, and secure the rights of vulnerable prisoners including women, transgenders, foreign nationals, refugees and asylum seekers. During the year 2024-25, it took up the following activities:

### I. Strengthening Prison Oversight and Conditions

CHRI continued its collaboration with state prison departments, legal services authorities, and human rights commissions to promote regular prison monitoring and improve conditions in the prisons.

#### Punjab

- Commissioned by PULSA to study all 24 prisons in the state, also in compliance with a Supreme Court directive.
- The *Inside Punjab Prisons* report was released by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul at the Northern Regional Conference on Enhancing Access to Justice.
- A working group was formed with representatives from PULSA, the Punjab Prison Department, and CHRI to develop an Action Plan.
- The Punjab Prison Department shared details of reforms undertaken, many of which were incorporated into the Punjab Prison Rules 2022.
- CHRI is finalising the Action Plan based on departmental inputs.
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**MoU with Punjab Prisons Department-** CHRI held successful meetings with senior prison officials, who agreed to a list of collaborative activities. The MoU is currently under final review for approval.

#### Karnataka

- Commissioned by KSLSA to study all 51 prisons in the state, in line with Supreme Court directives.

- The *Inside Karnataka Prisons* report was launched by Justice U.U. Lalit during KSLSA's Silver Jubilee celebrations.
- CHRI updated the report through zonal meetings facilitated by the DG Prisons, incorporating recent reforms.
- A High Court-appointed Prison Committee oversaw implementation, and a working group was formed to draft an Action Plan.
- Multiple meetings were held, and a comprehensive Action Plan is currently being finalised.

**MoU with Karnataka SLSA-** To advance implementation and initiate new reform activities, CHRI secured approval for an MoU with KSLSA.

## **II. National-Level Advocacy**

In response to the Supreme Court's directions in W.P. (C) No. 406/2013 (*Inhuman Conditions in 1382 Prisons*) and the new provision under Section 479(3) of the BNSS 2023, CHRI developed a sample format to assist jail superintendents in fulfilling their statutory duties.

- The format was shared with Prison Heads across all States and Union Territories, with a request to disseminate it to individual prisons.

## **III. Securing Rights of Vulnerable Prisoners**

### **Refugees and Asylum Seekers**

- CHRI continued to identify and follow up on cases of refugees and asylum seekers in detention, in partnership with UNHCR.
- Legal support was coordinated through police, prison authorities, legal services institutions, and private lawyers.

### **UNHCR 2024 Annual Report**

#### **Section 1: Project Overview and Strategic Focus**

1.1 The project was initiated with a targeted focus on West Bengal and the North Eastern states—particularly Assam, Manipur, and Tripura—to strengthen documentation processes and ensure access to legal representation for all refugees and asylum seekers (R&AS) in detention. During field interactions with R&AS and relevant authorities, it became evident that detainees faced significant challenges in accessing basic resources and amenities. In response, CHRI engaged with state authorities to document detention conditions, especially in Assam. A formal complaint was submitted to the Assam State Human Rights

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Commission, which subsequently directed the District Magistrate (DM) to inspect the premises and submit a report.

1.2 CHRI was invited to provide comments on the DM's report and was granted permission to visit the Matia Transit Camp in Assam. A detailed assessment was submitted to the Commission, advocating for the implementation of minimum standards of living for detainees. CHRI also documented the conditions of R&AS women detained at Dum Dum Central Correctional Home (CCH), West Bengal, and initiated the formation of a national network of lawyers working on immigration detention cases.

## **Section 2: Progress towards Outputs and Targets**

- 2.1 Legal assistance was extended to 307 individuals in detention across six states: West Bengal (126), Assam (82), Tripura (90), Manipur (2), Bihar (6), and Karnataka (1).
- 2.2 Two persons of concern (PoCs) were directly linked with legal aid lawyers through CHRI's intervention. All other PoCs interacted with had legal representation—either privately retained or through legal aid.
- 2.3 A total of 112 registrations were facilitated in West Bengal and Assam during 2024.
- 2.4 Sixty-nine additional lawyers were identified and added to the Immigration Detention Legal Network to strengthen legal support for refugees.
- 2.5 CHRI conducted two training programmes for lawyers engaged in immigration detention cases. These included:
  - A virtual session in April for lawyers interested in refugee and asylum issues.
  - A national-level litigator's training in August, co-hosted with UNHCR, NUJS, and the Global Strategic Litigation Council for Refugee Rights.
- 2.6 Twelve monitoring visits were conducted to detention facilities, correctional homes, and shelter institutions, including:
  - Dum Dum and Presidency Correctional Homes, All Bengal Women's Union (West Bengal)
  - Matia Detention Centre, Karimganj Prison, Silchar Central Jail (Assam)

These visits aimed to verify detainee details, assess conditions, and identify support needs.

