



National Commission for Women

PRESS NOTE

Smt. Rekha Sharma's visit to Karnataka

Bengaluru, 05.01.2019: A three-member Inquiry Committee from the National Commission for Women visited Karnataka on 04.01.2019 – 05.01.2019.

The Inquiry Committee, led by Smt. Rekha Sharma, was constituted to look into the recent incident in which 52 bonded labourers, including 17 women, were rescued from a plantation near Savankanahalli village in Hassan district, to inquire into the circumstances leading to the incident and the action taken thereafter by the concerned authorities.

As part of the inquiry, the Committee visited Hassan district on 04.01.2019 and met the concerned district officials including Deputy Commissioner, Superintendent of Police, Hassan District, Additional Superintendent of Police, Hassan District, Assistant Labour Commissioner, officials of WCD Department and Social Welfare Department, Tehsildar and Executive Officer of Hassan District. The Inquiry Committee also met two women, two children and four men who were rescued from the plantation to ascertain the facts and circumstances.

The key findings of the Inquiry Committee are:

1. No missing complaints were filed by the families of the labourers.
2. The men and women were beaten up on a regular basis.
3. Meals were provided only twice a day to the labourers; the first at 4 am in the morning and the second meal at 10 pm -11 pm.
4. Tobacco and alcohol were given to the labourers, including women and children, between meals to suppress their restlessness and the pain from the beating endured.
5. No proper medical tests for the women labourers were conducted after they were rescued.
6. It was also stated that a 13-year-old girl was found to be working on the plantation and many girls were not going to school.
7. The labourers were lured to the plantation with the promise of Rs. 800 per day for ginger picking.
8. The middlemen scouted for the labourers in railway stations.
9. Most of the rescued labourers were migrant workers in search of jobs.
10. Lack of employment opportunities and alternative source of income in the state.

Some of the recommendations and suggestions made by Committee are:

1. Open bank accounts for the rescued labourers
2. Ensure compensation amount for the labourers is released by the Centre
3. Provide rehabilitation including housing, vocational training, employment opportunities by State Government.
4. Police and Labour Departments need to be more vigilant in such matters
5. Women-related schemes need to be properly implemented and should not exist only on paper
6. Ensure employment schemes are properly implemented
7. Education Department to look into the matter of ensuring education for all girls in the State
8. Need for effective anti-tobacco campaigns and other measures to deter and reduce use of tobacco by men, women and children.

Smt. Rekha Sharma met the Chief Secretary, Home Secretary, Labour Secretary, Women & Development Secretary and Director General of Police on 05.01.2019 in Bengaluru to discuss the matter.

Smt. Sharma discussed four important cases from the Karnataka with the DGP and the Additional DGP was asked to appoint a Nodal Officer to avoid pendency of cases.