



# RASHTRA MAHILA

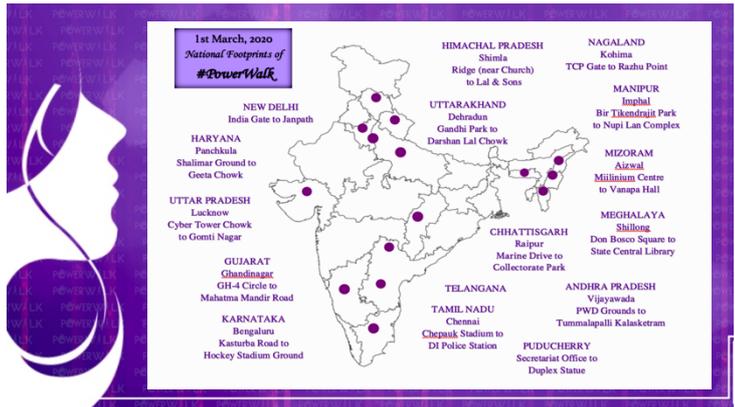
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## 1. POWER WALK

National Commission for Women has always been an ardent advocate of women safety especially in public spaces. It is pertinent that we as a society build a progressive mindset and provide healthy environment for empowering women. In line with NCW's women-led initiatives, the Commission under the leadership of Chairperson Rekha Sharma organized 'Power Walk' to normalize visibility of women in public spaces. It was a step towards breaking stereotypical norms associated with women and to reclaim their rightful presence in public spaces irrespective of the time of the day.

The 'Power Walk' was a national campaign held on March 1 across major cities in India, to create awareness on issues of women safety, crime and assault against women that occurs on the streets and public spaces. The campaign was held successfully in collaboration with 14 State Commissions for Women that assembled thousands of participants. Around 2000 participants joined the Power Walk from India Gate to Janpath in New Delhi.



The event was attended by Chief Guest, Smt. Usha Chamar, Padma Shri Awardee and the Guest of Honor, His Excellency, Mr. Nadir Patel, the High Commissioner for Canada to India. The event kick started with a street play by Anusthan Theatre Society of Delhi University, titled "Nari Hoon – Bechari Nahin", which took on the stage with a storm and engaged the participants around the theme of gender-based discrimination. It promoted the cause of women safety and highlighted how men can play an active role in helping women reclaim public spaces.



## 2. CONSULTATION ON WOMEN-LED ENTERPRISES

The National Commission for Women organized a consultation on 'Effective Methods to Assist Women-Led Enterprises' in collaboration with Ministry of Micro Small & Medium Enterprises, Government of India on March 11, 2020 at India International Centre, New Delhi. The Consultation was held to prepare a road map for reaching out to women-led MSMEs with the objective of improving their skills in managing enterprises and to help them improve the productivity of their enterprises.



The consultation was chaired by Ms. Rekha Sharma, Chairperson NCW, with Shri R.M. Mishra, Special Secretary, Ministry of Micro Small & Medium Enterprises, Ms. Meeta Rajivlochan, Member Secretary, NCW and Ms. Rajni Sekhri Sibal, Former Secretary Dept. of Fisheries (GoI) and other participating members from various Ministries like Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Department of Rural Development and other government organizations. The event saw eminent women entrepreneurs deliberating upon the issue and presenting their views at length during the consultation. The group discussed the existing glitches in the existing system that prevent women from establishing and successfully managing their enterprises, particularly at the micro and small-scale level.

### WOMEN TAKES THE CENTRE STAGE



Prime Minister Narendra Modi kick started Women's Day celebrations with the hashtag #SheInspiresUs and handed over his social media accounts to seven inspirational women achievers who shared their exceptional journey on his Twitter account motivating billions towards the cause of women empowerment. These seven women were Sneha Monhadoss, Malvikalyer, Arifa Jaan, Kalpana Ramesh, Vijaya Pawar, Kalavati Devi and Veena Devi selected from different parts of the country.

## 3. NARI SHAKTI PURUSKAR

India marked the celebrations of International Women's Day on March 8 by acknowledging women achievers and their exceptional service towards the cause of empowering women in the society. The women achievers were felicitated with Nari Shakti Puruskar, an award conferred by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in order to recognize their efforts towards uplifting the vulnerable and marginalized women of the society. The Nari Shakti Puruskar was given by President of India to seven inspiring women from across the country.



Nari Shakti Puruskar is an annual award recognizing service done for women empowerment. Earlier known as Stree Shakti Puraskar, the award is conferred in six institutional and two individual categories and carries a cash prize of rupees two and one-lakh.

### WOMEN ACHIEVERS

Fifteen women were honoured with Nari Shakti Puruskar, 2018-2019 for their outstanding contribution to the society. The winners were Padala Bhudevi, Bina Devi, Arifa Jan, Chami Murmur, Nilza Wangmo, Rashmi Urdhwardeshe, Mann Kaur, Kalavati Devi, Tashi & Nungshi Malik, Kaushik Chakroborty, Avani Chaturvedi, Bhawanna Kanth, Mohana Singh, Bhageerathi Amma and Karthyayini Amma.



### 4. A HISTORICAL RULING IN THE ARMED FORCES

The battle for gender equality constitutes fighting stereotypes in people's mind. The society has been for ages considered men as socially dominant and physically powerful sole breadwinners of the family whereas women were seen as the weaker sex incapable of being in roles involving strength and power. It is highly unlikely that there would be a change in the mindset of people if they continue assigning stereotypical gender roles to men and women. The Supreme Court of India on February 18 2020 took a huge step towards correcting these notions and directed the government to grant permanent commission to women officers in the Army's non-combat support units at par with their male counterparts, should they wish to continue after completing their Short Service Commission. The apex court dismissed all the submissions on women being physiologically weaker than men. The top court upheld a 2010 Delhi High Court verdict, stating that women officers be given permanent in the Army irrespective of their years in service.



