

Seminar on International Humanitarian Law

Salesian College, Sonada was pleased to receive the information about the Three Day Teaching Seminar (9 - 11 December, 09) at Orange Village Resort, Gangtok for University Teachers organized by the International Committee for Red Cross (ICRC) in collaboration with the Sikkim University on International Humanitarian Law (IHL). The purpose of the programme was to teach the faculty members of Universities and Colleges and journalists the latest developments and current trends in Humanitarian Law and International Criminal Jurisprudence.

I, Kishan Harijan, Lecturer, History Dept., Salesian college, Sonada got the opportunity to attend the Seminar as a nominee of the college. I reported at the Orange Village Resort on 8th December 09 afternoon. However, we were accommodated at the star hotel, Royal Plaza where we the participants received an excellent accommodation and food during the programme and our TA was also reimbursed. We enjoyed the hospitality of ICRC and Sikkim University very much.

Around 40 distinguished persons participated in the Seminar such as the Colleges like Tadong Govt.College, Pakim Palatine college, Rhenok College, Namchi college, Namchi B.Ed.college of Sikkim University; Colleges of North Bengal University such as Salesian College,Sonada; Sonada Degree College, Southfield College, Darjeeling; St.Joseph's College, North Point and Kalimpong College from different disciplines like History, Political Science, Geography, English and Education. Besides, important delegates of Law departments of North Bengal University, Sikkim University and a cluster of Journalists and media reporters of Sikkim also attended the seminar.

On 9th December 09, the seminar began with Registration of participants. The inaugural session was chaired by Prof. Manoj Kumar Sinha, Professor, National University for Juridical Sciences(NUJS), Kolkata and inaugural address was delivered by Prof. Mahendra P Lama, Vice Chancellor, Sikkim University, Gangtok. The distinguished speakers or resource persons of the seminar were Dr. Stephanie Bouaziz, Communication Coordinator, ICRC, South Asia; Mr. Christopher Harland, Regional Legal Advisor for South Asia;

Prof. Manoj Kumar Sinha, Prof. of Law in NUJS, Kolkata and Dr. Sanoj Rajan, Academic Programmes Responsible for South Asia, ICRC.

The first session began on 9th at 9:30am. the first speech was given by Dr. Stephanie Bouaziz about Red Cross movement and the role and mandate of ICRC (with ICRC movies). She presented a brief history of the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement and revealed the different symbols and functions of ICRC. The second speech was given by Mr. Christopher Harland. He gave a logical introduction of International Humanitarian Law (with case studies). We understood that IHL means "law of armed conflict". IHL is a branch of public International law established by custom and treaty. Further, he spoke about the background of IHL with the aid of detailed slides for projection. In the afternoon session, Mr. Harland dealt with "general protection in armed conflict using case studies.

The last session of the first day was delivered by Prof. Manoj Kumar Sinha. This speech unveiled the relationship between IHL and IHRL (international human rights law) [with case studies]. He referred to Geneva Convention (1864) as the ultimate preamble of IHL and dealt with many vital articles of these conventions.

The speech of the second day (10th December) delivered by Dr. Sanoj Rajan showed the "application of IHL during armed conflict (with case studies). He explained three types of armed conflicts which comes in IHL, such as a) international armed conflict, b) non-international armed conflict and c) internationalized non-international armed conflict. The next speech was given by Prof. Manoj Kumar Sinha about 'means and methods of warfare with case studies. He gave an idea about the difference between a Civilian and a Combatant.

The afternoon session began with Prof. Sinha's talk on "implementation of ICRC study on Customary IHL". He gave information about "Refugees" and Conventions regarding them. The last session was much exciting as it dealt with "Implementation of IHL" by Mr. Harland as it was interactive through a "Film Test". Further, we also enjoyed Cultural Programme in the evening with all the delegates present. On the last day (11th December), the seminar was held at Chumbi Valley Hotel (Gangtok) in a Conference Hall. All the

participants reported early at 9:00 am. The morning session began with the speech and video clip of Dr. Sanoj Rajan on "prisoners of war" (PoW) [case studies]. He showed us a film on "history of armed conflict" covering the historical background from First World War till the contemporary wars in African Nations.

The next speech was again presented by Dr. Rajan on "International Criminal Responsibility and Tribunals". He clarified the meaning of international criminal responsibility on the part of states as well as Individuals. He also gave emphasis on the "History and Evolution" of international criminal responsibility from League of Nations to United Nations. He briefly gave description of International Criminal Court established by Rome Statute of 1998 and also discussed some of its major functions. The afternoon session was an "Open Forum Discussion" on way forward, recommendations on inclusion of IHL, in respective of Curriculum. We interacted with resource person and many suggestions were put forward. Further, Sikkim University would like to include IHL in their curriculum. We shared our experience with them and our understanding with regard to IHL.

Last but not the least, at 5pm in the evening Valedictory session was organized by Law Dept., Sikkim University. We received our certificate of participation in the three days Seminar of ICRC in collaboration with Sikkim University. So, the Seminar was very informative and I hope it is relevant. Further, we also suggested some improvements and comments requested by the authority.

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Sonada***