



# Rashtra Mahila

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## Editor's Column

Since 2012, 11th October is observed worldwide as the International Girl Child Day, with a view to promoting girls' rights and highlighting gender inequalities. The International Girl Child Day gives people and organizations the opportunity to raise public awareness of different types of discrimination and abuse that many girls around the world suffer from.

As far as India is concerned, it is well known that daughters are not preferred and India's inability to tackle this problem has led to a steep decline in the number of girls born per 1,000 boys from 909 during 2011-12 to 906 for the 2012-14 period. The findings of the 2014 Sample Registration System indicate sex selection is not limited to the Hindi heartland but is spreading to states such as Tamil Nadu, where the number has dropped to 921 from 927.

A new study conducted by a team of researchers in India and Canada found that for every 100 boys who died before attaining the age of five in 2012, there were 130 dead girls. The findings

support the age-wise data of the population in 2011, released by the census authorities recently that among children upto the age of fifteen, there are fewer girls than boys. As more and more girls die before they reach the marriageable age, the remaining faces the hazards of being trafficked, sold to prostitution, or sexually abused.

Even if a girl child is allowed to be born, discrimination and gender bias are evident from day one. She is denied

**FOCUS**

## International Girl Child Day

adequate nourishment and health care given to male siblings. As a result, girls grow up into adulthood weak and undernourished. After marriage, they give birth to under-weight babies, and most of them being denied post-natal care, remain weak and frail throughout their lives, prone to diseases and early death. There are cases of mothers, who dare not ensure survival of their girl children given the fact that the family will have to spend a hefty dowry when the girls get married.

While socio-economic conditions and lack of job opportunities for women – and not just gender discrimination, or patriarchy – might have contributed to the rejection of a girl child, the main problem stems from the fact that the states are unable to implement the Pre-conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques Act 1994 (PCPNDT Act), which bans sex determination tests to stop sex-selective abortions.

A recent report by the Comptroller & Auditor General of India states that the law is being poorly enforced due to lack of regular inspections, under-utilization of funds meant for implementation of the Act and failure to conduct sting operations.

The Prime Minister himself has declared time and again that society must value girls so that the skewed sex ratio can be corrected. However, neither economic development nor education has changed the preference for a male child. Unless there is a revolution in the societal mindset, a time will come when there will be no brides for our male heroes.

## Important Decisions

- The Centre will be opposing the practice of triple *Talaq* in the Supreme Court on the ground that women's rights are "inalienable" and the issue should not be seen from the perspective of Uniform Civil Code.
- A special court has said that a wife is entitled to seek maintenance only from her husband and is not liable to be maintained by her in-laws. The special judge made this observation in a domestic violence case while barring a married woman from entering her matrimonial house, noting that the property belonged to her mother-in-law, who had disowned her son.
- The Supreme Court has affirmed its 2014 order that husbands and in-laws should not be arrested mechanically in dowry harassment cases filed by wives but seek authorization from the magistrate before detention.

## Complaints received by NCW in September, 2016

Month	Complaints Received	Action Taken Reports received	Complaints Closed
September 2016	1027	613	613

NCW took suo-motu cognizance of 6 cases in September, 2016

## Seminar on Human Trafficking

The Indian Society of Victimology, University of Madras, organized a national seminar on human trafficking along with the International Justice Mission at the University of Madras in Chennai. The 2-day seminar was planned to educate academicians, students of social sciences, criminology, law, as well as representatives from the civil societies and the media on various aspects of human trafficking and laws and provisions in place to help curb trafficking.

Speaking at the valedictory session, NCW Chairperson said that most of the trafficked girls belong to poor and marginalized families and many have been tricked into this trade. Hence, there was need for rehabilitation and skill development for the rescued girls so that they and their families become economically self-reliant. She urged that various agencies working on this issue need to work together and there was also a need for a fluid and responsive system in place to address the issue of human trafficking.



*NCW Chairperson addressing the seminar*

## Consultation on Indecent Representation of Women

A consultation on Indecent Representation of Women Act 1986, was organised by NCW in New Delhi.

Welcoming the participants, NCW Joint Secretary Vandana Gupta gave a brief introduction of the Act and said that the objective of the consultation was to review the legislation with regard to overlapping of the Act with other existing legislations in order to synergise all aspects of the Act. The participants included Chairpersons and Members of the State Commissions, representatives from various Ministries, NGOs, the police, legal experts, the Media, etc.

Speaking on the occasion, NCW Chairperson Lalitha Kumaramangalam said that the Act, which was thirty years old required amendments to keep pace with the growth of internet and the social media. She said that in the recent times, women were increasingly depicted through advertisements as a commodity, with sexual overtones and hence, the electronic media should also be included within the ambit of the Act. The retrogressive and repressive portrayal of women in TV serials produce a detrimental effect on people, she added. She said a consensus must emerge between the media, the government and the administration to project decent portrayal of women, free from the mores of revengeful patriarchy.



*Inaugurating the consultation (from left) Ms. Lalitha Kumaramangalam, Member Rekha Sharma, Joint Secretary Vandana Gupta, Member Sushma Sahu*

## Jan Sunwai

- The National Commission for Women organized a "Mahila Jan Sunwai" in Panchkula, Haryana on 29-30th September, 2016. Member Rekha Sharma along with an NCW team attended the Sunwai conducted in collaboration with the District Police and the District Legal Services Authority. During the Sunwai, 50 cases were taken up and 46 cases were finally disposed of.
- The Commission organized a "Mahila Jan Sunwai" in South East District of Delhi on 21st September, 2016. Member Alok Rawat and an NCW team conducted the Sunwai in collaboration with the Delhi Police and the District Legal Services Authority. During the Sunwai, 50 cases were taken up.
- The Commission organized a "Mahila Jan Sunwai" in Police Lines, at Kanpur on 25-26th September, 2016. Member Sushma Sahu and an NCW team conducted the Sunwai with the support of Kanpur Police and the District Legal Services Authority.