#### Permanent Commission for Women in the Army

Women officers will be granted Permanent Commission in the Indian Army in all the ten branches where women are inducted for Short Service Commission. Besides the existing two streams of Judge Advocate General (JAG) and Army Education Corps, now Permanent Commission is granted in Signals, Engineers, Army Aviation, Army Air Defense, Electronics and Mechanical Engineers, Army Service Corps, Army Ordnance Corps and Intelligence to women officers. Short Service Commission women officers can give their option before completion of four years of Commissioned Service and they can also exercise option for grant of Permanent Commission with their choice of specialization. Women Officers will be considered based on suitability, merit etc. and will be employed in various staff appointment in the service.

- The induction of women officers in the Army started in 1992.
- A woman officer working for 14 years is neither given pension nor retirement benefits due to policy of government pension that starts after 20 years of service as an Officer.
- The PIL was filed in 2003 in the Delhi High Court for grant of permanent commission to women SSC officers in the Army.



#### Permanent Commission for Women in the Navy.

Similar to its judgment granting permanent commission to women officers in the Army, the Supreme Court on March 17, 2020 ruled in favour of permanent commission to female officers in the Indian Navy. The landmark decision was passed by a bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and Ajay Rastogi which remarked that all statements devised by the government in holding the grant of the commission was baseless, including assumptions on motherhood and physiological limitations, all of which reeked of a stereotypical mindset. The bench ruled that women officers are eligible for all the command appointments at par with male officers, including further promotions to higher ranks for women. They are also allowed to attend the same training courses and critical appointments, which are necessary for higher promotions in the Navy.

#### What challenges lies ahead for Women?

The bigger shift will have to take place in the culture, norms and values of the rank and file of the Defense Services. The responsibility has to be borne by the department of human resources management in armed forces, by senior military and political leadership to bring women in equal status.



- The decision of the Supreme Court directs the centre to grant permanent commission to short service commission women officers within three months from the date of judgment.
- The top court also granted pension benefits to retired women officers who were not granted permanent commission during their tenure.



### 5. NCW CELLS UPDATE

#### COMPLAINTS & INVESTIGATION CELL

Month	Complaints Received	Complaints (Closed) (Old+New)
March 2020	1347	1347

#### NRI CELL

Month	Complaints Received	Complaints (Closed) (Old+New)
March 2020	56	-

#### LEGAL (SUO-MOTO) CELL

Month	Nos. of Cases Taken	ATR Received (Old+New)	Cases Closed (Old+New)
March 2020	16	11	4

## 6. NCW CHAIRPERSON ENGAGEMENTS



Smt. Rekha Sharma was invited as Guest of Honor on March 4, at a Workshop on **“Impact on Women Leadership”** in Goa organized by United Cities and Local Government Asia-Pacific at the 2nd Leadership Summit hosted in India. She spoke on various NCW programmes and policy initiatives that advocate for equal participation of women leaders in local and global platforms.

Smt. Rekha Sharma was invited as Chief Guest on March 7, at a Workshop on **“Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace”** in New Delhi organized by Care Needy Foundation. She addressed a session on implementation, redressal and the role of NCW in protection of women's rights under POSH (prevention, prohibition, redressal) Act, 2013.



Smt. Rekha Sharma, NCW Chairperson met with Shri Satya Pal Malik, Hon'ble Governor of Goa on March 5 and had a worthwhile discussion on several initiatives and development policies for women in the state. Chairperson extended NCW's support for women empowerment programmes in Goa.



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## 7. NCW IN MEDIA & PRESS



An exclusive prime time telecast on India Ahead News Channel on the topic **“Women Safety & Security & her Right to own Public Spaces”** with, NCW Chairperson Smt. Rekha Sharma, Social Activist Ms. Yogita Bhayana and Acid Attack Survivor & Activist Ms. Promodini Roul.



NCW Chairperson, Smt. Rekha Sharma was invited as guest speaker for an exclusive show on **“Women & Domestic Violence”** telecasted on DD National Hindi on March 7, 2020.

NCW's Power Walk national campaign held across 14 major cities in India had received remarkable feedback and support from several renowned sport personalities like Sania Mirza, PV Sindhu, Geeta Phogat and other official dignitaries and social activists like Asha Devi, Usha Chamar and others. The videos can be found on the NCW official Youtube site.

### ‘Power walk’ raises women safety issue

New Delhi: The National Commission for Women (NCW) organised a “power walk” from India Gate to Janpath on Sunday evening to create awareness about women safety at public places.

Hundreds of young women and men including students and activists participated in the walk, which was led by NCW chief Rekha Sharma. Wearing black t-shirts, which had ‘Power Walk’ written at the back, the participants were seen holding placards with messages and slogans regarding gender equality and women safety.

Among those present at the event included high commissioner of Canada to India, Nadir Patel, and Padma Shri awardee Usha Chaturam.

Addressing the gathering, Patel offered Canadian High Commission's support to such initiatives. “It is incumbent on all of us to help create an environment all over the world where women can thrive and prosper,” Patel said. “Women are equal contributors to prosperity, both economic and social. I am particularly pleased to see so many men here.” Sharma said the walk was being simultaneously organised in 15 states. A *nukkad natak* was also held by a group of students from Delhi University.



Hundreds of women and men participated in the walk from India Gate to Janpath

The Power Walk national campaign was given coverage across all major national and regional press and electronic media in India.



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