



## Editor's Column

The shocking imbalance in the sex ratio in some parts of the country is indeed a cause of worry and what is worse is the involvement of a section of doctors in identifying the sex of the baby while in the womb leading to killing of an infant, if it is a girl.

In this context, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal for saving the girl child while launching the "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" scheme is indeed laudable. The Prime Minister launched this scheme in the district of Panipat in Haryana, which incidentally, has one of the worst sex ratios in the country. The Prime Minister made an impassioned plea not only to save the girl child but also emphasized the need for her education and safety. The save daughter, educate daughter, scheme with an initial

corpus of 100 crore, provides for a small deposit for a girl child, which would fetch an interest rate of 9.1% with tax relief.

However, money alone cannot be the criteria; it is the implementation of the law that can save a girl child from being killed. Though the government had passed Pre-Conception and Pre-

### FOCUS

## Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao

natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) (PCPNDT) Act in 2004, which prohibits doctors from revealing the sex of an unborn child, many doctors violate the Act with impunity because the Act is not being properly enforced by the authorities. Estimates of female foeticide vary. One group estimates that more than 10 million female foetuses

may have been illegally aborted in India since 1990 and 500,000 girls are missing annually due to female foeticide.

Therefore, it is necessary to identify the nursing homes and doctors, who are involved in committing such heinous practices. Further, for the scheme to be successful, it is most important to involve men in this battle because it is their attitude towards women which hinders a girl child's progress with regard to education, nutrition or safety on the streets, at home and the workplace. Our patriarchal society has spawned a culture among men to believe in their superiority and, therefore, lessons in gender equality must begin at homes and schools so that no brazen distinctions are made between girls and boys from their birth.

## Programme by Jwala

NCW Chairperson Lalitha Kumaramangalam attended a programme organized by Jwala Sanstha at Indore. Speaking on the occasion, the Chairperson discussed the Vishakha guidelines on sexual harassment at work place and said that the guidelines should be stringently implemented by all organizations. While speaking on domestic violence against women she said that until there was change in the mindset of men and women, violence against women would continue. The Chairperson also said that she would discuss with the Censor Board depiction of derogatory images of women in films and advertisements. Social activist Smt. Janak Palta was honoured with a shawl and sripthal on the occasion.



Ms. Kumaramangalam addressing the audience

## Hindi Workshop

In order to promote awareness in respect of official language Hindi, a two day Hindi workshop was organized by NCW. Officers and staff of NCW took part in the workshop. The workshop was conducted by the Hindi translator, Shri D.B. Srivastava.

## Consultation on ICT and Women Empowerment

The Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi and the National Commission of Women (NCW), had jointly organized a policy debate titled “Consultation on ICT and Women Empowerment” at IIPA, New Delhi. The deliberations focused on the issues related to women empowerment in Information Technology (IT) spaces as well as hitherto unexplored opportunities for women’s information communication technologies (ICTs), with special reference to India. Shri T.N. Chaturvedi, Chairman IIPA, was the Chief Guest and Ms. Lalitha Kumaramangalam, Chairperson, NCW, was the guest of honour in its inaugural session. Others, who graced the inaugural session included, Prof. Amita Singh, Mr. Vikas Kanungo, Mr. B. N. Sathpathy, Ms. Shamina Shafiq and Dr. Charru Malhotra.



*Chairperson addressing the gathering on women empowerment*

After the thought-provoking plenary session, the consultation was segmented into five exhaustive sessions such as “Understanding the Existing Situation-Issues and Opportunities”; “IT Skills and Knowledge for Women: Available and Required”; “Building Novel Gender-Sensitive Scenarios using Emerging Technology Trends and Newer Implementation Models”. The final two rounds had collated the deliberations to suggest the policy recommendations.

