

EVENT REPORT: HUMAN RIGHTS DAY OBSERVATION

Date: 14th December 2024

Time: 10:30 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.

Venue: Auditorium II, Information Centre, Baha'i House of Worship (Lotus Temple), New Delhi

Minute-to-Minute Programme Summary

10:30 A.M. – 10:45 A.M.

- **Arrival & Tea:** The event commenced with refreshments available to all attendees, including tea and coffee, ensuring comfort from the very start.

10:45 A.M. – 10:55 A.M.

- **Welcome Address: Ms. Nilakshi Rajkhowa**, Director of the Office of Public Affairs of the Baha'is of India, delivered the opening speech. She welcomed all attendees, including dignitaries, speakers, and students. In her address, she:
 - Emphasised the importance of protecting human rights.
 - Highlighted the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.
 - Praised the Baha'i Office of Public Affairs for providing a platform to address these concerns.

She then invited the keynote speaker, Smt. Sulata Deo, to share her thoughts.

10:55 A.M. – 11:10 A.M.

- **Keynote Speech – Smt. Sulata Deo**

Smt. Sulata Deo, Honourable Member of the Rajya Sabha, delivered a powerful keynote. She spoke about:

- The need to raise voices for human rights and the protection of minorities.
- Personal anecdotes on activism and leadership.
- A moral story highlighting how change begins with oneself, inspiring attendees to take small steps towards global change.

11:10 A.M. – 11:20 A.M.

- **Video Screening – United Nations Human Rights Day Message**

A video message was shown emphasising the UN's commitment to human rights, reflecting global challenges and solutions.

11:20 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

- **Speakers' Session**

1. **Ms. Madhavi Samson, Founder-Director of ABHAS:**

- Discussed the plight of minorities and weaker sections, especially female children.
- Highlighted ABHAS's achievements in empowering underprivileged girls, with notable success stories, such as students securing admissions to Delhi University.

2. **Dr. G. V. Rao, Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India:**

- Addressed current atrocities against minorities worldwide.
- Focused on the importance of adhering to the United Nations Human Rights Declaration.
- Mentioned concerning issues like ongoing genocide in Bangladesh, stressing that such actions violate the core principles of human rights.

11:30 A.M. – 11:40 A.M.

- **Film Screening – Global Vision, Local Action**

The audience viewed an impactful film showing:

- Footage of humanitarian initiatives by Baha'is worldwide.
- Efforts to provide food, shelter, and education while combating discrimination based on caste, colour, gender, and religion.

The film inspired attendees to contribute to similar causes.

11:40 A.M. – 12:10 P.M.

- **Open Discussion**

An interactive session followed, where attendees asked critical questions about:

- Current violations of human rights.
- Steps individuals and organisations can take to ensure protection for minorities.

The guest panel provided insightful answers, and attendees shared personal views on fostering inclusivity and justice.

12:10 P.M. – 12:20 P.M.

- **Speech by Dr. Charu Wali Khanna**

Dr. Charu Wali Khanna, President of SAFMA, spoke on:

- Providing monetary and legal support to female victims of atrocities.
- Highlighted real-life incidents displaying the helplessness of victims' families.
- Urged for stronger safety measures and systems to protect women from heinous crimes.

12:20 P.M.

- **Vote of Thanks**

Ms. Nilakshi Rajkhowa concluded the event with a heartfelt vote of thanks. She appreciated the speakers, attendees, and organisers for their contributions. She emphasised the session's success and encouraged everyone to keep working for the protection of human rights.

Special Highlights:

- **Advocate Rajesh Gogna**, Secretary General of Human Rights Defense International, reiterated:
 - Human rights are not just moral obligations but collective duties.
 - Encouraged everyone to “be the voice of the voiceless” and fight for justice.
 - Provides the insights of conducting events just like this on regular basis by Human Rights Defense International and Bahá’í and fruitful outcomes of such events.
 - Hailing from the law background he also highlighted how Human Rights have much more ambit than just being a legal right.
- **Token of Appreciation:** A small plant was presented to all the guest speakers as a symbol of growth and hope.
- **Certificate Distribution:** Certificates of participation were awarded by Smt. Sulata Deo to students from various institutions, including:
 - ABHAS
 - SAFMA
 - Chanakya National Law University
 - Delhi University
 - Jamia Millia Islamia

Additional Details

- **Refreshments:** Coffee, tea, and snacks were available throughout the event for all attendees.
- **Facilities:** The hall was well-equipped for comfort, with appropriate seating and amenities.
- **Post-Event Networking:** After the formal conclusion, attendees engaged in discussions while enjoying refreshments. Students and guests shared positive feedback, with some students offering their thoughts on camera, expressing how enlightening and impactful the event was.

Conclusion

The event successfully fostered dialogue on human rights, inspiring attendees to advocate for minorities and the underprivileged. The diverse perspectives shared by distinguished speakers emphasised collective action and the importance of moral responsibility in ensuring a just world.