



Editor's Column

Violence against women is a fundamental violation of human rights, across nations, societies, cultures and classes and impacts women physically and mentally, hindering gender equality. Though human rights guaranteed by the Indian Constitution are inalienable and non-negotiable, yet, gender violence is still rampant in the Indian society.

Since there had been no specific laws in India to deal with prevention of sexual harassment in work place, the Supreme Court of India, in the case of Vishakha and others vs. State of Rajasthan, passed directions and laid down preventive measures and mechanism for redressal in the form of guidelines. Following this direction, NCW formulated a comprehensive legislation to deal with sexual harassment at work place. The Bill was revised and

redrafted after extensive consultations. The final draft bill "Prohibition of Sexual harassment of Women at Workplace Bill 2010", was sent to the Ministry on 12th February, 2010. The Ministry tabled the Bill and further amendments were made at the level of the Ministry as "Protection of Women against Sexual Harassment at Work Place Bill 2010". In the NCW draft Bill, inclusion of "domestic

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Sexual Harassment Bill

workers" in the definition of "employee" had been proposed and "workplace" included a "house" or a "dwelling place".

The President, Shri Pranab Mukherjee on 22nd April, 2013 gave consent to the Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Bill, 2012, which was earlier passed by both houses of Parliament. The new

legislation has brought domestic workers within the ambit of the law.

The Bill entails that every employer of a workplace shall constitute a committee to be known as the Internal Complaints Committee and an aggrieved woman may make a complaint of sexual harassment to the committee and the enquiry should be completed within a period of 90 days, failing which, a penalty will be imposed.

The Bill also provides protection to women of any age in public and private sectors, organized and unorganized sectors, to domestic workers employed in dwelling places and houses. In case of physical contact and advance, demand or request for sexual favour, making sexually coloured remarks or showing pornography etc., women can lodge complaints as per the Bill for redressal of their grievances.

Enquiries Undertaken by NCW

- Dr. Charu WaliKhanna as Chairperson of an enquiry committee enquired into the "Mysterious death of Ayurvedic Doctor" at Malatipur in Puri, Odisha.
- Dr. WaliKhanna as Chairperson of an enquiry committee enquired into a report - "Tribal Women paraded naked in Odisha for witchcraft" at Amapada village in Sundergarh Distt., Odisha.

Important Decisions

- ❖ The Mumbai High Court has asked a Mumbai resident to pay more maintenance to his estranged wife as he has got a salary hike. The Court said "since the income of the husband has increased from 2 lakh to 3 lakh, consequently, it would be appropriate if the maintenance amount payable to the wife is increased proportionately".
- ❖ The Mumbai High Court has ruled that a widowed woman has a right to be maintained by her father-in-law after her husband's death. The Court held that the widow had the one-third right in the flat which was purchased by her husband. Since her husband would have inherited a part of the property of his father after the latter's death, she had a right to half of such property; the other half would go to the widow's daughter.

NCW signs MOU with HUDCO

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the National Commission for Women and HUDCO, whereby, the two organizations will utilize their respective strengths to improve the living conditions of destitute women and upgrade facilities like women's hostels, remand homes and wherever women are in custody. As per the agreement, the NCW will identify areas, where projects need to be undertaken and HUDCO will provide financial assistance along with technical support and design.



NCW Member Secretary Ms. K. Ratna Prabha and CMD HUDCO Shri V.P. Baligar signing the MOU in the presence of Union Minister Shri Ajay Maken, WCD Minister Smt. Kristina Tirath, NCW Chairperson Mamta Sharma and NCW Member Nirmala Samant Probhavalkar.

Girls' shelter homes to be monitored

● In the wake of a case in Jaipur, in which five deaf and mute girls were allegedly raped and beaten by the staff of Awaaz Foundation, an NGO, the Chairperson told reporters that she would write to the Directors General of all States to initiate an enquiry into the functioning of shelter homes for girls in the country and to keep a constant vigil over their working.

● The Chairperson Mamta Sharma addressed a National Level Seminar organized by an NGO in collaboration with NCW on "Gender Sensitization of Teachers and College Students for Effective Social Change" at Lucknow. Speaking on the occasion, she said teachers and students should be gender sensitized in order to combat gender violence and work for gender equality. Member Shamina Shafiq also spoke on the occasion.

