HRSS : Endeavour towards Human Rights

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THE law students of different public and private universities from home and abroad, have successfully accomplished the 8th Human Rights Summer School, an enterprise of ELCOP (Empowerment Through Law of The Common People). Like the preceding years Proshika Human Resource Development Center (PHRDC) Koitta, Manikgonj turned into the state of rights and duties, which we named 'Adhikarbhumi'. Luminaries from national and international arena have added colour to it but the shining star of the event Professor Dr. Mizanur Rahman, teacher of Department of Law, University of Dhaka, the founder of Human Rights Summer School and Executive Director of ELCOP was the torch bearer of this mission. The slogan "Lawyering for the poor is lawyering for justice"was pronounced together. The summer school was held from 29 November to 10 December, 2007. Forty-four law students took part as participants from Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Kushtia, South East University and Gujrat Law School; India.

On the opening day we had to draft a charter of rights and duties for the state 'Adhikarbhumi' and the next day the charter was adopted unanimously.

The participants had to remain engaged in multi dimensional activities in the School that everyday we had to go through brainstorming sessions. Getting up early in the morning, attending lectures of prominent resource persons, taking part in group exercises and presentations and reading had been very common phenomenon every day. We hardly had time for taking rest or doing something as pastime. After finishing the academic session we had to take preparation for the next day.

This year Dr. Kamal Hossain inaugurated the summer school. In the opening ceremony Prof. Dr. Nazrul Islam, chairman, UGC and justice K.M. Subhan, Chief Adviser, ELCOP were present as special guest and president of the ceremony respectively. This year the issue of concern was 'Human Rights and Corruption.'Corruption is regarded a silent yet forceful threat to human rights. In the lectures of different resource persons it was shown how corruption poisons each and every effort of a government for human development.

Amongst the resource persons were: Dr. Abdullah Al Faruque (Nexus of International Law and Human Rights Law), Mr. Iktidar Ahmed (Corruption in the Judiciary and access to justice), Prof. Zakir Hossain (Justiciability of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), Prof. Dr. Shah Alam, Dr. Ridwanul Haque (Jurisprudential Basis of Human Rights to Combat Corruption and Judicial Activism), M. Hamid (Role of Press and Media in combating corruption and protection of Human Rights), Dr. Naim Ahmed (Human Rights and Refugee Law Nexus), Ms. Sanaiya Faheem Ansari (Mobilizing for Women and Children Rights), Dr. M.A. Hasan (Bangladesh Genocide in 1971 & trial of the war criminals), Ms. Rosy Hossain, The Daywalka Foundation (Trafficking in Persons [TIP]), Sultana Razia (Domestic and International Legal Regime regarding TIP, Dr. Salimullah Khan (Deconstructing the Colonial Legacy & Mobilizing for Empowerment: Role of Human Rights), Sanjib Drong (Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous People: A case study of Bangladesh), Dr. S. K. Taufique (Governance and social mobilization and empowerment), Mr. Jobst Bodenstein (South Africa) ("Street Law Training" a significant tool of Human Rights Education vis-à-vis social mobilization and empowerment: Demonstration by the Street Law Trainers), Dr. Shawkat Alam (Australia) (Development, Environment and Human Rights) and Prof. Abul Barkat (The Political Economy of Corruption).

The resource persons demonstrate that the judges should come out of the barrier of legal hemisphere and interpret and use their judicial mind and acumen so the actual purpose of the legal system is served, which is justice and this is called "judicial activism".

It was great fortune for the law students to meet and listen to all the luminaries.

Besides the group exercises we had to participate in reality based issues and we had to sketch the diagram on how the law students could possibly play a role for preventing corruption and thus ensuring human rights. Moreover, we went to community visits to observe the real scenario of peoples' life and it was very agonizing experience.

Participants from various law quarters were very interactive and co-operative as well so it's going to be a milestone for the future human rights development in Bangladesh.

At the end of the day we fond our hearts filled up with tranquility and composure and we realized that nothing but working for the deprived and destitute people can bring such contentment.

We participated in exams and contested in moot court competition based on Human Rights and Corruption. Resident instructors who were the teachers of different universities from home and abroad have invested their precious time and effort to make the program a success. The volunteers from Dhaka University also gave their utmost to keep up things.

On the Valedictory Ceremony three participants were awarded as the best academician, best mooter and best fellowship award. Ms. Shaheen Anam, director, Manusher Jonno Foundation was present as special guest.

Finally, goodbye time as usual, none of the participants could help but cry because summer school has established a bridge of friendship and fraternity amongst us and made us united on a platform to work for the people as their very own lawyer. So, we left the school with brain full of human rights and with heart full of deep blue sorrow but with a well-built commitment towards human rights.

We are beholden to

- Professor Dr. Mizanur Rahman (D.U.)
- Dr. Rahmat Ullah (D.U.)
- Professor Zakir Hossein (C.U.)
- Mr. Sheikh Hafizur Rahman Karzon (D.U.)
- Mr. Gobinda Chandra Mandal (D.U.)
- Mr. Selim Toha (I.U.)
- Md. Abdul Alim (R.U.)
- Mr. Mostafa M. Naser (C.U.)
- Mr.Shafiqur Rahman Khan (Stamford)
- Mr. Jobst Bodenstein (S.A.)
- Mr. Masum Billah (Northern) and

Above all ELCOP (Empowerment Through Law of The Common People).

Dept. of Law,DU