

Under the directions of Hon'ble Executive Chairperson, Sikkim SLSA, Hon'ble Mrs. Justice Meenakshi Madan Rai, Judge, High Court of Sikkim, the Sikkim State Legal Services Authority (SLSA) organized a *Sensitization Programme for Registration of Marriages for different Religious Communities in Sikkim* held on *2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2017 (Saturday)* at *Chintan Bhawan, Gangtok, East Sikkim*, chaired by Hon'ble Executive Chairperson, Sikkim SLSA as Chief Guest in august presence of Hon'ble Mr. Justice Bhaskar Raj Pradhan, Judge, High Court of Sikkim, as Guest of Honour.

Hon'ble Mrs. Justice Meenakshi Madan Rai, Judge, High Court of Sikkim and Executive Chairperson, Sikkim SLSA informed the participants that today's programme is aimed to sensitize different religious communities with regard to the Registration and Solemnization of marriages and what are the steps that would be required for registering such marriages.

Her Ladyship also informed with regard to the functions of State Legal Services Authority, and the different tiers, National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) at the Central level, the State Legal Services Authority (SLSA) in every State of India, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) at the District level and Taluk Legal Services Committee (TLSC) at the Taluka level, whose main function is provide access to justice to all the marginalized section of the society.

Her Ladyship informed that one of the functions of the SLSA/DLSA/TLSC is to provide free legal aid to various sections of the society who are categorized under *Section 12* of the *Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987*, regardless of their income viz; who is tribal, a scheduled caste, women, child, person with disability, person in custody and those whose income is below one lakh per annum.

Hon'ble Mr. Justice Bhaskar Raj Pradhan, Judge, High Court of Sikkim, while welcoming all informed the participants that, since 09.08.2007, it has been made compulsory to have all marriages registered. His Lordship also apprised all with regard to the provisions contained in "**Rules to provide for registration and solemnization of a form of marriage in Sikkim**" publicized by His Highness the Maharaja of Sikkim vide Notification NO.1520/H dated 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 1963.

During the Working Sessions, Shri N. Rai, Senior Advocate, High Court of Sikkim/Senior Panel, Sikkim SLISA, spoke elaborately on “*Registration of Marriages under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 and other relevant legislations*”. He delved elaborately on the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 and explained as to who are governed under the Act, solemnization of marriages under the Act, void and voidable marriages, provisions of Divorce and Registration of marriages under the said Act.

Shri Umesh Ranpal, Panel Advocate, Sikkim SLISA, spoke on “*Indian Christian Marriage Act, 1872*”. He highlighted the provisions of the Act in detail, how the marriages are to be solemnized as per the relevant provisions of the Act and the procedure to be followed, in detail.

Shri T.R. Barfungpa, Panel Advocate, Sikkim SLISA spoke on “*Solemnization of all Forms of Marriages in Sikkim*”. He brought to the notice of the participants that Tribals are not governed by the Hindu Marriage Act, therefore, their marriages could be registered under "**Rules** to provide for **registration** and solemnization of a form of **marriage** in Sikkim" and not the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955. He urged the Authorities present to guide the public by generating awareness amongst them. Each Working Session was followed by vibrant interactive session.

The participants in the programme included Sub-Divisional Magistrates, Block Development Officers and Officers dealing with Registration of Marriages from the East District, Khusuolas of all the different monasteries of Sikkim, the Reverends, Pastors and Elders of all the Churches of Sikkim and the Purohits of all the temples of Sikkim.

The welcome address was presented by Mrs. Matilda Isaacs, Special Secretary, Sikkim SLISA while the vote of thanks by Shri Praveen Pradhan, Under Secretary, Sikkim SLISA.