2.7 Legal representation was facilitated for approximately 30 individuals in Assam through over 300 coordinated phone calls with lawyers, District Legal Services Authorities (DLSAs), and prison welfare officers.

2.8 CHRI held 69 advocacy meetings with key stakeholders, including:

- State Legal Services Authorities (West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Manipur)
- Prisons Departments
- Human Rights Commissions
- Child Welfare Committees
- Judicial Academies
- Directorate of Social Welfare and Education
- Foreigner Regional Registration Office

Frequent virtual engagements were conducted with authorities in Tripura and Manipur to gather information on R&AS in detention.

2.9 Resettlement interviews were facilitated for 25 individuals in West Bengal and 70 Refugee Status Determination (RSD) interviews in Assam. In Tripura, despite the highest number of arrests in 2024, registration efforts were hindered due to limited access and rapid bail grants in early 2024. In the latter half of the year, courts became more cautious in granting bail due to non-appearance of some R&AS post-release. In several cases, permission to conduct registration was denied.

2.10 CHRI conducted a focused visit to the Matia Transit Camp in Goalpara, Assam on 4 May 2024 to document living conditions and advocate for improved standards.

### **Section 3: Communication and Case Monitoring**

3.1 CHRI maintained consistent communication with legal representatives and family members of R&AS to ensure timely updates and coordination. Despite limited direct access to detainees, CHRI and UNHCR met 26 R&AS in detention in West Bengal to provide updates on resettlement processes and address concerns. Two virtual interaction sessions were also facilitated.

3.2 CHRI ensured that R&AS were kept informed about developments in their cases and efforts towards their release. Where direct communication was not feasible, updates were conveyed through legal counsel, prison authorities, or family members. In Assam, CHRI responded to complaints regarding deteriorating detention conditions and rising skin-related ailments, and took appropriate steps to escalate the issue to relevant authorities.

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## CHRI Work under UNHCR Project for Refugees and Asylum Seekers from January to June 2025

### Reach and Support

- **Total Persons of Concern (PoCs) Assisted:** 138 individuals
  - *Assam:* 52 PoCs, including 17 CHIN refugees
  - *West Bengal:* 80 PoCs
  - *Manipur:* 6 PoCs

### Advocacy and Outreach

- **Total Engagements:** 80 meetings/advocacy sessions across three states
  - *Assam:* 27 advocacy sessions + 1 visit to Matia Detention Centre
  - *West Bengal & Manipur:* 50 advocacy sessions, majority in West Bengal
  - *Facility Visits:*
    - Dum Dum Central Correctional Home
    - All-Bengal Women's Union Shelter Home

### Key Outcomes:

#### Legal & Protection Interventions

- **Resettlement Advocacy:** Multiple high-level engagements with prison officials, district authorities, and ministries secured forward movement in cases involving long-term detention and resettlement requests.
- **Human Rights Litigation:** Regular follow-ups with the State Human Rights Commission (SHRC), including submission of case responses and procurement of legal orders, ensured accountability and continued action.
- **Child Protection Measures:** CHRI traced minor refugees placed in protective homes and initiated dialogue with child welfare bodies for ongoing care and their restoration with their family members.

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## Medical Support & Welfare

- **Urgent Health Cases:** Formal applications submitted to legal and government bodies improved medical attention for critically ill detainees.
- **Systemic Improvements:** CHRI consistently advocated for improved health services within detention centres, including deployment of medical staff and consistent medication supplies.

## Documentation & Identity Recognition

- Distributed UNHCR Refugee Cards, helping refugees formalize their legal status and access protection mechanisms.
- Coordinating for identity verification, such as collection of photographs and signatures for PoCs, vital for their resettlement processing.