## Delegation from NCW visits Mizoram and Tripura

An NCW delegation comprising Member Laldingliani Sailo and Richa Ojha, Senior Research Officer, went on a 4-day visit to Mizoram. The delegation evaluated the work of NCW’s expert committee on Social, Economic, and Political status of the women in the North East states in order to send recommendations to the government for empowering women based on the empirical data from the primary survey. Later, the delegation visited Sesawng village, Thingsul block and Durtlang Village, Tlangnuam Block, to get a first hand knowledge of the process of making cane products. They held discussions with women cane workers and anthurium growers and gathered lot of information about the challenges faced by women at the grassroot level for their household or micro enterprise. Later, the delegation visited Aizwal Women Polytechnic at Durtlang and interacted with the faculty and the students.

The delegation also met the Director General of Police and visited the protection home for victims of trafficking as well as Aizwal jail to see if safeguards provided for women in the jail manual are being followed. Member Sailo visited Mizoram University and met the Vice Chancellor to discuss the possibility of the university and the women commissions collaborating in research studies on gender issues.

The delegation was given a presentation on the new law on women rights relating to marriage, divorce and inheritance, which recognises the customs and traditional practices of the Mizos and yet provides safeguards for Mizo women, especially, in the area of divorce and inheritance.

The delegation met the Minister for social welfare to discuss issues relating to economic empowerment of women and strengthening the State Women Commission in terms of budgetary support, infrastructure and manpower. The delegation also met the state government officers, sub committee expert members and members of the state commission, NGOs and grassroot women and stressed the importance of skill development to ensure economic empowerment of women.

A delegation comprising Member Sailo, Member Hemlata Kheria and Counsellor Varun Chabra, visited Tripura for 4 days primarily to evaluate the work of NCW’s expert committee on social, economic and political status of women in the state. The delegation visited Birganja village, Gomati district for interaction with two SHGs, (1) Jagabandhu SHG involved in fishery activity and (2) Krishan SHG. The workers requested that small fish may be supplied by the government at subsidized rates as well as provide new equipments and skill training involved in rice processing.

The delegation also visited Kobrakhamar ADC village and Changpreng Agarbati SHG centre and interacted with the SHGs involved in mushroom cultivation and agarbatti product respectively. They visited women ITI Indranagar and women Polytechnic Hapania and discussed with the faculty and the students the need for skill development as well as training in traditional skills. Later, the delegation met the Director General of Police and the Minister for Social Welfare to discuss crimes against women and issues relating to economic empowerment of women. The delegation also visited women correction centre, Bishalgarh, Agartala, to ascertain if safeguards provided for women in jail manual are being followed.

## Women and Leadership “The Absent Revolution”

The British Council held a discussion on “Women and Leadership - The Absent Revolution” in New Delhi. Under-representation of women in education is a major challenge but the problem is most acute in the influential and senior leadership in the global academy.

Participation in education for women is now approaching parity with men at both secondary and undergraduate level (and in some countries surpassing men). Yet, this has not translated into senior appointments and leadership positions in our education institutions. In Higher education, for example, only 3% of women are Vice-Chancellors in South Asia and in the UK only 17%. This inequity of access and opportunity is mirrored across the leadership spectrum from young researchers, senior administrators, professors, Vice Chancellors and Chancellors.

Whilst women are beginning to break the glass ceilings in all sectors of industry (even those in traditionally male preserves of manufacturing, IT and engineering), scaling the ivory towers is still seen as a distant goal.

The dialogue presented the research findings from “Women in Higher Education Leadership in South Asia” and drew upon knowledge from the global academy and other sectors on how women have succeeded in overcoming barriers to leadership. It also discussed the importance of network as a key to success and why they fail, and focussed on enabling inclusivity and diversity within leadership as a key element of change of institutional culture, as well as identified specific action and interventions for change

The participants comprised experts from Higher Education Industry, academicians and policy reform level dignitaries.



*Chairperson addressing the gathering*

## Interactive meeting with State Women Commissions

NCW had organised an interactive meeting with the State Women Commissions in New Delhi to discuss various issues relating to their working and difficulties being faced in implementing their mandated activities.

