

Press Release
The 1st April 2019

Human Rights Law Network (HRLN) and Human Rights Alert (HRA) in association with EEVFAM, FIDAM, COHR, AMKIL, NEIPF, IP, Free Press School of Journalism, AMANA, CRAM organized a three-day north east consultation on Human Rights, Social movements and Law from 30th March to 1st April, 2019 at PP Park, Bishnupur, Manipur.

The consultation was attended by field experts consisting of lawyers, civil society leaders, women activists, *meira paibis*, LGBTQIA+ activists, academicians, journalists and students from all over north east India. The participants deliberated on various issues such as torture, extra-judicial executions and enforced disappearances, Human Rights Defenders, Violence and Discrimination against Women, Indigenous Peoples Rights, Freedom of Expression, Destruction of the Environment, LGBTQIA+ and Land and Resources.

The three day consultation opened with a session on torture, extra judicial execution and enforced disappearances. One of the speakers brought in the current challenges and hurdle faced by the families of EEVFAM.

Non granting of prosecution sanction by both the State and Central Government despite being sought by the Central Bureau (CBI) against whom CBI indicted in their charge-sheet submitted before various court in Manipur has created reasonable apprehension to general public particularly those who lost their near and dear one in fake encounters. The consultation endorsed relentless effort made by victims' families and decided to redress these issues by all legally available means.

Threat and intimidation inflicted to Human Rights Defenders and journalist for exercising constitutionally guaranteed fundamental rights continues to be persistent by slapping draconian laws like NSA and sedition. Inaction of the state by refusing the registration of FIRs despite being reported in written is clear abdication of state's responsibility towards Human Rights Defenders. The consultation unanimously decided to approach Manipur Human Rights Commission to adopt a mechanism by appointing a focal person so that threat and intimidation faced by the HRDs are taken at priority.

As per the subject experts, alarming situation of violence and discrimination against women particularly rape, sexual assaults and mob lynching needs to be responded collectively. The consultation decided to sensitize all the stockholders to collectively respond to end the violence and discrimination against women including LGBTQIA (Lesbian, Bisexuals, Gays, Transgenders, Queers, Intersex, Asexuals). Looking at recent incidents such as 'Utlou' case, strongly indicate instrumentalisation of women against women to uphold patriarchal norms that violate women freedom may require initiation of a dialogue to deconstruct certain societal structures that symbolically or structurally violate women's rights and safety. While space needs to be enlarged for women, we also need to create an inclusive space for the LGBTQIA community. The question that needs to be raised could be- is seeing trans people in public space enough to integrate them into the society? The discussion revealed that beyond seeking legal security, at the community level, there needs to be inclusion such as creating non binary public spaces in regard to toilets,

bathrooms. The violation of their right to privacy is constantly faced by the LGBTQIA people as there are unprofessional sexual questions posed in health sectors, state security sectors etc.

The consultation also equally included discussions on Indigenous people's rights, destruction against environment and issues of land and resources in the NE. Most poignantly, panelist Malem Mangal pointed out the economic trade obligation of the State must not compromise the needs of the indigenous people who depend upon the natural resources for livelihood and as means of subsistence and most importantly, their identity as native people of the land. Developmental projects such as construction of dams need proper assessment to not disrupt the ecology and harmonious relationship between the locals and the environment. PK Jamatia , leader of Tripura People's Front talked about the shrinking of its indigenous people's population from 93% to 18% currently, lower than 20% due to influx of illegal immigrants and various governmental policies and amendments that violate the indigenous people's

Mizoram State Assembly's initiative of passing the implementation of UN declaration of Rights of the Indigenous Peoples is highly appreciated and it was deliberated in the consultation that the other northeastern state should also follow the same. The consultation urges the Manipur State Assembly and other State Assembly of North East to pass a resolution in order to implement UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.