

## Press Release

# **State's Role Vital in Sustaining Human Rights**

On the occasion of Human Rights Day, a seminar was organised by the NSS wing of the Institute of Media Studies (IMS) in their seminar hall on Saturday, the 10<sup>th</sup> of November.

Titled "Stand Up For Human Rights Today", the seminar was graced by dignitaries such as former Minister of State for Finance, Panchanan Kanungo; Dharendra Panda, Convener, Civil Society Forum on Human Rights; Prasant Paikray, Spokes Person, POSCO Pratirodh Sangram Samitee, Manoj Jena, Core Member, National Human Rights Commission, New Delhi, Human Rights Activist, Biswapriya Kanungo and Upendra Padhi, Director of IMS.

The proceedings began with Manoj Jena speaking about the Human Rights of different sections of society and how one should never compromise with it by allowing the state or individuals to abuse it.

Prasant Paikray detailed his organisation's so far successful campaign against the establishment of POSCO steel plant in the state. He cited the non-existent history of rehabilitation in the state as the main reason behind those affected by POSCO refusing to believe and accept any of the company or Odisha government's displacement and rehabilitation measures.

Dharendra Panda gave a brief overview of the history of Human Rights, beginning with the United Nation's Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948, which is the reason why that particular date is commemorated as Human Rights Day. He further differentiated between Human Rights and Fundamental Rights and educated the audience on the various principles of Human Rights as enumerated by the United Nations.

Biswapriya Kanungo cited cases of Human Rights abuse by the state giving examples of Doctor Binayak Sen of Bastar region of Chattigarh, Nandini Sundaran of JNU and others.

Panchanan Kanungo, capped off the grand discussion, with his views on Human Rights. Admitting that the state was indeed responsible in many a way for the rise in Human Rights abuse around the world. In response to a question from a member of the audience, Mr. Kanungo acknowledged the fact that on numerous occasions the state is the biggest culprit in denying the citizens of the society their basic Human Rights by either not providing basic amenities to the underprivileged, or not punishing forces indulging in Human Rights abuse under its nose, or being actively or stealthily involved in abusing Human Rights in certain instances.