## CEO Roundtable

Disha, a partnership between India Development Foundation, UNDP, and Xynteo, supported by IKEA Foundation, organised the second CEO roundtable in New Delhi with the object of evaluating with key partners and experts the progress made during the past one year since the project's launch.

The project is aimed at impacting one million underprivileged women by helping them to learn marketable skills and connecting them with sustainable income opportunities.

The panelists, comprising representatives from the government, private sector and training providers, discussed ways, challenges and rewards of scaling public-private partnerships in skilling with focus on making business models sustainable.



*NCW Chairperson addressing the conference*

## Consultation on National Creche Policy

The Commission had organised a consultation on the National Creche Policy on 4th October, 2016 in its Conference Hall. It was decided that an Expert Committee would be constituted to examine the reports of the consultation for providing suitable recommendations.

Later, the Chairperson inaugurated a creche in the Commission for the children of NCW staff.



*The Chairperson (left) inaugurating the Creche alongwith Members*

## From the Complaint Cell

- A woman lodged a complaint with NCW alleging that her brother was trying to deprive her of her share in the family business by having her declared mentally unfit. The Commission took up the matter with the Police Authorities seeking protection for her and requested the Government of Jharkhand (Department of Health) to medically examine the complainant. The reports of the Medical Board after the first and second examination of the complainant were examined by the Commission by conducting hearings with concerned officers and the doctor in charge. As per the Medical Board Report, the complainant is suffering from paranoid schizophrenia but can manage her day to day affairs. With the intervention of the Commission, the State Health Department took up the matter with the District Magistrate to take further action as per the Mental Health Act, 1987, to safeguard her interests, particularly, her shareholding in the family business, so that she could lead a life of dignity.
- A complaint of sexual harassment at workplace was taken up by the Commission as the complainant had alleged that the audio recordings of the proceedings of Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) meetings were deleted in violation of law. The Commission conducted hearings by calling the concerned officers and raised objections to the procedure adopted by it. The matter was further taken up with the Chairman, Railway Board and the Cabinet Secretariat.
- The Commission mediated in a complaint of marital discord. As both the parties did not wish to continue with the relationship in spite of counselling sessions conducted by the Commission, a compromise was arrived at between the parties that they would file divorce by mutual consent and the respondent husband would pay Rs. 45 lakhs to the complainant as a consolidated alimony. Both parties have filed first motion for divorce in the court of law.
- The Commission entertained a complaint wherein the complainant alleged that her services were terminated because of her pregnancy. The matter was taken up with the concerned organisation and with the intervention of the Commission, the organisation has reinstated the complainant and also assured to give her leave and benefits as per the Maternity Benefits Act, 1961.

## Members' Visits

❖ Attention of NCW was drawn towards the pitiable condition of women workers in the glass and bangle industry. To ascertain the actual position, Member Rekha Sharma along with Avni Bahri Jr. Technical Expert (Legal) visited Ferozabad to examine the working conditions of the female workers of such factories as well as those working in the household sector. ● Ms. Sharma along with Avni Bahri and Counsellor Neha Mahajan Gupta organized a 2-day Mahila Jansunwai at Panchkula in Haryana wherein a total of 50 cases were resolved by the Commission from the six districts of the State, namely Karnal,



*Member Rekha Sharma interacting with glass and bangle workers*

Kurukshetra, Kaithal, Ambala, Yamuna Nagar and Panchkula. ● Member Rekha Sharma visited the garment factories situated in Surat, Bharuch and Ahmedabad to examine the working conditions of female workers in these factories. She found the situation in which the women were working was deplorable as they were made to work for 8 to 12 hours in a standing position.

❖ NCW Member Secretary Preeti Madan visited Ranchi and held a meeting with the Principal Secretary, Panchayati Raj, Rural Development and Principal Secretary, Social Welfare, Women & Child Development to discuss implementation of capacity building of elected women representatives on the basis of the module developed by the National Commission for Women. ● Ms. Madan visited Hyderabad and held a meeting with DG, National Institute of Rural Development, regarding scaling up of capacity building project of elected women representatives. ● The Member Secretary accompanied by Jt. Secretary Vandana Gupta and Technical Advisor to Chairperson, Mridu Markan, visited Jaipur and held a meeting with the Principal Secretary, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj to discuss the capacity building modules for elected women representatives.

## For Your Attention

The National Commission for Women looks into complaints and takes suo motu cognizance on various issues related to deprivation/violation of women's rights.

*Complaints may relate to :*

- Domestic Violence
- Dowry
- Sexual Offences
- Refusal to register FIR by Police
- Gender Discrimination
- Sexual Harassment at Workplace, Cyber Crimes, etc.

*The Commission handles complaints through :*

- Investigation by concerned police and other authorities,
- Mediation and Counselling - for resolving family disputes,
- Inquiry Committees - to make on the spot inquiries for providing immediate relief and justice to the victim.

Complaints can be written and sent by hand or post or registered online (personally or on behalf of the aggrieved woman).

No. of the Complaint Cell : 011-26944880, 26944883, 26944884 ● Website : [www.ncw.nic.in](http://www.ncw.nic.in)

Complaints pertaining to respective States can be taken up with the State Commissions for Women. For contact details, refer to our website.

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