● NCW Chairperson Ms. Mamta Sharma was the Chief Guest at a National Workshop on "Gender Sensitization", organized by CISF in New Delhi.

● The Chairperson visited Alwar and held discussions with the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police on atrocities and crimes committed against women.



The Chairperson is lighting the lamp. Member Ms. Shamina Shafiq is on her Right.

NCW Initiative

On 10th May, Member Hemlata Kheria inaugurated a new female ward in Chittorgarh jail, in Rajasthan. Earlier, when she visited the jail, she found the women inmates were housed in two small rooms, which also included the toilet. She strongly recommended that renovation of the female ward should be done on priority basis so that female inmates were not inconvenienced further. She was happy to see gleams of satisfaction in the faces of female inmates. She specially applauded Shri Ashok Upadhyaya, Deputy Jail Superintendent, who had taken keen interest in upgrading the female ward. It was due to his initiative and concern for the inmates that the female ward was renovated within just two months.



Ms. Hemlata Kheria inaugurated the women ward. The District Judge and the Superintendent of jail look on

Building confidence between police and public

In view of shocking incidences of rape and sexual violence against women and young girls in the capital, a series of special and emergency meetings had been convened by the National Commission by Women under the aegis of its newly constituted Special Study Expert Committee and the Special Task force on Rape, Trafficking and Violence Against Women, to study the vulnerabilities and protection frameworks, as well as to build confidence in police-public relationship. In the consultation on building confidence between police and public held in New Delhi recently, two representatives of 180 police stations in Delhi and 20 representatives from crimes against women cell as well as from armed battalions had participated.

In her welcome address, Ms. Sreerupa Mitra Chaudhury explained the necessity of registering every FIR lodged by women complainants and reiterated that the police cannot take law into their hands as was evident in the case of rape of a 5-year-old girl recently.

Speaking on the occasion, NCW Chairperson Mamta Sharma said that NCW would frequently hold such type of consultations in every State divisional headquarters. She said the need of the hour was timely filing of FIR, pursuing the case in a fast-track court within a time-frame and increasing the strength of police in every police thana as well as the number of women police personnel.

Member Advocate Nirmala Samant Prabhavalkar said that sensitization of police was very important because 80 percent of the complaints which are reported to the police stations are of domestic violence and marital discord. Others who spoke on the occasion, included NCW Members Ms. Shamina Shafiq, Ms. Hemlata Kheria, Dr. Charu WaliKhanna, and Mr. Sankar Sen and Mr. Markand Pratap Singh.

NCW's Special Study Expert Committee and Special Task Force also held another consultation with the Northern Railways on Gender Sensitization Initiative, since the Indian Railways is the largest government wing servicing wide ranging socio-economic groups of women, families and children from across the country.



NCW Chairperson along with Members and other speakers

National Conference on Dalit Women

A national conference on Dalit women was organized by NCW in New Delhi and was inaugurated by WCD Minister Smt. Krishna Tirath and Shri P.L. Punia, Chairperson, National Commission for Scheduled Castes.

Welcoming the gathering, Member Hemlata Kheria emphasized on the apathy and discrimination faced by Dalit women at every level – from access to education, health care, land rights, water and sanitation and political participation. Quoting Babasaheb Ambedkar, she said that such discriminations weaken the nation's integrity.

NCW Chairperson, Ms. Mamta Sharma, in her address emphasized the need for special attention on the issues of Dalit women and reinforced the Commissions commitment for their empowerment.

Shri P.L. Punia, stressed that crimes and atrocities committed against Dalit women were increasing, specially in states like UP and Madhya Pradesh and suggested sensitization of the judiciary, the police and administrative machinery to address the problems.

Delivering the inaugural address, WCD Minister Smt. Krishna Tirath said that the government was making every effort to bring Dalit women into the mainstream so that they could live with dignity and self-respect. She said that the government was thinking of setting up "one stop crises centre" to provide all necessary support to Dalit women.

The conference was also addressed by Dalit women leaders, academicians and social activists, who spoke on issues and practices that hinder Dalit women's progress and empowerment.



