



Editor's Column

The entire country was shocked and outraged at the words of advice given to a distraught father, when he came with a complaint to the DIG of police, Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh stating that his minor daughter was suspected to have eloped or had been abducted. Instead of acting against the criminal, the DIG was caught in camera, telling the father, "If your daughter had eloped, you should be ashamed and end your life.....I would have killed my sister if she had eloped or would have committed suicide".

Coming from a senior police officer, who is expected to uphold the rule of law, more so in a state that has one of the worst records of honour killings, this kind of shocking suggestion is unpardonable. His outrageous

remarks show, how to many it is perfectly legitimate to murder a woman if she defies the "diktat" of the family or compromises with the so called "honour" of the family. Instead of trying to rescue the girl and seeing to it that she comes to no harm, the police officer advocated greater violence against

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In sensitive
Police

her. The National Commission for Women has asked for suspension of the police officer.

This type of medieval attitude surely proves that education and socio-economic status do not change the patriarchal mindset. The treatment of women as persona-non-grata begins before birth and is perpetuated throughout their

lives. From the very beginning of her life, a woman is subjected to all kinds of deprivation with regard to food, healthcare, education etc.

Though, in India, there is no dearth of good women-related laws which protect the rights of women from birth onwards, yet the implementation process has always been below par. Unless, the laws protecting women are implemented vigorously, police officers like the DIG would continue to trample on the basic human rights of women. It is only the fear of being stringently punished that will deter those, who fail to protect the rights of women. The DIG must be severely pulled up for his insensitive conduct, which would also signal that however high or mighty, nobody is above the law.

Programme attended by Chairperson

The Chairperson attended a seminar on status of women in present day society, organized by Gitanjali Welfare Educational Samity at Ghaziabad.

Speaking on the occasion, Ms. Sharma said that no society can develop unless men show proper respect for women. She said that if the women-related laws were properly implemented, crimes against women would drop by 50 percent. She also said that if female foeticide continues in the country, then nearly 2 crore young men would not get brides for themselves. Later, she released a book entitled "Mahila Mission Eek Pahal" in which phone numbers of local police stations as well as rules regarding dowry, domestic violence etc., were mentioned.



Chairperson Ms. Mamta Sharma addressing the gathering at the workshop

NCW launches Toll Free Helpline

The National Commission for Women recently launched a 24x7 toll free helpline (1800 233 22222) for women in distress at Ahmedabad in Gujarat. It was inaugurated by Dr. Smt. Kamla Beniwalji, Governor of Gujarat.

Speaking on the occasion, the NCW Chairperson Ms. Mamta Sharma said that the helpline was being launched on a pilot basis first in Gujarat and Haryana and then the model may be replicated across India. She also informed the audience that NCW was launching 'Mahila Adhikar Abhiyan' in four states - Kerala, Rajasthan,



At the launch of helpline (from left) Member Charu WaliKhanna, Dr. Smt. Kamla Beniwal, Ms. Mamta Sharma, Ms. Leelaben Anokoliya

Uttarakhand and Punjab with a view to creating awareness among rural women on their legal rights. NCW Member Dr. Charu WaliKhanna, who accompanied the Chairperson, stressed the need to help women in distress to lead a violence-free life.

NCW team visits Dahod

After NCW took suo motu cognizance of an incident in which Dahod MP Ms. Prabha Taviad was manhandled by the police, a three-member team, led by NCW Member Ms. Nirmala Samant Prabhavalkar visited Dahod in Gujarat to enquire into the incident.

Ms. Prabhavalkar said that the video clippings of the incident clearly showed that the police had used force against the MP while detaining her during the Gujarat Day celebrations.

The NCW had submitted a list of 15 questions to the Gujarat police and sought a reply within a few days.

Important Decision

Haryana Govt. has announced a cash prize of ₹ 21,000 for those providing information about doctors or radiologists - conducting sex-determination tests through ultrasound machines in the state. The information can be given on phone number 102.

Making a Difference

Consistent efforts and resistance of Lakshmi, 18, resulted in an annulment of her marriage performed in Rajasthan, when she was a child.

Taking a brave stand, she forced the caste elders to accept her rejection of the "so called wedlock". An NGO Saarthi Trust, claimed that this was the first time in the region when a girl came out in such a way against child marriage. Later, Laskhmi and Rakesh signed an affidavit declaring their child marriage was null and void.

Do you know?

