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Preface

PLD has been working in Orissa with local NGOs and lawyers on social justice interventions in the community since 1998. PLD's principal initiative has been to team local lawyers with community based organisations for incorporating human rights norms through the law into community work. The work has ranged from interventions on violence against women, negotiating claims for women in family disputes and matrimonial matters, assisting in cyclone relief, and struggles against land alienation of tribals from their land and habitat. As part of its state level engagement, PLD has collaborated in state based workshops for lawyers, paralegals and NGO staff annually – either by organising the event with local support or providing resource to locally organised events. This workshop on 'Human Rights: Concepts, Law and Challenges', was organised by PLD with HURINEO – the Human Rights Network of Orissa.

This workshop signified a concrete shift and progress in our work. From a small network in 1998, we worked through a vibrant and challenging process of community based work plans, legal strategising, legal aid and trainings through to 2002. In this period, direct support into community work was reduced, closing support for some promising partners owing to resource constraint rather than the value of work. The support took new forms through trainings, referrals and meetings. The field projects, however, continued with the NGOs and lawyers cobbling together time, skills and their commitment to using law for social justice. The network and connection with PLD continued and expanded, as was evidenced in this workshop. Over these last two years, the PLD partners have built a group of young lawyers interested in human rights – and through HURINEO called for this particular workshop. As a result, in March 2002, PLD became a part of a larger community in Orissa – no longer a small team that it started out with. It has made tangible a ripple effect and affirmed faith in the dream of injecting social justice issues through law, into fieldwork and thereby transforming and expanding the nature of law practice.

PLD's state level engagement in Orissa has been facilitated and sustained through the abiding support of FARR [Friends Association of Rural Reconstruction], Kalahandi – a founding member of HURINEO. This workshop would not have been possible without HURINEO having taken care of all logistical and administrative work, for which we are very grateful. I must also acknowledge FARR, Kalahandi, not only for the support it has rendered on many fronts, but also for planning long-term projects that aim towards development and expansion of the human rights community within Orissa. It is this zeal and support of FARR, Kalahandi, that has

paved the way for sustaining PLD's work through field projects and technical collaborations - and in doing so, contributed immensely to PLD's own development.

Madhu Mehra
[Executive Director]

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Published by:

Partners for Law in Development

F-18, Jungpura Extension
First Floor
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Please acknowledge PLD if this report, or any matter from this report is used. We would appreciate being informed of where, in what form and for what purpose you have used it.

This report is based on the rapporteur's workshop notes. Although care was taken in recording the discussions at the workshop, the report has considerably paraphrased and re-structured the matter. This reproduction has regrettably been at the cost of losing the flow and sequence of some of the discussions and inputs – but hopefully, consolidated the matter more coherently. Again, we were not able to get confirmation from all the resource persons to approve their resource inputs. This report therefore at best a guide on the subjects covered and captures the essence of the topics, but is not to be used as an authoritative text for reference. We would recommend consulting specialised resource material available on the topics along with the resource package given at the workshop for further reference, usage or study.

