



Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Dr P K Mishra addresses Inaugural Session of the National Conference on 'Ensuring Everyday Essentials – Public Services and Dignity for All'

Human Rights Day is not merely a commemoration of a historic declaration but an invitation to reflect on the lived experience of dignity: Dr P K Mishra

Human Rights Evolving to Include Technology, Environment, and Digital Inclusion: Dr P K Mishra

India Secures Everyday Essentials Through Four Pillars- Dignity at Home, Social Protection, Inclusive Economic Growth, and Justice for Vulnerable Communities: Dr P K Mishra

Dr P K Mishra underscores deepening citizen-centred governance, using technology responsibly, strengthening institutional foresight and ensuring dignity as the guiding principle of every public service

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Dr. P. K. Mishra, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, addressed the inaugural session of the National Conference on Ensuring Everyday Essentials – Public Services and Dignity for All at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi today. In his keynote remarks, he emphasised the significance of World Human Rights Day for democratic nations like India, where constitutional ideals, democratic institutions and societal values converge to protect and promote human dignity. He recalled Article 25(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which guarantees the right to an adequate standard of living, including food, clothing, housing, medical care, social services and security in times of vulnerability. Human Rights Day, he observed, is not merely a commemoration but an invitation to reflect on dignity in everyday life. The year's theme, "Human Rights, Our Everyday Essentials", highlights the role of public services and institutions in shaping citizens' interaction with the State.

Dr. Mishra recalled India's historic role in shaping the UDHR, particularly the contribution of Dr. Hansa Mehta, who ensured the Declaration affirmed "all human beings are born free and equal," a decisive step for gender equality. Rights, he emphasised, must be realised through access to food, water, shelter,

education and justice. Human rights thinking has evolved from civil and political rights to encompass social, economic and cultural rights, and now extends to technology, digital systems, environmental concerns and new vulnerabilities. Dignity today, he remarked, is shaped not only by freedoms but also by access to privacy, mobility, clean environment and digital inclusion.

India's civilizational ethos, he said, has long placed dignity and duty at the centre of public life. Concepts such as dharma, nyaya, karuna and seva emphasised righteous conduct and welfare, while ahimsa encouraged restraint and vasudhaiva kutumbakam fostered belonging to a larger human family. These principles influenced the framing of the Constitution, from universal adult franchise and enforceable rights to directive principles prioritising education, health, livelihood and welfare.

Reflecting on the decade prior to 2014, Dr. Mishra noted that India pursued a rights-based approach to development through legislations such as the Right to Education Act, MGNREGA and National Food Security Act. However, enacting rights without effective delivery undermined credibility. Since 2014, the government has emphasised a saturation approach, ensuring no eligible beneficiary is left out. This marked a shift from "paper rights" to "implemented rights," supported by digital infrastructure, direct benefit transfers and outreach campaigns such as the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra. Poverty alleviation, he stressed, is the most effective human rights intervention, with 25 crore Indians lifted out of poverty in the last decade, corroborated by the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey 2023-24.

Dr. Mishra outlined four pillars securing everyday essentials. The first, dignity at home, has been advanced through housing, water, sanitation, electricity and clean fuel, with PM Awas Yojana, Jal Jeevan Mission, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Saubhagya and Ujjwala Yojana transforming lives. The second, social protection, ensured food security and health assurance, with PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana feeding 80 crore people during COVID-19 and Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY covering 42 crore citizens. Insurance, pensions and new labour laws extended benefits to informal and gig workers, while reforms such as the Mental Healthcare Act assured dignity for vulnerable groups. The third pillar, inclusive economic growth, was advanced through financial inclusion and empowerment. The JAM Trinity revolutionised direct benefit transfers, over 56 crore Jan Dhan accounts brought the unbanked into formal finance, and schemes like PM Mudra Yojana and PM SVANidhi enabled enterprise creation. Women's empowerment was highlighted through SHGs, "Lakhpati Didis," Beti Bachao Beti Padhao and the historic one-third reservation in legislatures. The fourth pillar, justice and protection of vulnerable communities, was strengthened through new Criminal Law Codes, fast-track courts, POCSO Act, Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act and PM-JANMAN for tribal communities. Humanitarian assistance, including Vaccine Maitri, reflected India's belief in the universality of human rights.

Driven by the Prime Minister's call for Jan Bhagidari, public service delivery has shifted from prescribing to responding, from delivering schemes to delivering dignity, and from viewing people as beneficiaries to partners in nation-building. India's election to the UN Human Rights Council reflects global confidence in democratic institutions and inclusive development.

Urging the National Human Rights Commission to adapt frameworks for emerging challenges as India advances toward Viksit Bharat 2047, Shri Mishra highlighted climate change, environmental justice, data protection, algorithmic fairness, responsible AI, gig work vulnerabilities and digital surveillance as pressing concerns.

Concluding, Dr Mishra emphasised that good governance is itself a fundamental right, defined by efficiency, transparency, grievance redressal and timely service delivery. He envisioned a modern, inclusive nation with liveable cities and vibrant villages, stressing citizen-centred governance, responsible technology use and collective action to ensure dignity, justice and development for all.

MJPS/SR

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