Member Hemlata Kheria presenting a memento to Ms. Krishna Tirath, as Member Shamina Shafiq, Shri P.L. Punia, Member Dr. Charu WaliKhanna and Member Secretary Ms. K. Rama Prabha look on

Members' Visits

◆ Dr. Charu WaliKhanna participated in a programme on Disseminations of Findings of a Joint United Nations Study on Social Protection Floor for India in New Delhi.

● Dr. WaliKhanna visited Chandigarh and held discussions with the Punjab State Commission for Women. Later, she was Guest of Honour at Dalit Chintan Sabha. ● Dr. WaliKhanna inspected the model central jail at Kanda in Shimla and had a meeting with the Superintendent of Jail, officials and female inmates. On 26th April, she attended a special emergency meeting with Delhi police. ● Dr. WaliKhanna was the Chief Guest at Gender Sensitization programme organized by SJVN Limited in New Delhi on 9th May. ● The Member met the Home Minister Shri S.K. Shinde to discuss Guidelines for Service Providers in case of Violence Against Women especially Rape/Sexual Assault for Police, Medical Professionals, Prosecution, Courts, Social Workers, Counsellors and the Media etc. and presented a copy of the same. Later, she met Km. Shefja,

Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment to discuss caste related violence against women. ● The Member was the Chief Guest at "Crimes Against Women: Precautions & Actions" organized by GK-II Welfare Association in New Delhi.

◆ On 3rd May 2013, Member Shamina Shafiq held discussions with Mr. Richard Burge, Chief Executive of Wilton Park Executive Agency of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on gender issues.

● The Member was the Chief Guest at Sarv Samaj Ekta Sammelan, organized at Tajpur, Simbalka, Shamli Distt. in U.P. ● Ms. Shafiq was the Chief Guest at a Legal Awareness Workshop for Minority women at Sakipur village, Greater Noida, UP. ● The Member inaugurated a free health check up camp for Minority women at Khairabad in U.P. ● The Member attended a symposium on "International Family Law Inc. International Parental Child Removal" in New Delhi, organised by Lord Justice Thorpe, head of international family justice for England and Wales in association with the British High Commission, New Delhi. ● The Member was the Chief Guest at the annual function of St. Mary's Convent School in Nainital and later held a meeting with various social workers of district Almora at Ranikhet.

● The Member attended a seminar on Domestic Violence at Bhimtal District, Nainital, inaugurated by the Governor of Uttarakhand Dr. Aziz Qureshi.

◆ Member Hemlata Kheria visited Mewar Girls' college at Chittorgarh and informed the students about their legal and social rights.

● Ms. Kheria also visited Kewalpura and Sangaria Gram Panchayats of Badisadri Sub-Divisions of Rajasthan and discussed with village women issues related to dowry, female foeticide, education for girl, availability of toilets and violence against women.

◆ NCW Member Adv. Nirmala Samant Prabhavalkar participated in a discussion on Prohibition of Indecent Portrayal of Women in the Media and the role of Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) in which CEO, CBFC and Ekta Kapoor were also present. Ms Prabhavalkar questioned the monitoring role of CBFC as films and advertisements keep on showing objectionable contents and item songs denigrating women.

● She participated in a programme of "Working Group on Human Rights" in New Delhi. She mentioned that NCW regularly visits women jails, mental homes, correctional centres as women rights are also human rights. ● On 3rd May, the Member attended the State Advisory Committee meeting on PCPNDT Act 1993, in Mumbai to improve the girls' ratio in the State and review the performance of the Advisory Board in preventing sex-selective abortions. ● She visited Masina Hospital to meet the acid attack victim Preeti Rathi, and offered financial and medical help. She also demanded a CBI probe and ban or regulation on sale of acid. Unfortunately, the girl succumbed to her injuries on 2nd June. ● The Member met the Vice-Chancellor of Mumbai University to discuss joint action plan for gender sensitization programmes with the students and NCW. ● She also met the National Boxing champion Ms. Manisha Chouhan, who was in ICU after a head injury and assured her all possible help for her rehabilitation and medical expenses.



Dr. Charu WaliKhanna addressing the gathering



Ms. Shamina Shafiq (left) with Governor Dr. Aziz Qureshi

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