Speaking on the occasion, NCW Chairperson Lalitha Kumaramangalam referred to the various problems being faced by women in different spheres of their lives. Even in politics, women have been denied their rightful due. She said crimes against women, trafficking of women and children, female foeticide, acid attack, desertion by NRI husbands, etc. were some of the common problems faced by each state. There was a need to share each other's experiences in order to arrive at solutions to stem the malaise, she added.

Later, the interactive meet was divided into six technical sessions dealing with the following subjects : (i) Action taken on the recommendations of the earlier interactive meetings with State Women Commissions held in New Delhi, Manipur and Hyderabad respectively; (ii) Uniform template on the functioning and powers of different Commissions for Women; (iii) Action taken in respective States in compliance with directions of the Supreme Court of India on creating awareness on the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2013; (iv) Group discussion on the topics proposed; (v) Proposals received from State Commissions for Women on Legal Awareness Programmes/Seminars/Research Studies/Capacity Building of functionaries. Recommendations emerging out of these discussions will be sent to the State Commissions.



*NCW Chairperson, Members and representatives of State Women's Commissions*

## Members' Visits

❖ Member Shamina Shafiq went to Shillong to hold a meeting with the officials of the Meghalaya State Commission for Women (MSCW) and also to evaluate the survey undertaken by the Head of the Department of Social Work, Martin Luther University, Shillong, in collaboration with MSCW. ● Ms. Shafiq was the keynote speaker on “Inclusive growth of minority women through ICT”, at Lucknow. ● Ms. Shafiq addressed a consultation of “ICT and Women Empowerment”, organised by the Indian Institute of Public Administration in New Delhi. ● The Member spoke on “Respect and Honour of Women” at the Talkatora Gardens organised by Brahma Kumaris. ● She also delivered a lecture at the Delhi University at their annual academic festival. ● Ms. Shafiq attended a colloquium on “Mainstreaming, the Indian Muslim – the way Forward”, organised by NCW, in collaboration with the Centre for Women Studies, Maulana Azad University. ● The Member participated in a discussion organized by NCW, on the issues of minority women in Hyderabad. ● Ms. Shafiq gave the opening remarks at the national consultation organized by AP and Telangana State Commission for Women, in association with NCW on the “Condition of Devadasis in India”, at Hyderabad.



*Ms. Shafiq addressing the consultation on women empowerment*

❖ Member Hemlata Kheria was the Chief Guest in a State level Convention of “Women from Manual Scavenging Community”, organised by Social Development Foundation in Lucknow. She called the practice a black spot on modern Indian society, which forces such undignified tasks on individuals. ● The Member visited the Vishwakarma Kala Kendra Bamboo art and Training Centre at Agartala in Tripura and met village women working at the centre. ● She, along with Member Laldingliani Sailo, visited Agartala Jail and met jail officials and female inmates. ● Member Kheria headed an Expert Committee on Dalit women titled ‘Discrimination faced by Dalit women and suggested action plan’ and outlined the purpose of the Committee to look into issues and concerns of dalit women, which needed immediate attention of the Government.



*Expert Committee meeting on Dalit women*

## Important Decisions

- South West district administration in Delhi has encouraged citizens to report sex-determination clinics running without registration, promising that their names and identity would be kept secret and a reward of Rs. 5000 shall be provided to the informant, if the information turns out to be correct.
- The Haryana Government has decided to extend the benefit of certain schemes applicable to two-girl child in a family to the third as well. This is part of the measures to improve the sex ratio in the state.
- Acid attacks will now entail a minimum punishment of 10 years. Any doctor, who refuses to treat an acid attack victim will also invite one year's imprisonment.
- The Supreme Court had said that demand for dowry can be made at any time and not necessarily before marriage, while upholding the life term awarded to a man for poisoning and burning his wife to death in 1997.

*for further information visit our website at : [www.ncw.nic.in](http://www.ncw.nic.in)*

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