



Editor's Column

NCW Chairperson Dr. Girija Vyas recently held a press conference at the Commission premises to apprise the media of the various initiatives taken by NCW to improve the lot of women.

The Chairperson said that after wide ranging consultation with concerned stakeholders, the NCW had proposed amendments to some of the provisions of the Sexual Assault Bill. She said that thereafter the Department of Legal Affairs prepared the Criminal Law Amendment Bill based on the Law Commission's recommendations and changes proposed by NCW, incorporating most of the views proposed in the draft bill of NCW.

Speaking about marital rape, Dr. Vyas said that the Commission had also been emphasising that exception to 375 of IPC should be deleted thereby bringing marital rape under the ambit of the crime of rape and the Commission had also recommended, in keeping with the commitment to CEDAW, that marital rape should be made an offence. The high powered committee chaired by the Home Secretary had given due consideration to this demand and the exception to Section 375 is proposed to be modified so that forcible sexual intercourse would be considered as an offence if imposed on a wife, who is less than 18 years of age. She said that NCW would

have preferred if no age limit was mentioned; however as a first step it was heartening that the age limit had been increased from 15 to 18, she added.

With regard to acid attacks, the Chairperson said that considering the gravity of the crime, the Commission had earlier drafted a bill titled "Prevention of Offences (By Acids) 2008". Subsequently, the Commission has also suggested a rehabilitation scheme and

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**Press Conference
of NCW
Chairperson**



accordingly, the Commission had formulated a scheme for relief and rehabilitation of offences (by Acid) on women and girls which is on the lines of the scheme relating to rape victims.

As per the direction of the Supreme Court to NCW "to wipe out the tears of the unfortunate victims of rape", Dr.

Vyas said that the Commission had sent a draft scheme to the Central Govt. earlier. The scheme was at a final stage and was expected to be implemented soon by the Govt.

While speaking about 'Honour Killings', Dr. Vyas said that the Commission was of the view that a separate legislation focussed on honour crimes was required to root out this practice and be covered under section 302/306 IPC. Accordingly, a draft Bill has been sent to the govt. on 18th August, 2010. The Bill deals with the issue of honour crimes and not just killings and recognises that all persons, including young persons and women have the right to control their own lives, having right to liberty and freedom of expression, movement and physical integrity.

While speaking on trafficking of women and children, which has reached alarming dimension, Dr. Vyas said that the Commission proposed to convene a Convention of SAARC countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka- the countries of origin, transit and destination) in November, 2010.

Finally, she said that to facilitate registration of complaints, the NCW was contemplating setting up of a toll free 24x7 call centre facility to promptly deal with cases of atrocity against women.

Dr. Girija Vyas Visits Paris

The Chairperson, NCW visited Paris from 8th to 12th October, 2010 to represent the Congress Party at the International Convention of the French Socialist Party. The main objective was to establish a

continuous dialogue between the Indian National Congress Party and the French Socialist Party leading to a fruitful partnership and working out a vision of common interest.



Dr. Girija Vyas addressing the Convention



Dr. Girija Vyas with other delegates

Chairperson Visits Kathmandu

Dr. Girija Vyas, Chairperson, National Commission for Women was invited to deliver a talk in Kathmandu on Non-Violence Day on 2nd October, to mark the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, a great crusader of non-violence and social transformation.

Later, she held a meeting with the women MPs of Nepal, members of the Nepal Women's Commission, representatives of women organisations, NGOs and activists, in which women empowerment strategies and projects of both the countries were discussed.



Dr. Girija Vyas (centre) at the non-violence conference in Nepal

Mining project payouts to go to women

The new mining legislation will make woman of the house chief beneficiary of the compensation for land acquired for mining project, as the government seeks to ensure that annuity payment to families affected by mining projects will be transferred into the account of female head of the family.

This is in sync with the government's attempt to empower women by giving them a bigger role in financial decision-making. According to Mines Ministry "Women are known to manage the household finances better than their male counterparts and can use the regular fund flow for the betterment of the entire family".

The Petroleum Ministry has also made 50% female ownership mandatory for any cooking gas dealership in rural India under the Rajiv Gandhi Gramin LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) Vitrak Yojana.

