



## Editor's Column

In a recent directive, the Central Government has urged all state governments to provide 33% reservation for women in their police forces to effectively deal with cases of sexual violence and crime against women. However, employment of women in the police force is still viewed with skepticism and disfavour. Many senior DGs and senior police officers had opined that recruitment of women in the police would be unwise because they are not suited to the tough requirement of the job.

But with changes in social conditions, increasing involvement of women in crime either as accused or victim, growing juvenile delinquency and domestic violence necessitated employment of women in greater numbers in the police though their numbers still remain very low.

In India, women constitute only 5.3% of India's police forces, whereas in South Africa, women police officers comprise 29% of the force, 14% in the USA, almost 13% in Australia and 18% in Canada.

International research has exploded the myth that women are unsuitable for

police jobs. On the contrary, it has been proved that women officers use less physical force, are better in defusing violent confrontation with the public and are less involved in the use of excessive force. They possess better communication skills and are able to elicit public cooperation and trust.

## FOCUS

### Women in the Police Force

Though representation of women in the police continues to be low but their number will increase if the environment within the organization is congenial and women-friendly; very often it is not so. At present, women police officers are not given core police functions and are allotted inconsequential jobs. Instead of confining their roles to soft desk jobs and investigation of cases of dowry death, rape and harassment only, women police officers should be assigned other important general duties. It has been found that women officers in-charge of districts, sub-divisions and zones have acquitted themselves very creditably. India's contingent of women

police officers to Liberia to assist the United Nation Peace Keeping Operations was a correct move which sent a message to many countries about the need for women police officers.

It is true that police women are often confronted with lack of appreciation from their male counterparts, who also consider women unreliable for tough assignments. They face not only verbal but also physical harassment. The common response of women employees to sexual harassment is either to ignore the harassment or avoid the situation in which such harassment occurs. Often, the victims are reluctant to make formal complaints as they hold less powerful positions than the harassers and fear retaliation. Strangely, even women police officers ostracize colleagues, who complain of harassment.

However, all these issues can be resolved if women officers attain professional excellence that would automatically change gender stereotypes and make them important players in decision-making, career planning and management in the police.

## Ms. Lalitha Kumaramangalam, NCW's New Chairperson

Ms. Lalitha Kumaramangalam took over as the Chairperson of the National Commission for Women w.e.f. 29th September, 2014. Belonging to an illustrious political family, comprising of Parliament, Ms. Kumaramangalam is a prominent relentlessly for decades for the empowerment and under-privileged sections of society. She has AIDS prevention and worked with dis-workers, the LGBT community, migrant and women. Her varied experiences as a political leadership to the cause of women's

Extensively travelled in India and abroad, Ms. Business Administration from the Madras Economics from St. Stephens College, Delhi. A Hindi, English, Tamil and Bengali.

We welcome Ms. Lalitha Kumaramangalam to the



Governor, Cabinet Ministers, Army General and Members political leader in her own right, who has been working advancement of women belonging to the vulnerable worked on issues dealing with healthcare, HIV/empowered communities like truckers, sex-construction workers, SHGs and urban slum and social activist will help to provide dynamic empowerment.

Kumaramangalam holds a Masters Degree in University and graduated with honours in versatile linguist, she can converse fluently in

Commission and wish her a very successful tenure.

## Conference on Trafficking of Women and Girl Child

The National Commission for Women in collaboration with Assam State Commission for Women and UNICEF organized a two-day regional conference on addressing trafficking of women and children in the North Eastern states. The seminar discussed the present situation of trafficking in the region, identifying the challenges faced by the agencies in prevention, rescue and rehabilitation of the victims and forming a network of agencies to improve coordination to curb the crime.

Speaking on the occasion, NCW Member Laldingliani Sailo said “non-brothel prostitution” is becoming a matter of serious concern and women living along the international borders are most vulnerable to cross-border flesh-trade racket. Organisations like Naga Mothers Association, Meira Paibies of Manipur, Young Mizo Associations etc. must be mobilized to combat human trafficking at the grassroot level.

She said that socio-economic factors, natural disasters, organ trade etc. are also responsible for women being trafficked. She mentioned that NCW has taken initiative to combat trafficking by preparing a plan of action in collaboration with NHRC, NHA, WCD, UNICEF and UNIFEM.

