



## Editor's Column

"The Selfie with Daughter" campaign, started by Sarpanch Sunil Jaglani in Bibipur village, Jind, Haryana, has struck a chord in the hearts of the Indian people. The campaign has got further fillip after Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his *Mann Ki Baat*, radio programme, asked parents to tweet photos of themselves with their daughters. The response was overwhelming. On the first day, the hashtag had been used 1.5 lakh times. Admittedly, in the country, where a vast number of parents prefer sons to daughters, leading to a terrible skewed sex-ratio, the Selfie Campaign is an imaginative tool to change the social mindset

and combat female foeticide as well as child marriage.

The "Selfie with Daughter" represents a new concept in the imagination of Indian psyche. It showcases the girl child as an embodiment of love and pride to be nurtured and cherished without any pious declarations.

### FOCUS

### Selfie with Daughter

It's a fact that during the last so many years the Central and the State governments have embarked on various legal and social campaigns highlighting the salient features of the laws relating to female foeticide and infanticide and pointing out the detrimental effects

of the abysmal sex-ratio through advertisements, awareness programmes, the visual and electronic media.

Yet, such initiatives have not been very effective in the long run simply because those bureaucratic campaigns did not touch peoples' hearts. A strategy which engages people's emotion as well as enthuse them to participate has much greater chances of success. Though the idea of "Selfie with Daughters", emanated from a Sarpanch of an obscure village, yet the credit must go to the Prime Minister for making it a national campaign to transform social mindsets against entrenched patriarchal bias and gender discrimination.

## Module for NCW's Legal Awareness Programmes

The National Commission for Women (NCW) entrusted Jamia Milia University to prepare a module for legal awareness programmes sponsored by NCW. The programmes are organized by Institutions, NGO's, resource persons and course directors. The module will provide procedural guidelines for imparting legal awareness by giving detailed information about free legal aid services, PILs, rights of arrested women, remedies and procedures of the family and Mahila Courts.

The basic objective of the programme is to impart practical knowledge about the legal rights and remedies provided under various women-related laws, thereby making women fit to face the challenges in real life situations.

## Congratulations!

With no aid from the government or corporates, 24-year-old twins Tashi and Nungshi Malik managed to conquer the highest peaks in all seven continents and reached North and South Poles with the help of private funding and from NRIs and ex-Army officers.

NCW applauds their indomitable spirit, grit, determination and courage.

## Dialogue on Pre-Natal Sex Selection

An International Conference on "Policy dialogue on pre-natal sex-selection", was organised by Centre for Social Research and Heinrich Böll Stiftung India in New Delhi. Speaking on this occasion, NCW Chairperson Lalitha Kumaramangalam held both women and men responsible for upholding the patriarchal system in India. "Despite making rapid strides, unfortunately even today, India is a patriarchal society because patriarchy is also taken forward by Indian women and not just men", she said. "You don't say to your daughter that she will be the next Prime Minister but you say she will be the next collector as that is quite appropriate to our Indian context", she added.



*Dr. Ranjana Kumari, Director, Centre for Social Research (CSR), Ms. Lalitha Kumaramangalam, NCW Chairperson, Dr. Mansi Mishra, Head, Research Division, CSR & Ms. Shalini Yog, Deputy Director Heinrich Böll Stiftung, India, at the conference.*

Women, she said, were not taught even they could own properties. "Advising women to invest (in properties) must be brought into the awareness discourse. Women have started getting financial independence in the sense that they have started earning but they don't still have a say on where the money should be spent", she said.

Defining dowry as a practice of buying husband for a daughter, the Chairperson said, "I do not know how far we are going to go in terms of gender equity as long as this practice exists". She further stressed on stricter monitoring of not only the families killing female foetuses but also those, who make available and affordable, the prenatal screening facilities.

She also said that Jan Dhan Yojana has been a resounding success and more women as compared to men have opened accounts under the scheme and emphasised that social media should be also available in vernacular languages so that it could reach people in far flung-areas, who lack knowledge of English.

## Imperative need for toilets

A six-year old girl had to pay with her life just because their 2-roomed house did not have a toilet.

At 6:30 am, in the morning, when she went out of her house to relieve herself, she was raped and murdered by an alleged serial rapist. When she did not return even after half an hour, her family went in search for her. They found her lying in the corner of a desolate building near their residence.

After repeated incidents of this kind, it is time parents understood that lack of toilets in their houses would lead to heinous crimes against women. Not only that, a recent study of 670-odd pregnant women in Orissa has also shown that women who defecate in the open are more likely to have Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes (APO) such as difficult deliveries or low birth weights than those who use toilets. This could be because poor sanitation practices can promote infection and induce stress during pregnancies.