Seminar on Preventing Workplace Harassment

The Airports Authority of India (AAI), in pursuance of the landmark judgement of the Supreme Court of India regarding prevention and redressal of grievances relating to sexual harassment of women at workplace, has taken an initiative of putting in place the first ever policy amongst the PSUs. The first workshop, in the series of 50 workshops, was launched by Dr. Girija Vyas, Chairperson, National Commission for Women.

On this occasion, a book on Do's and Don'ts regarding code of conduct at the workplace brought out by the AAI's Women Welfare Association, Kalyanmayee, was also released.

Dr. Vyas said it was a matter of pride for AAI that no complaint has ever been received by the NCW about harassment of women employees in AAI.



Dr. Girija Vyas (centre) releasing the book on Code of Conduct

Hindi fortnight held at NCW

As a part of Hindi fortnight from 14.9.2010 to 28.9.2010, the National Commission for Women conducted a competition for promoting Hindi language in day-to-day work. The different categories under which various competitions were held included essay writing, noting & drafting, grammar and quiz. The Chairperson, distributed prizes to the winners at the Conference Room of NCW.



Shri K.K. Das and Shri Atul Sinha receiving the 1st and 2nd prize respectively. Among other winners were Shri V.K. Asthana, Shri V. Chidambaram

● **HC links maintenance to spouse's family income**

The Bombay high court has ruled that the joint family finances of a man can be considered while determining the quantum of maintenance to be paid to his estranged wife.

Hiking eight-fold the maintenance amount, the court directed a businessman to pay his estranged wife and their minor daughter Rs. 20,000 a month from Rs. 2,500. A division bench said, "Considering the lifestyle of the family, it would necessarily follow that the income of the husband was substantial". The judges added, "the husband has substantive income and considering the holdings of the joint family, he is capable of paying the monthly maintenance to the wife and the minor daughter". The court also directed the husband to pay an additional Rs. 10,000 to his wife towards legal costs.

● **Divorce can't be purchased : SC**

The Supreme Court has ruled that divorce cannot be purchased by a spouse by paying a lumpsum amount to the other party and said courts cannot pass any decree in violation of the Hindu Marriages Act.

"A Hindu marriage can be dissolved only on any of the grounds plainly and clearly enumerated under section 13 of the Hindu Marriage Act. The law does not permit the purchase of a decree of divorce for consideration, with or without the consent of the other side", a bench of Justices Aftab Alam and R.M. Lodha said in a judgement.

The apex court passed the judgement while upholding the appeal filed by a woman challenging a Calcutta High Court judgement which had granted divorce to her husband.

● **Can't call pregnant woman to court**

A woman in an advanced stage of pregnancy cannot be forced to appear in a court, a Delhi court has said. A court issued this directive while expressing displeasure over a lower court judge not exempting a six-month

pregnant woman from personally appearing in criminal proceedings.

● **Women to serve liquor at 21 years**

Women in Delhi can now serve liquor in bars and pubs. The Delhi government enacted a new act- Delhi Excise Act, 2010 - that allows women to work in bars and pubs and serve liquor to customers.

The new act has also lowered the minimum age to serve liquor in bars from 25 years to 21 years. But the minimum age to consume liquor continues to be 25.

WELL DONE GIRLS!

The National Commission for Women congratulates all women medal winners (Deepika Kumari, Dola Banerjee, Bombayala Devi, Gagandeep Kaur, Bheigyabati Chanu, Jhanu Hansda, A. C. Ashwini, Manjeet Kaur, Mandeep Kaur, Sini Jose, Krishna Poonia, Harwant Kaur, Prajusha Maliakkal, Seema Antil, S. Geetha, Srabani Nanda, P.K. Priya, H.M. Jyothi, Kavita Raut, Saina Nehwal, Jwala Gutta, Ashwini Ponnappa, Heena Sidhu, Anuraj Singh, Anisa Sayyed, Rahi Sarnobat, Tejaswani Sawant, Lajja Gauswami, Suma Shirur, Kavita Yadav, Meena Kumari, Poulomi Ghatak, Mouma Das, Shamini Kumaresan, Madhurika Patkar, Mamta Prabhu, Sania Mirza, Rushmi Chakravarthi, Renu Bala Chanu, Soniya Chanu, Rani Devi Sandhya, Monika Devi Laishram, Anita, Geeta, Alka Tomar, Nirmala Devi, Babita Kumari, Suman Kundu) for their outstanding performance in the Commonwealth Games-2010.

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