According to Delhi Police figures, only 18% cases registered under dowry death charges end up in conviction. Of the 413 cases registered during 2008-10, only 207 people in 75 cases were convicted, though according to police statistics 1 dowry death is reported in every third day in the city.

Members' visits

● NCW member Dr. Charu WaliKhanna was the Chief Guest at a programme on “Female Foeticide – Sin and Curse.” The function was organized by Vidhi Bharati Parishad in collaboration with Delhi Medical Association and Unnayan in New Delhi.

Addressing the participants, mainly doctors, she said that a doctor’s duty was to give life and not take life. She said that though sex determination and selective elimination of foetus was rampant in the country, yet the conviction rate was abysmally low; therefore, the guilty should be severely punished, she added. Later, a book titled “Itihas Banata Samaj” was released on the occasion.

Dr. Charu WaliKhanna was also the Chief Guest at “UP State Consultation – Implementation of the PCPNDT Act”, organized by Plan India and World Vision India and Exchange for Gender Community at Lucknow. Later, Members Dr. Charu WaliKhanna and Shamina Shafique met women from the Muslim community and listened to their problems. They also discussed compulsory registration of marriage and need for codification of Islamic law, among others.



Dr. Charu WaliKhanna (third from left) at the seminar

● Member Hemlata Kheria was the Chief Guest at Northern Regional Workshop on “Strategizing Advocacy for effective implementation of women-friendly laws”, organized by NCW and Women Power Connect in collaboration with HNYKS at Chandigarh.

Inaugurating the workshop, Ms. Kheria said that there were plenty of women-friendly laws but little awareness and knowledge about different provisions of the law at the grass-root level; even when women are aware about the law they do not register complaint for fear of antagonizing their family. Ms. Kheria said that there was an urgent need to take steps to make laws accessible to women, ensuring their effective implementation.



Member Hemlata Kheria (third from left) at the workshop

About 80 representatives from government agencies, legal bodies, NGOs, drawn across Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir participated in the workshop.

● Member Wansuk Syiem visited Darjeeling Correctional Home in West Bengal, which comprised 87 inmates, out of which 6 were women.

She observed that there were no vocational training facilities available at the home. She suggested that sewing and weaving machines should be provided to female inmates so that they can engage themselves with fruitful activities. She also recommended setting up a five-bedded hospital with a medical officer.

Later, Ms. Syiem visited the Kurseong District jail and observed that the jail was spacious and clean with 23 male and 3 women prisoners.

The Member recommended that since there were no vocational training for women, they should be provided with sewing and weaving machines so that they can spend their time profitably.

● NCW Member Nirmala Samant Prabhavalkar recently visited the State of Goa. During her two-day visit, she met the Chief Minister, Shri Manohar Parrikar and held meetings with Secretary and Director (WCD) as well as the Jail Superintendent of Women Prison at SADA.

During discussion with the Chief Minister, she stressed upon the need for constructing ladies' toilets and changing rooms on all prominent beaches of Goa. She said that the female-run Massage Parlours as well as tourism-related crimes towards women and minors need to be monitored to avoid any sexual exploitation of female workers. She invited the attention of the Chief Minister to strengthen the Women Commission of Goa so that the Commission could effectively redress the grievances of women. The Chief Minister appreciated the efforts of NCW and promised to look into the issues mentioned in the memorandum submitted by the Member.



Member Prabhavalkar greeting the Chief Minister as Goa Chairperson Ezilda Sateco looks on

Later, Ms. Prabhavalkar visited women's jail at Sada and met the undertrials and convict female prisoners and promised them to take up their issues to the concerned authorities for speedy trials and rehabilitation as per court order.

Mandatory marriage registration soon

Registration of marriages will soon become mandatory in Delhi and couples who fail to do so within 60 days of tying the knot will have to pay a fine of ₹ 10,000. The Bill is being brought with an aim to prevent child marriage, check bigamy or polygamy, enable widows to claim right on property and to ensure that deserted women get their rights like financial help and custody of children from their estranged husbands. All the marriages solemnised in Delhi or marriages solemnised out of Delhi, involving a person who normally resides in Delhi, will come under the purview of the proposed legislation.

The Bill also seeks to make registration of marriages a simple and hassle-free process as presence of either the husband or wife at the designated offices will be enough for it. In special circumstances, a couple may even authorise their parents for registration of their marriages, provided documentation of the paper work is in order.

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