



## Editor's Column

The year 2013 has been an eventful year for the National Commission for Women. Under the dynamic leadership of NCW Chairperson Ms. Mamta Sharma, the Commission resolutely and indefatigably strove for women's empowerment and elimination of gender violence and injustice. At this point of time, at the year end, an objective appraisal of the Commission's works and achievements is called for.

In keeping with NCW's mandate, which is to review constitutional and legal safeguards for women; recommend remedial legislative measures, facilitate redressal of grievances; advise the government on all policy matters affecting women, the Commission took various steps to improve the status of women and worked tirelessly for their social and economic empowerment during the past year.

The Chairperson has taken initiatives to organize seminars, consultations and workshops all over the country on gender awareness, female foeticide, rape, child marriage, violence against women, sexual harassment against women at workplace, dowry death, witchcraft etc. in order to generate awareness in the society against these social evils. Along with empowerment, the Chairperson laid utmost stress on growth, education and development for women.

To make women aware of their rights, the NCW launched Mahila Adhikar Abhiyan, particularly in rural areas to inform them about various government schemes and their entitlements.

In the wake of Nirbhaya incident, the Commission's recommendations with

regard to changes in the rape law, making stalking of women a crime and a separate law on acid attack etc. were accepted by the Government.

The Commission made several visits to jails, nari nicketans and hospitals to gain firsthand knowledge about the problems faced by women and suggest remedial

### FOCUS NCW SURGES AHEAD

measures to take up with the concerned authorities. In the past year, the Commission received a large number of complaints, dealt with them and also took up suo-moto cases to provide speedy justice. Publicity was also



Smt. Mamta Sharma

made through advertisements in the print media and on TV channels, nukkad-nataks etc. and also published several books, booklets and publicity materials in order to create awareness about women rights. The NCW also participated in different melas to sensitize the civil society on women-related issues.

The Foundation stone of NCW office, Nirbhaya Bhawan was laid down last year by the President of India Shri Pranab

Mukherjee. During the year, the Commission entered into partnership with UNIFEM to work jointly on the issue of combating trafficking in women and girls, and with HUDCO for creating infrastructural and incidental facilities for rehabilitation of destitutes, widows and abandoned women.

The Commission also organized capacity building and sensitization programmes for officers involved in implementation of women-related laws through various police and judicial academies. The Commission inaugurated video conference facilities with the state commissions of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Nagaland and West Bengal. It also constituted several enquiry committees to enquire into alleged cases of atrocities against women.

The NCW has created a North East Cell to handle complaints received from North Eastern states on line or by post. The Commission has constituted a special study committee with the primary objective to study the support mechanisms for the victims and survivors of rape and sexual violence. The Commission had also undertaken sensitization programmes for the para-military forces, the Delhi Police, the Railway Protection Force etc., on women's issues and is also actively pursuing for the passing of the Women Reservation Bill, still pending in the Lok Sabha.

Admittedly, NCW has achieved considerable success, yet there is no room for complacency. NCW pledges to strive relentlessly to mitigate the sufferings of women of our country and take appropriate steps to provide them gender justice and equity.



## NCW Visits Manipur

NCW has taken initiative to set-up a North-East Cell at the Commission, to look into complaints as well as other women-related issues concerning the North-East sector. In that context, a team led by Chairperson Mamta Sharma comprising Members Nirmala Samant Prabhavalkar, Ms. Laldingliani Sailo, Joint Secretary Sunita Khurana, Ms. Sudha Chaudhary, Ms. Lilabati and Sh. V.K. Asthana visited Imphal in Manipur. The Chairpersons and Member Secretaries of North East Commissions for Women were also present.

Later, they held an interactive meeting with representatives of women vendors of three Ima Keithels. Impressed with the unique women-only, Ima market, the Chairperson said she would explore the possibility of setting up market complexes exclusively run by women traders in other parts of the country. She however, regretted that despite the valour and defiance shown by the women folk of Manipur, their social status remained static, in spite of rapid changes in the social structure. She emphasized on the need for collective effort by the police, press and politicians to prevent atrocities committed against women. The Social Welfare Minister Kum. A.K. Mirabai Devi pledged all possible assistance in making the Manipur State Commission for Women more vibrant and effective. A bilingual booklet entitled "Violence Free Home, a Woman's Right" was released on the occasion.

