

Although persons with disabilities in India do have some benefits and some civil service positions are reserved for them, there is no legislation covering accessibility issues.

India's National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), established in 1993, has continued to grow in influence and continues to demonstrate a willingness to take up controversial cases and to focus on critical human rights issues.

### **CANADIAN POSITION**

Bilaterally, Canada continues to maintain a dialogue on human rights with the Indian Government, both at the national and state levels. As there has been no high-level visit since that of Minister Axworthy in January 1997, opportunities to raise these issues at the political level have been few. However, a number of high-level, including ministerial, contacts are planned in 1998 which will permit the raising of human rights questions with key Indian decision-makers.

Canada is working with the Indian Government, other governments, the private sector, NGOs and international institutions to improve the human rights situation in India. Through the Governance Support Fund, the Child Development Fund and the NHRC/Canadian Human Rights Commission cooperation project, Canada provides funding to Indian NGOs to assist their efforts in the human rights field. Furthermore, Canada's contributions to India's sustainable development and growth help to address the poverty which hinders the development of a human rights culture.

Multilaterally, Canada made a contribution in 1996 of \$700,000 to the ILO's International Program for the Elimination of Child Labour. Canada is also working with the UN Commission on Human Rights on the development of an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child which would require countries to criminalize the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and to extend their jurisdiction extra-territorially.