## NHRDN 2nd CSR Summit

NCW Chairperson Lalitha Kumaramangalam addressed the recently held NHRDN 2nd CSR Summit "From Act to Action" in Mumbai. Her address on Leadership at the inaugural session of the Summit was extremely thought-provoking and set out the right tone for the deliberations.



*Ms. Lalitha Kumaramangalam addressing the Summit.*

## Paid leave for victims of sexual harassment

As per new guidelines issued by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) victims of sexual harassment will get three months paid leave - apart from their entitled leave.

The DoPT instructions also empower committees dealing with such complaints to recommend transfer of the victim or the accused to another department till the enquiry is completed.

The complainant is also required to report the incident to the Internal Complaints Committee of the organisation within three months. However, the time limit can be extended if circumstances prevented the complainant to submit her complaint within the time frame.

The probe committee must have a senior woman officer. In case, the department concerned lacks such an officer, one can be deputed from another office. The matter should be resolved within 90 days.

## Important Decisions

- The cost of getting a one-day tatkal marriage certificate from a Delhi government office may soon come down from the current Rs. 10,000 if a proposal for downward revision is accepted by the Delhi cabinet.
- The government is considering amending the legal provision that compels Christian couples to wait for at least two years for divorce, whereas this period of separation is one year for other religions. The apex court also urged the government to bring uniformity in divorce laws across religions.
- The Supreme Court has directed municipal bodies not to insist on the name of the father while issuing birth certificates for children born outside wedlock, saying that in such cases, it should mention only the mother's name. The court said, "in today's society women are increasingly choosing to raise their children alone and the law must recognize the reality and evolve with the changing times. The law is dynamic and is expected to diligently keep pace with time and the legal conundrums and enigmas it present. There is no gainsaying that the identity of the mother is never in doubt. Accordingly, we direct that if a single parent/unwed mother applies for the issuance of a birth certificate for a child born from her womb, the authorities concerned may only require her to furnish an affidavit to this effect, and must thereupon issue the birth certificate, unless there is a court direction to the contrary", the bench added.
- The BSE has penalised 530 companies that have not appointed at least one woman director on their board as the last date for compliance with the SEBI norm of at least one woman director on the board of directors expired on March 31, 2015.
- By January, 2016, citizens may be able to dial a national helpline (112) for immediate police help in crimes against women. The Union Home Ministry will circulate detailed guidelines to states asking them to link police services to this central emergency response system. The scheme will initially be launched in five to six states, but gradually the government plans to link all emergency services to one central helpline number.

## Madras High Court recalls order on mediation in rape cases

Amid strong nation-wide public outrage and strict censure from the Supreme Court, the Madras High Court recalled its controversial order directing mediation between a rapist and the victim after granting him interim bail.

The Supreme Court observed that it would be a 'spectacular error' to adopt a soft approach on cases of rape and stated that there could not be any compromise in such matters.

Justice Devadass recalling his earlier order also directed the accused to surrender before the Mahila Court and send him to the Central Prison.

## Delhi girl tops CA final examination

After spectacular results in the civil services examination this year, women continue to maintain their winning streak in the final chartered accountancy (CA) exam too. Twenty-five year old Shailee Chaudhary stood first in the country with 75.75%, a position she shared with Rahul Aggarwal from Secunderabad.

## Women Employees Earn Less Than Men

A survey by the recruitment firm Monster India says gender discrimination continues to play a significant role in determining the wages in the labour market and the average wage earned by women is 27 percent lower than what men make. The gap could be due to preference for male employees, quick promotion for men or break in service for women for child birth etc. The survey also adds that it is important to invest in education because a professional degree or higher education invariably fetches higher wages. Hence, it is imperative to educate our girl children.

## Women languishing in prison without trial

The Delhi High Court took suo moto cognisance of the plight of 614 women inmates of Tihar jail, who have served half the jail term of their punishment. In a letter to the Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court, Supreme Court Justice Judge Kurian Joseph highlighted their sufferings and grievances after he received an appeal from the women inmates asking to be released on personal bonds. They have also alleged lack of sympathy from the courts and the doctors in the jail.

## Profile in courage

A teenage girl thrashed a youth inside a police station in Uttar Pradesh and made him apologise for allegedly eve-teasing her. Angry over alleged eve-teasing, the girl stopped the boy's motor-cycle by blocking the way with her bicycle in front of Puranpur police station and dragged him inside the premises. The girl slapped the youth and beat him up with her shoes and made him touch her feet seeking apology in front of police personnel.

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