● The Chairperson also held a meeting with the Principal Secretary, DG Police and other state officials relating to settlement of issues of Ima Keithels Market. Later, she met the Chief Minister and the Governor of the state to discuss issues relating to empowerment of women. The delegation also went to Moreh, to assess the problems faced by the local women of the area. The team found that there was lack of medical facilities in the local hospital and the patients had to go to Imphal in case of an emergency. Ms. Sharma assured that the matter would be taken up with the concerned officers. The women desired that some small scale industries could be established so that they could make themselves financially self-reliant. The Chairperson assured them that she would also take up this issue with the concerned

authorities.

● The delegation also went to JLN Institute of Medical Sciences in Manipur, where Ms. Irom Chanu Sharmila is on hunger strike and under judicial custody since 2000.

● Later, the NCW delegation visited the Manipur Central Jail to assess the condition of women prisoners. The prison was neat and clean and the prisoners had no complaint. The jail authorities told the Chairperson that they were not getting any financial assistance for running vocational training and rehabilitation programmes for the prisoners. The Chairperson assured the jail



NCW Chairperson with Kum. A.K. Mirabai Devi. (below) Chairperson, Manipur Women Commission, NCW Member Laldingliani Sailo, Ms. Mamta Sharma and Member Nirmala Samant Prabhavalkar at the meeting with women community leaders at Moreh authorities that she would write to the Chief Minister of Manipur in this regard.

## Important Decisions

● The Supreme Court said that clinching proof of committing rape against each accused is not necessary and a person can be convicted in a gangrape case even if there is no medical evidence against him. The court passed the order convicting six persons in a gangrape case despite medical evidence showed only four persons had committed rape on the prosecutrix. However, the bench said, "Explanation 1 to Section 376(2)(g), IPC, states that where a woman is raped by one or more in a group of persons acting in furtherance of their common intention, each of the person shall be deemed to have committed gangrape within the meaning of the sub-section".

● The Delhi government has sent directives to all zonal ambulance officers and senior officials in the Directorate of Health Services that ambulances be sent on a priority basis, free of cost, to victims of sexual assault. It states besides responding to calls from accident and trauma victims, the ambulances are to transport to and back pregnant women and sick new borns from hospitals to their homes. Further, the ambulances will be made available to the family members accompanying the victim to the nearest hospital and also drop the victims at their residents alongwith escorting family members.



## The Role of Media on Women Issues

The NCW Chairperson Ms. Mamta Sharma attended a workshop on "Role of Media on Women Issues" organized by Future Society at Jaipur. Speaking on the occasion, she said though the centre has made stringent laws to combat crimes against women, yet they are not implemented properly. In such a situation, women must come forward and assert their rights. She expressed her displeasure at the police that instead of helping the victims, they very often pressurize them to compromise.

Speaking on rampant female foeticide in the country, she said that in the next 20 years a situation will arise when 2 crore boys will not get brides to marry. She further said that even now women are branded as witches and atrocities are committed on them in the states like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh. To stop such atrocities, strong measures must be undertaken and in this the media must play a critical role. Many eminent journalists also spoke on the occasion.



The Chairperson addressing the Workshop.

## Members' Visits

❖ NCW Member Shamina Shafiq visited the India World Foundation to attend a national seminar and art workshop on "Justice for Women", dedicated to Nirbhaya, the braveheart in New Delhi. ● The Member attended the 10th Annual Function and National Seminar on "Vulnerability of Contemporary Women: Current Scenario" at Aligarh Muslim University organized by Dr. Zakir Hussain Foundation and graced by Smt. Salma Ansari, wife of the Vice President of India. The Member emphasized the need for elimination of sex-determination tests and female foeticide, which are responsible for a skewed sex-ratio in the country.



Ms. Shamina Shafiq (left) at the seminar with Smt. Salma Ansari (right).

