National Human Rights Commission

Now we can see growing awareness of human rights and struggles for human dignity. Many cases of human rights violations in diverse fields, for instance, Gujarat riots, are being brought to the public notice from across India. Human rights organizations and the media often criticize government agencies for not seriously pursuing these cases or catching the culprits. Someone had to intervene on behalf of the victims. This is where the National Human Rights Commission stepped in. This is an independent commission set up by law in 1993. Like judiciary, the commission is independent of the government. The commission is appointed by the President and includes retired judges, officers and eminent citizens. Yet it does not have the burden of deciding court cases. So it can focus on helping the victims secure their human rights. These include all the rights granted to the citizens by the Constitution. For NHRC Human rights also include the rights mentioned in the UN sponsored international treaties the India has signed.

The NHRC cannot by itself punish the guilty. That is the responsibility of courts. The NHRC is there to make independent and credible inquiry into any case of violation of human rights. It also inquires into any case of abetment of such violation or negligence in controlling it by any government officer and takes other general steps to promote human rights in the country. The Commission presents its findings and recommendations to the government or intervene in the court on behalf of the victims. It has wide ranging powers to carry out its inquiry. Like any other court it can summon witnesses, question any government official, demand any official paper, visit any prison for inspection or send its own team for on-the –spot enquiry. Any citizen of India can complain to the Commission against the violation of human rights.