On the second day, the discussion was focused on “Commonalities and peculiarities” of eight North East states and on finding solutions to the challenges of human trafficking.

Later, Member Sailo interacted with the Addl. DGP of Assam, ADG Doordarshan (North East) and Commissioner and Secretary Social Welfare, Government of Assam.



Member Sailo addressing the conference. (Below) Ms. Meera Baruah, CP, Assam Commission for Women, Shri Jitesh Khosla, Chief Secretary, Assam, Shri Akon Bora, Minister, Social Welfare and Jails and Ms. Sailo releasing the book “Crimes Against Women & Legal Provisions”

## One Stop Crisis Centre (OSCC)

Victims of sexual assault can now avail of medical and legal assistance under a single roof. The first One-Stop-Crisis-Centre (OSCC) has been set-up at Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital in Mangolpuri with the objective of providing immediate help to rape victims in terms of medical facilities, registration of FIR and psychological support. The other hospitals to have OSCC are – Deen Dayal Upadhaya Hospital in Hari Nagar, and Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital at Dilshad Garden in east Delhi.

Incidentally, India’s first One Stop Crisis Centre, was launched by Madhya Pradesh’s Department of Health and Family Welfare on 16th June, 2014, at Bhopal, to provide instant assistance to women, who had been victims of violence, dowry harassment, molestation, rape, etc.

## Important Decisions

- In a landmark ruling, the Supreme Court has ordered that the police should not arrest a person mechanically after registration of dowry harassment cases before seeking authorization from a Magistrate. The court said the police would record reasons before arresting a person like the possibility of his/her absconding from law or committing repeat offences and seek authorization from the Magistrate, who would also record his or her satisfaction for the purpose. The court said, that no arrest can be made in a routine manner on a mere allegation of commission of an offence made against a person. The rule would also apply in all cases relating to offences, where the punishment was up to 7 years imprisonment.
- WCD Minister Smt. Maneka Gandhi has said legal action will be taken against organizations, which do not have internal complaint committees to address sexual harassment at workplace.
- A family court in Mumbai has ruled that objecting to wife wearing kurta and jeans and forcing her to wear sari amounts to cruelty inflicted by the husband and can be a ground for seeking divorce.

## Seminar on Social Inclusion of Women

The National Commission for Women in collaboration with National Foundation for Communal Harmony, organized a seminar on “Promoting Peace and Harmony: Social Exclusion of Women of Minority Communities – Challenges and Remedies”, in New Delhi .

The seminar was organized to explore the status of women in different communities, particularly, the minorities, in terms of their social exclusion and deprivation.

In his welcome address, Ambassador Ashok Sajjanhar, Secretary, National Foundation for Communal Harmony said that social inclusion of women of minority communities will be possible only when we change the mindset of the society and implement the laws made for women.

Mr. D.R. Kaarthekeyan, President, Foundation for Peace and Harmony called for equal status for women as most Muslim women are deprived of educational, legal, cultural and social rights, which lead to their social exclusion.

NCW Member Shamina Shafiq said that women belonging to minority communities are more vulnerable to social exclusion and discrimination and experience multiple level of violence due to poverty, low literacy and social



*Member Shamina Shafiq, Member Sailo, Mr. Kaarthekeyan, Member Kheria and Mr. AshokSajjanhar at the seminar on Promoting Peace and Harmony*

marginalization. Ms. Mohini Giri, former NCW Chairperson, emphasized on the need for implementing the recommendations emerging out of the seminar.

NCW Member Hemlata Kheria, chaired the session on the status of minority women and Member Laldingliani Sailo chaired the discussion on government and society’s initiatives to curb marginalization of women and improve their status in an inclusive society.

## Compensation for Crime Victims

As per Delhi High Court directive, from 21st August, 2014, victims of various crimes including rape, will get compensation awarded to them by the Delhi State Legal Services Authority (DSLISA) within 24 hours. The High Court has directed the Delhi Government to ensure that the mechanism and funds are in place.