❖ NCW Member Hemlata Kheria, was the Chief Guest in a Sangoshti and Abhinandan Samaroh on "White Revolution in India", organized by the Meerut Chamber of Commerce. She said that there was also need for a social revolution so that crime could be stopped. She asserted that media could play an important role to make women aware of their rights. ● The Member visited the District Jail in Ujjain, and held a meeting with the Superintendent and other jail officials and women inmates regarding legal aid, vocational training, medical facility for women inmates with mental health problems, as well as food, education facilities, sanitation and hygienic problems of women prisoners. ● Later, she met Ms. Sushma Singh, IG, Women Wing, Bhopal, and discussed issues related to crime against women in Madhya Pradesh.



Member Hemlata Kheria (2nd from right) at the Abhinandan Samaroh

❖ NCW Member Adv. Nirmala Samant Prabhavalkar along with Adv. Vijaya Bangade, Member, Maharashtra State Commission for Women visited Chandrapur Jail in Maharashtra and interacted with 19 female prisoners, most of whom were



undertrials. It was found that proper food, clothing and regular health checkups were being provided as per the jail manual provisions. ● Ms. Prabhavalkar along with the Chairperson of Himachal Pradesh State Commission for Women visited Kanda jail and interacted with 16 women prisoners. The NCW would like to place on record that it seemed to be a very good model jail as the barracks were clean and neat and each inmate was provided with a separate bed, pillow, blanket, etc. along with medicines, legal help and regular health checkups. ● The Member attended a programme jointly organized by Wadia hospital and Siddhivinayak Temple Trust to create awareness and generate revenue for the Cardiac Clinic for heart operations of poor and needy infants hailing from the rural and tribal areas.

The Chief Guest was Shri Sachin Tendulkar. ● The Member attended a two-day seminar on 'gender awareness', for women police officers organized by DGP Kerala. The Member also visited the women ward of the Central jail and an Open jail for women prisoners at Thiruvananthapuram. ● Ms. Prabhavalkar visited the Holi Hospital at Kandavili in Maharashtra and met the Municipal Councillor Smt. Sheetal Mhatre, a victim of sexual harassment. The Member assured her all possible help from the Commission. ● The Member helped Smt. Bimla Gupta, widow of an ex-Railway employee to get an increased pension of Rs. 3500/- per month plus DA against the pension of Rs. 350/- she was getting earlier.

❖ NCW Member Dr. Charu WaliKhanna was the Chief Guest at a seminar on "Issues and Concerns in NRI Marriages" held at the National Law School of India University in Bangalore. She spoke in the technical session on "NRI Marriages: Understanding the Complexity of Issues and Concerns". Later, she met the Governor of Karnataka Dr. Hansraj Bhardwaj and discussed women-related issues. ● The Member was the Chief Guest at the workshop on "Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace", organized by Doordarshan in New Delhi. She emphasized that sexual harassment at workplace infringes on the fundamental right of women to gender equality and the right to work in a safe environment, free from harassment. The publication of NCW titled "Do not fear, bear, admit" was distributed among the participants. ● Dr. WaliKhanna was a speaker at the "Pravasi Bhartiya Divas", organized by Overseas Indian Affairs and Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi. The Member spoke at the plenary session on "Aspirations of Diaspora" chaired by Shri Manish Tewari, Minister for Information and Broadcasting.



*Ms. Nirmala Samant Prabhavalkar addressing the gathering at Wadia Hospital. Shri Sachin Tendulkar is on her right*



*Dr. Charu WaliKhanna inaugurating the Seminar on NRI Marriages*

### Enquiries undertaken by NCW

- Ms. Hemlata Kheria, along with social activist Manasi Pradhan conducted an enquiry into a newspaper report titled "Odisha girl held hostage for 3 days and raped by 6 men". A detailed report has been submitted on 23.01.2014.
- Ms. Kheria, with Manasi Pradhan conducted an enquiry into a newspaper report titled "30-year-old lady raped by 6 persons and photographed in mobile, in Banpur Thana, Khurda District, Odisha. A detailed report has been submitted on 23.01.2014.

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

Published by the National Commission for Women, 4 Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Marg, New Delhi-110002. Editor : Gouri Sen. Printed at Akanksha Impression, 18/36, Street No. 5, Railway Line Side, Anand Parbat Indl. Area, New Rohtak Road, New Delhi-5