



## Editor's Column

8th March, the International Women's Day, is an occasion celebrated by women groups around the world. Women of all continents, often divided by national boundaries and by ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic and political diversities come together to celebrate solidarity on this day. They look back to a tradition that represents decades of struggle for equality, justice, peace and development.

International Women's Day is the story of ordinary women as makers of history. It is rooted in the century-old struggle of women to participate in society on an equal footing with men.

The idea of the International Women's Day first arose at the turn of the nineteenth century, which in the industrialized world was a period of expansion and turbulence, booming population growth and radical ideologies.

Since those early years, the International Women's Day has assumed a new dimension for women in developed and developing countries alike. The growing international women's movement, which has been

strengthened by global United Nations Women's Conference has helped to make the commemoration a rallying point for coordinated efforts to demand women's rights and participation in the political and economic processes. Increasingly, the International Women's Day, is a time to reflect on progress made, to call for change and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women, who have played an extraordinary role in the history of women's rights.

### FOCUS

### International Women's Day

Thus, where once women fought to put gender equality on the international agenda, gender equality is now one of the primary factors shaping that agenda. In many countries, provisions guaranteeing enjoyment of human rights without discrimination on the basis of sex have been included in Constitutions or integrated into legislative reforms. Discriminatory legal provisions have been repealed and legal literacy and other measures introduced to alert women to their rights.

Yet, much remains to be done. More than 67 years after independence,

despite plethora of laws, women in India still find themselves shackled. Poverty of women, especially, heads of households, appears to be deepening. Women are over represented among the unemployed. They still continue to pay with their lives for child marriage, domestic violence, dowry demands, foeticide, rapes and inadequate provisions of healthcare.

The situation is alarming and calls for urgent, matching interventions. We have to put more of our girl children in schools and equip them with quality education - as opposed to making them merely literates. We have to make primary health centres accessible to women so that hundreds of women in rural areas do not die every year during childbirth for want of medical attention. And most importantly, we have to reform property laws so that gender parity becomes a reality. While these changes are necessary, they will amount to nothing, if we, as a society, continue to deny our women, the dignity, liberty and opportunities that are rightfully theirs. For when women thrive, the whole society benefits and succeeding generations are given a better start in life.

## Women lawyers of the Supreme Court file petition

Women lawyers practising in the Supreme Court have filed a petition seeking action against two advocates, who made derogatory remarks against women in the documentary "India's daughter" while representing an accused in the Nirbhaya case. Hurt by the statements made by the two lawyers, the Association sought action against them by the Gender Sensitization Committee of the Supreme Court and even consider restricting their entry in the apex court.

The petition said "the comments made in the documentary are inhumane, scandalous, unjustifiable, biased, outrageous, ill-minded and are a direct affront to the dignity of women", specially, women, practising in the Supreme Court. It also asked the court that the lawyers may be directed to issue a public apology for making such derogatory comments.

## NCW Celebrates International Women's Day

To commemorate 8th March, the International Women's Day, the National Commission for Women in collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Child Development and Confederation of Indian Industry, organized a national consultation on "Creating an Empowering Environment for Women" at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi. Minister of Women and Child Development Smt. Maneka Gandhi inaugurated the event and NCW Chairperson, Lalitha Kumaramangalam delivered the welcome address.



*At the consultation (from left) Smt. Prema Ramachandran, Shri D.V. Prasad, Smt. Maneka Gandhi, Smt. Lalitha Kumaramangalam & Smt. Shamina Shafiq*

The consultation was conducted to create an environment for women, where they can get good education and enhance their skills and entrepreneurship to empower themselves and lead a healthy and safe life. Three sessions were held on different topics such as (1) education, skill and entrepreneurship, (2) health and nutrition, (3) sexual harassment at workplace and violence against women. Shri D.V. Prasad, Member Secretary NCW, moderated the discussions. NCW members Shamina Shafiq, Hemlata Kheria, Laldingliani Sailo and other officers of the Commission were present on the occasion.

## Impact of Tuberculosis on Women and Children

To commemorate the World TB Day, the National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis (NIRT) organized a symposium titled "Impact of Tuberculosis on Women and Children" at Chetpet, in Chennai.

Delivering the keynote address, NCW Chairperson, Lalitha Kumaramangalam called for measures to improve the health of women and children as they were vulnerable to TB. She said that social care should be integrated with health care services. According to Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, Director, NIRT, tuberculosis was among the top ten causes of death among children worldwide; however, children with TB were given low priority in most national health programmes.



*Smt. Lalitha Kumaramangalam addressing the gathering as Dr. Soumya Swaminathan looks on.*

## Making a Difference

Pratapgarh District Magistrate felicitated Shyama Patel for her presence of mind that helped to save the lives of hundreds of passengers travelling on the Kashi Vishwanath Express. While returning from the agricultural field, Shyama found a gap about a foot in the railway tracks between Chilbila and Jagesarganj railway stations. She immediately took off her red shawl and rushed to the spot where she found that the breach was wide enough to cause a terrible train accident. Standing between the tracks, she started swaying the shawl frantically. Although the driver saw her and applied the brake, the engine crossed the broken section of the track before finally coming to a stop.

