

CHILD RIGHTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

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“Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home—so close and so small they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person...man, woman and child.” – Eleanor Roosevelt

In celebration of Child Rights Week, on Child Rights Day, Dream School Foundation (DSF) which is a non-profit organization that works towards improving the standard of public education organized a talk on child rights and civil society in their ongoing effort to ensure that child rights are equitable. The event was a part of a series of workshops and speeches held in order to facilitate the volunteers and general public, to build their capacity and thereby maximize their interventions at the school and community level.

The need of the hour according to Maitreyee Kumar, Executive Director of DSF, is to actively engage the society in taking an interest in advocating the rights of our children. The underlying belief of DSF is the people's ability to contribute towards the nation building process. This year on 18th November - Childs Rights Day, DSF advocated child rights by involving the various stake holders in schools and communities because educating civil society is the key to protecting children's rights. The highlight of the day was the key note from Mr. Mathews Philip, the Executive director of South India Cell for Human Rights Education and Monitoring (SICHREM). Mr. Philip gave a comprehensive speech beginning with a chronological timeline outlining the development

of Child Rights. He then moved onto the United Nations Convention on Rights of The Child Rights (UNCRC) and its significance in recognizing the rights of children globally, and ended with an emphasis on the special status that should be given to children, as well as the responsibility of the civil society in safeguarding the rights of children.

Unfortunately for us, India's track record on child rights is more than disappointing; we are qualified as belonging to a league of countries considered to be amongst the most dangerous for children, despite the fact that we have ratified the UNCRC and have legislations for children in place. Laws and regulations alone cannot resolve this issue; wider social mobilization and participation from society is required. This is where we as a part of the society come in. So, the next time you see a child being beaten, being forced to work, or being abused in any manner, remember that 'universal human rights' begins in small places, with small steps, and that children are after all human! If you have the opportunity, make the difference. Like, William Harvard said, "The greatest glory of a free-born people is to transmit that freedom to their children"; our freedom is no freedom unless our children are liberated and freed from the manacles of injustice.



Participants at the Seminar.

Our Thanks to Mr. Sabu Joseph and Ms Maitreyee Kumar, DSF.

For more information on DSF visit www.dsfindia.org, Phone: 41492179 / 9844060478. For more information on Sichrem write to contact@sichrem.org