

MASUM from its inception is observing 10th December as International Human Rights Day with other human rights fraternity all over the world. MASUM tried to advance the human rights agenda and brought the principles of Universal Declaration closer to reality in our society, promote equality, the rule of law and justice through our commitments and sacrifices of numerous known and unknown defenders of human rights. Our effort is to advocate for better shaping of laws and policies that can establish that no-one should be the victim of discrimination in anyway. Thus, MASUM invited different sectoral groups working within different audience and targets. Discrimination has multiple disguises. It can manifest as racism. It can present as religious intolerance and bigotry. It may be that being a woman is enough to consign a person to a life of fundamental deprivation. Millions of individuals from marginalized communities do not go to school, have no access to health care, and cannot find jobs because of their socio- economic strata, being evicted from their natural inhabitation in the name of beautification or so called development and ongoing extraction of natural wealth and resultant environmental degradation affecting people settled upon their surroundings. All these deprivations are reckoning ill- affect on the society.



Though, MASUM is thriving for a torture free society having its primary focus on custodial torture, extra- judicial killings, illegal detention and other forms of state atrocities but with appreciation for other sectors of human rights. In these auspices, MASUM trying to correlate and challenge these two types of deprivation as the affected people are all discriminated against; from identical socio- economic strata. Despite the seeming hopelessness of many of these situations, a number of remarkable people have managed to break the cycle of discrimination. From our example we know it is possible to defeat discrimination, can achieve justice, can lead full, rich lives in which the world 'future' has meaning for all.



MASUM took up the issues of the citizens living along the Indo- Bangladesh bordering districts of West Bengal; facing atrocities by the Border Security Force and connived with the local police and other duty bearers, non deliverance from state agencies and shrinking livelihood options by natural calamities and governmental negligence thereafter. MASUM initiated a concerted effort through partnering with different civil society organizations to address the malevolence and establish the rights of the said populace; this was the thematic concern for this year's human rights day.

Nearly 15 organizations from different hues participated in two day long Human Rights Fair, adjacent to Kolkata Academy of Fine Arts, they put their stalls and displayed visuals and publication and distributed those among the visitors. There were a wide range of organizations with their definite motivations. Human Rights Law Network; a legal support group; MANTHAN, socially committed little magazine; DISHA, people centric environmental group; SAWYAM, women group with specific agenda to minimize domestic violence; Bandi Mukti Committee, a platform for release of political prisoners; Campaign Against Atrocities on Minorities in Bangladesh, an organization denounce state communalism; SANLAP; a little magazine for open and democratic dialogue and Jana Sanghati Kendra; a network for livelihood and life, put their stands along with MASUM. The stalls were remain open from 12 noon to 8 pm on 10th December and 12 noon evening on 11th of December. Between the orations made by representatives from various organizations; cultural performances were made.

The programme was conducted by Biplab of MASUM with an elaborate discussions on the issues by Kirity Roy; Secretary- MASUM; in course of his speech he touched all the issues of human rights and its violations, giving special references on state atrocities. Kirity in his speech also discussed about the significance, situation and role and responsibilities of human rights movements in West Bengal. Mr. Sasanka Dev of DISHA, Mr. Mohit Roy of Campaign Against Atrocities on Minorities in Bangladesh, Mr. Bhanu of Bandi Mukti Committee and others made their speeches before well gathered audiences.



Mr. Ajit Mahato from West Midnapur's Lalmati Salbon Jhumur Akhara made a splendid performance before the audience. The performance touched the nerves of urban spectators by the rural form of performance and its contents. SWAYAM made a street drama on domestic violence and sang few relevant mass songs. Later, a film on Manipur, especially on Ms. Irom Sharmila and her struggle against AFSPA was screened.

On 11th of December Mr. Debashis Bannerjee of Human Rights Law Network spoke about the Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection) Act, Mr. Basudeb Basu of AICCTU on labourers of tea gardens of North Bengal, Ms. Archana Sarkar of Sanlap on democratic space for dialogue and Mr. Prabhat Chakroborty on livelihood issues, made their comments and observations before the audience. A recital was presented by the volunteers from Swayam.

The fair was concluded with a pledge to challenge all human rights violations and state atrocities with a unified effort and connote the same with chorus singing of 'We Shall Overcome'.