## Hastkala Utsav

On the occasion of International Women's Day, Bharatiya Mahila Bank Limited organized Hastkala Utsav from 7-15 March, 2015 at Delhi Haat, Janakpuri in New Delhi. The objective of the utsav was to provide a unique platform to women artisans as well as self help groups to display their talents. NCW Chairperson Lalitha Kumaramangalam, inaugurated the Utsav in the presence of Smt. Usha Ananthasubramanian, Chairman and Managing Director and Smt. SM Swathi, Executive Director of the Mahila Bank. Speaking on the occasion, the Chairperson lauded the bank for its various efforts towards economic empowerment of women. The exhibition cum sale of handicrafts will help in encouraging Indian handicrafts and in bringing out the talents of women, she added. She took a round of the stalls and appreciated the creativity of women and the products on display.



NCW Chairperson inaugurating the Hastkala Utsav

## Important Decisions

- The Delhi High Court has denied a woman, the right to live in a house owned by her father-in-law, saying she has no right to a property, which belongs exclusively to her parents-in-law and the property cannot be treated as a shared accommodation. The woman has the right to reside in a separate house, which her husband had already rented. Quoting a Supreme Court judgement, the judge added that the woman is entitled to the right of residing in the house only if her husband owns the property or has a share in it.
- Employers will be liable to a fine of Rs. 50,000/- for failing to implement the provisions of the law dealing with sexual harassment of women at workplace.
- In a special drive to ensure women safety, all district DCPs have been directed to deploy personnel in civvies as well as uniforms at major bus stands, on chartered buses, outside girls' schools and colleges and in poorly lit areas. A daily report will be submitted by the teams to their respective SHOs.
- The Satrol Khap Panchayat has decided to socially boycott persons involved in honour killing, rape and female foeticide cases in its jurisdiction of 42 villages. The committee adopted a resolution stating that it would ban the "hooka pani" of the accused persons and they would not be allowed to take part in any meeting or function.
- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has directed several listed companies to appoint women Directors on their Boards by 1st April, 2015. Over 250 companies, at the last moment, have appointed women Directors to meet the SEBI deadlines and the numbers are expected to rise.
- After discouraging illegal practice of sex determination by sonography centres, the Rajasthan government is now targeting parents, who approach these centres for determining the sex of the unborn child. Any one, who approaches sonography centres to determine the sex of the foetus, will be held under the PCPNDT Act.

### Complaints Received by NCW in writing and online in February, 2015

Month February, 2015	Opening balance (Pending of previous month)	Complaints received	Number of complaints on which action taken	Complaints pending for action
In writing	NIL	1027	1027	NIL
Online	NIL	170	170	NIL
Cases closed	In writing - 105	Online - 35		

❖ Member Hemlata Kheria attended a programme organized by NCW in collaboration with Social Development Foundation on "Listening to the Voices of Women from Marginalized Communities Engaged in Manual Scavenging" at Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. Speaking on the occasion, the Member said that for the first time NCW has taken up this issue of manual scavenging, which is prohibited by law.

● Ms. Kheria participated in a programme on the occasion of International Women's Day on "Women Safety" organized by Bhagidari Jan Sahyog Samiti in collaboration with Human Foundation, Prabhav Foundation and Pragati Path Foundation in New Delhi. The Member spoke about women's safety in public and private spheres as well as increasing violence against women.

❖ The Jabalpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry organized a felicitation programme for women entrepreneurs at Jabalpur for excelling in different fields. Speaking on the occasion, NCW Member Shamina Shafiq, who was the Chief Guest, appreciated the programme and said that the time has come when women should think of self employment, as women have more strength and capacity to manage their business and enterprise as well as their family at the same time. IG Women Cell, Pragya Richa Shrivastava emphasized the need for positive and supportive atmosphere for women in business.



Member Hemlata Kheria (centre) at the programme on Manual Scavenging



Member Shamina Shafiq at the felicitation programme

## Profile in Courage

A rape survivor showed exemplary courage not only by going against the diktat of community elders to marry the accused but forced the police to arrest him on the day of the wedding. The elders from both sides tried to legalize the offence by marrying the girl with the accused but the accused refused to marry her and the girl lodged an FIR against him. However, negotiations continued and under pressure from the police and the community, the accused agreed to marry the girl. Without the knowledge of the girl, a date was fixed for the wedding. As the groom side was preparing for *Baraat*, the girl called the police and refused to marry the rapist. Police had no option but to arrest him as an FIR was already pending. We salute the courage of the girl, who has set an example for others to follow.

## Women to work in night shifts in shops in Punjab

Giving more employment opportunities to women, the Punjab Government has allowed women to work in night shifts in shops and commercial establishments in the state with the proviso that strict conditions will be enforced to ensure their safety during nights. This move is expected to benefit the information technology sector which operates call centres, shopping malls, multiplexes and other such establishments, which work during the night hours. Incidentally, Punjab had already allowed women to work in factories during night shifts.

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