## Stakeholder Engagement

- Conducted meetings with prison administrators, judicial authorities, and legal services institutions to promote long-term structural improvements.
- Maintained daily coordination with detention centres to facilitate legal aid, communication access, and refugee determination procedures.
- Engaged with shelter homes and institutional partners to track vulnerable individuals and ensure continuity of care.

## Sustained Impact

CHRI remains committed to deepening its outreach and refining legal support for displaced communities. The dedication of a small team has yielded significant results, reflecting both efficiency and empathy in execution. CHRI's consistent presence within complex bureaucratic ecosystems has built trust with institutional stakeholders, allowing the organization to serve as a vital bridge between vulnerable

## ACCESS TO JUSTICE INFORMATION PROGRAMME

The ATI Programme has not been able to attract dedicated programme funding since the adverse action taken by the Union Government against CHRI under the FCRA Act, 2020 in June 2021. Efforts to secure programme support from Indian donor agencies have not been successful either due to the stigma that has unfortunately attached to the organisation's name because of the adverse action or because this thematic is not a priority area for them. As a result, the ATI Programme has also not been able to recruit dedicated programme staff and the activities under the programme listed below have materialised primarily due to the efforts of the Director who also doubles up as the ATI Programme Head. Rationalising the use of the funds available from donors committed to supporting CHRI as an institution and CHRI's own general funds, the Programme has engaged in the following activities on its own and in collaboration with other organisations and institutions in the government and the non-government sector. While we continued to work on RTI-related issues, contemporary developments led us to focus on emergent needs of public education which we could not ignore as a human rights organisation.

CHRI engaged with the following specific activities and collaboration during the year under report:

As a Member of the Working Group on Human Rights (WGHR), CHRI provided inputs to the periodic report to the UN Human Rights Committee which monitors compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on various topics like RTI, Whistleblowers Protection Act, Anti-corruption measures and Police Complaints Authorities, etc.

CHRI took part in the “*Tareekh pe Tareekh*” conversation series and spoke about “Is Right to Information Absolute? One Supreme Court: Different stands”. Shailesh Gandhi, Uday Madhurkar, former Central Information Commissioners, Shashank Shekhar Jha, Advocate Supreme Court and Venkatesh Nayak took part in the conversation on 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2023.

CHRI resourced a RTI training workshop at the invitation of the Government of Meghalaya in Shillong. About 35 Junior and middle level officers from the Agriculture, Horticulture, Finance, Planning, PWD, PHE, Personnel and Admin Reforms, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary departments, as well as from Meghalaya Urban Development Authority took part in the training.

The workshop dwelt on the case laws and DoPT guidelines about various provisions of the RTI Act. Trainees were involved in simulation exercise in drawing mock RTI applications, etc.





The Deputy Secretary, Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms which is the nodal agency for RTI implementation advised MATI which hosted the training programme to put up a proposal for Phase-wise training series for PIOs with CHRI as the resource organisation. CHRI designed and conducted the workshop. 13-15 November, 2024.

The Director, CHRI took part in a webinar on the topic, “Is the Election Commission of India failing the transparency test?” organised by Citizens’ Forum India (CFI), 25 January, 2025

Director, CHRI took part in the Online Conference on “Building Solidarity for Social Justice and the Impact Sector” organised by an organisation called, Catalyst Now India organised on the occasion of World Day of Social Justice on 20 February, 2025. The conference explored the evolution, challenges, and opportunities of the social sector.

The Director, CHRI delivered 6<sup>th</sup> Rev. Dr. Ambrose Pinto, S.J. Memorial Lecture at St. Joseph’s University, Bangalore on the topic, “Fixing our Electoral System for a Robust Democracy” on 18 March, 2025

#### ***Publications and Media Coverage***

- The Director, CHRI gave an interview with *Eedina*, a local television in Karnataka on “Election Commission & Lok Sabha 2024” on 7 June, 2024.

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<https://www.mid-day.com/mumbai/mumbai-news/article/lok-sabha-elections-2024-no-data-yet-eci-judiciary-expect-people-to-trust-evms-23346597>
- Article on the challenges of RTI based on the officers’ training workshop conducted by Dr. R.S. Tolia Uttarakhand Academy of Administration, Government of Uttarakhand, 22 April, 2024
- Under-trials can’t vote, courts, government should set it right: Experts - CHRI in the news.  
<https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/karnataka/2024/May/13/undertrials-cant-vote-courts-government-should-set-it-right-experts>
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