A two-judge bench pulled up the Delhi Government for not having the Victim Compensation Fund (VCF) in place, though it was provided for under the Delhi Victim Compensation Scheme, notified in 2011. In the wake of this, the Delhi Government’s standing counsel has informed the Bench that the government will periodically transfer funds to DSLISA, which will be kept in the VCF account. The DSLISA, thereafter, would electronically transfer the amount of compensation to the victim within 24 hours of receiving the award from DSLISA.

## Members’ Visits

❖ Member Adv. Nirmala Samant Prabhavalkar inaugurated a para-legal training workshop organized by Mumbai District Legal Aid Authority Services and the law students of SNDT Women University. Addressing the law students, the Member reiterated the importance of para-legal volunteers and their role in counselling and mediation in cases of domestic violence and family laws.

● The Member conducted hearings of two cases transferred from NCW to Mumbai Commission for Women as the complainants and the respondents were from Mumbai. The hearing note was prepared and signed by all concerned persons. As the complainant’s daughter could not be present on the occasion, the matter has been kept pending and the police has been requested to produce



*Ms. Prabhavalkar addressing the para-legal workshop*

the girl before the committee of NCW. The other case pertained to the alleged molestation, stalking and professional medical misconduct by Dr. Vijay Sharma, regarding the breast implant done by him in his clinic. The complainant said the surgery had not been properly done and there was fear of breast cancer if the substandard material was not replaced. After intervention of NCW, Dr. Sharma accepted the responsibility and said he would pay the cost of the implant to the hospital which would do the surgery. ● The Member attended a conference on the role of elected women Municipal councillors for creating awareness of civic amenities like toilets and clean drinking water. ● Ms. Prabhavalkar visited the sub jail of Daman, where only one woman convicted for life imprisonment was kept in solitary confinement for the last 10 years. The Member immediately, contacted IG prison, Collector and Jail Superintendent and suggested that all facilities provided as per the jail manual should be given to her and she should also be provided vocational training. Alternately, the woman may be transferred, if she wishes, to other jails, where other female convicts are housed.



*Member Shamina Shafiq at Vocational Training Centre, Central Jail, Amritsar*

Member Shamina Shafiq organized a panel discussion in the conference room of NCW on “How information communication technology can be used to reduce gender inequality”. ● The Member visited the Amritsar District Jail and the report has been duly submitted to the Hon’ble Chairperson. ● Ms. Shafiq attended a programme on Trust and Peace organized by Brahmakumaris in New Delhi attended by Vice Chancellors, foreign dignitaries, ambassadors, among others. ● The Member attended Bandhua Mukti Morcha at Jantar Mantar and met the bonded labourers rescued from Jammu. ● She also attended a legal awareness programme organized by Bharatiya Manav Adhikar Morcha at Yamunanagar in Haryana. ● Later, she made a surprise visit to the Yamunanagar Jail and was dissatisfied with the medical facilities provided to the female inmates. ● Ms. Shafiq attended a meeting of the expert committee (Sub Committee of Sikhs and Jains) constituted by NCW at Jamia Millia Islamia, where issues relating to minority women were discussed. ● The Member was the guest of honour at a seminar on “Technological power of the women” organized by C.S. Azad University of Agriculture and Technology at Kanpur. ● Member Shafiq addressed the national seminar organized by the Institute of Charter Management Association in collaboration with NCW on surrogacy at the National Law University. ● The Member attended a panel discussion on gender health policy in New Delhi and raised the issue of mental health of women.

● Member Hemlata Kheria, attended an interactive programme between three generations to initiate and facilitate dialogues for women’s empowerment pioneered by Madhya Pradesh government in association with Madhya Pradesh Police at Jabalpur. The focus of the programme was on violence-free women in the society. ● Member Kheria was the Chief Guest at a state level seminar organized by Rastriya Mahila Sansthan in collaboration with NCW. The main issues of the seminar were social discrimination and caste-based atrocities on dalit women. ● The Member was the Chief Guest in a program entitled “Vishal Mahila Sammelan” organized by Kayastha Chetna Manch at Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh. The topics discussed included increasing violence against women in the society, constitutional rights of women and legal awareness.



*Member Kheria at the Madhya Pradesh Police interactive programme*

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

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