

GAYATRI KHANDHADAI
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AREAS OF EXPERTISE

• International Law and Human Rights • International and Regional Human Rights Mechanisms • Legal Analysis • Litigation Strategy • Public Interest Litigation • Research and Drafting • Project Planning, Implementation, Management and Assessment

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Not for Profit:

Researcher – Freedom of Expression, Bytes for All, Pakistan *June 2015 to December 2015*

- Researching on international standards prescribed for restrictions on freedom of expression on the basis of religious sensitivities.
- Mapping of laws and cases on restrictions on freedom of expression in Asia in online and offline spaces
- Drafting recommendations to be implemented by domestic and international stakeholders.

South Asia Programme Officer, Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-AISA), Bangkok, Thailand *February 2013 to May 2015*

Work involved:

- researching international standards on freedoms of expression, assembly and association based on the developments in the United Nations Human Rights Council and reports of the special procedures mandate holders.
- monitoring and responding to cases of violation of freedoms of expression, assembly and association in Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal and Pakistan.
- conducting fact finding and advocacy missions for lobbying States and national institutions to address particular cases of violations and improving laws.
- trainings and capacity building for civil society groups for engaging with international mechanisms and Universal Periodic Review processes.
- campaigning for accountability and ending impunity in Sri Lanka through helping human right defenders highlight domestic issues in international platforms.
- working with domestic groups towards integrating human rights standards in electoral laws and observation processes.
- strategizing for the development of a South Asian human rights mechanism based on the good practices of other regional human rights mechanisms.
- drafting programme implementation and financial reports, budget analysis, fund raising strategies and grant proposals for submission to donors.

Legal:

Lawyer, Mr. Sriram Panchu, Senior Counsel, Chennai, India *February 2010 to July 2011*

Work involved:

- cases concerning constitutional and fundamental rights, environmental law and private international law, before the Supreme Court of India and High Court of Madras.
- the rights of tribal and indigenous persons in connection with their displacement from the Mudumalai forest reserve on account of construction of an elephant corridor.
- assisting the mediation over a border dispute between the States of Assam and Nagaland, India.
- researching and assisting in authoring of the book "Mediation: Law and Practice".
- formulating the course curriculum on "Alternative Dispute Resolution and Access to Justice" for the Institute of Human Settlements, India.
- drafting articles on mediation laws, judicial accountability, right to information, sedition and freedom of expression, media laws, environmental laws and resolution of public disputes using consensual methods.

Lawyer, Mr. George Cheriyan, Advocate, Chennai, India

July 2008 to January 2010

Work involved:

- assisting in successful resolution of a case concerning police excesses in a clash between the police and lawyers on the Madras High Court campus, February 19, 2009.
- defending the constitutionality of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 and India's obligation under the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979.
- drafting and arguing writ petitions, matrimonial matters, domestic violence and gender rights complaints, immigration matters and criminal cases before the Metropolitan Magistrate and High Court.

INTERNSHIPS

Research Intern, Institute for Human Rights Education, Madurai, India

July 2012 to December 2012

- Drafting policy notes and recommendations for a National Human Rights Education Policy for India, submissions to National Institutions. Evaluating the human rights education training seminars and material.
- Designing a human rights education and training program for youth in collaboration with the Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Youth Development. Designing a training program for the involvement of local authorities, Panchayat heads in human rights protection.
- Submission of reports and documentation of Public Hearings on the Rights of Children and implementation of the Right to Education in the State of Tamil Nadu.

Legal Intern, M/s. Mohan & Devika, Law Firm, Chennai, India

July 2007 to April 2008

- Public Interest Litigations involving human rights, gender rights, consumer rights, health care law, environmental and building violations.
- Drafted petitions and assisted Senior Counsel on an appeal against the Sethu Samudharam Project between India and Sri Lanka, Supreme Court of India.
- Mapping of national and international standards on environmental protection and development.
- Opinions on disputes relating to Private International Law, execution of foreign judgments and Intellectual Property Rights.

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

- **Master of Arts International Law and Human Rights**, United Nations mandated University for Peace, Costa Rica *August 2011 to May 2012*
- **Bachelor of Arts / Bachelor of Law (Honors)**, School of Excellence in Law, The Tamil Nadu Dr. Ambedkar Law University, India *August 2003 to May 2008*

BAR MEMBERSHIP:

Admitted to practice as a member, Bar Council of India, Chennai since June 2008.

CERTIFICATIONS:

- **National Training Program on Dalit Human Rights Monitoring**, Dalit Foundation and People's Watch, India *August 2012*
- **Women's Human Rights : Building a Peaceful World in an Era of Globalization**, Women's Human Rights Education Institutes at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, Canada *July 2012*
- **Leadership Training for Young Leaders** at the **Global Young Leaders Conference**, Washington D.C and New York, United States of America *June 2004*

ADDITIONAL SKILLS AND INTERESTS:

- Proficient in English, Tamil, Urdu and Hindi. Learning Spanish.
- Performed plays and conducted workshops on using theatre as a tool for social change.
- Adept in Microsoft Office and Adobe applications.