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e newsletter

Seminar on NRI Related Marriage Issues in Punjab

The National Commission for Women conducted a National Seminar on “NRI Marriage Related Issues in Punjab” on July 30, 2018 at Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Punjab. The objective of the seminar was to discuss the legal and socio-cultural aspects pertinent to the issue and deliberate upon the possible measures to deal with it. The Seminar was chaired by Ms. Rekha Sharma, Chairperson, National Commission for Women. Shri. Gobind Singh Longowal, Chairperson, SGPC graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Justice (Retd.) Rakesh Kumar Garg, Chairperson, Punjab State Commission for NRIs, Shri Ishwar Singh, ADGP, NRI Wing, Punjab Police, Shri Jaapinder Singh, Secretary DLSA, Jalandhar and Ms. Paramjeet Kaur Landran, Ex-Chairperson, Punjab State Commission for Women were among the dignitaries who attended the seminar.

Representatives of around 25 NGOs across the state and counsellors from all the Special Cells functional in Punjab

participated in the Seminar. Around 30 women affected by NRI marriage related issues attended the seminar along with their family members. Amongst others, it was noted that the women aggrieved in case of NRI marriages were finding it difficult to locate employment opportunities. Many civil society organizations participating in the seminar assured to provide/ locate employment opportunities for such women and also provide support for education of their children. The Seminar was attended by over 1200 participants.



Sexual Harassment at Workplace with special reference to Entertainment Industry

In the light of the recent developments and challenges relating to sexual harassment at workplace, including the ‘#MeToo’ movement, the National Commission for women organized a seminar on “Sexual Harassment at Workplace with Special Reference to the Entertainment Industry” at Film and Television Institute of India, Pune on July 14, 2018 to deliberate upon this issue. The focus of deliberations was on

entertainment industry in India, owing to the relative silence and lack of information from the industry regarding compliance with the Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. Diverse participant groups such as lawyers, academicians, journalists, filmmakers, representatives of the film and television production houses participated in the programme. The seminar, besides disseminating information on the subject, focused on examining the degree of implementation of the Sexual Harassment of Women (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) at Workplace Act, 2013 in the entertainment industry and discussed the steps required for enhancing awareness about the law.





Inspection of Jails/Psychiatric Homes

The National Commission for Women continued inspection of Jails and Custodial Homes as per its mandate during July, 2018. Brief recommendations/observations from the inspection undertaken during July 2018 are summarized below:

- A team led by Shri Alok Rawat, Member, NCW and assisted by Ms. Avni, JTE (Legal), inspected the Nagpur Central Prison (female wing) on July 11, 2018. The Inspection Team observed that: (i) Barracks were neat and clean but the windows were without wire mesh. (ii) Kitchen needed exhaust fans (iii) solar power could be utilized for cooking (iv) Non-vegetarian food was being made available to inmates on payment basis (v) Women inmates were provided with video calling facilities (vi) A sanitary Napkin vending machine was installed in the women barrack (vii) Training was being provided for in-house manufacturing of eco-friendly sanitary napkins (viii) special care was being taken of the children of inmates including provision of boiled and purified water for drinking, special utensils for feeding children, regular medical examination, etc.
- A team led by Shri Alok Rawat, Member, NCW and assisted by Ms. Nazia (JTE) inspected the Female Wing of the Central Jail, Thane, Maharashtra on July 25, 2018. The team observed: (i) overcrowding in the women barracks as there were 87 inmates in the prison against a sanctioned strength of 25. It was informed that a proposal for construction of a new women jail is under consideration (ii) Bathrooms were generally clean but a need was felt to construct more bathrooms to cater to the problem of over-crowding (iii) CNG gas pipeline was being used for cooking (iv) crèche facilities were available (v) NCW team suggested utilisation of services of interns/residents of nearby medical colleges for medical examination of inmates. (vi) The team also suggested that short-term skill development activities need to be organized for the under-trial inmates (vii) It was suggested that Solar Incinerators could be used for disposal of used sanitary napkins (viii) and meshing of doors and windows should be taken up for keeping vectors out of wards.



REGIONAL MENTAL HOSPITAL, NAGPUR

Shri Alok Rawat, Member NCW assisted by Ms. Avni (JTE) inspected the Regional Mental Hospital, Nagpur on July 12, 2018. The team observed that: (i) the medical facilities being made available were adequate and the general cleanliness of the hospital was of high order (ii) the women inmates were involved in cultivation of vegetables and multiple other skill development activities (iii) the hospital had a robust post-release rehabilitation plan wherein they had tie ups with high-end hotels where, the cured inmates would be employed for basic tasks, post training (iv) a unique feature of 'care-giver interaction program', was that the family members/relatives of inmates are sensitized regarding mentally ill patients (v) it was also noted that dance therapy was actively made use of by the hospital for treating patients (vi) shortage of female medical attendants and installation of exhaust fans in the kitchen was considered necessary.



The practice of Female Genital Mutilation prevalent amongst certain communities in Maharashtra and some other parts of the country is inhumane and barbarian and violates the integrity of Child's body and leaves a lifelong impact on their physical and psychological existence. Such a barbaric practice cannot be justified under any circumstances. The fact that it is being practiced in a secretive and clandestine manner, highlights that it is neither an essential part of the religion nor has any religious sanction. The practice is, on all accounts, a social evil and should not be allowed to continue. Such an inhuman practice cannot have any protection under article 25 of the Constitution, as it fails the test of being in conformity with the 'Public Order, Morality and Health.' There is, therefore, a need to impose a complete and instant ban on this practice and treat it as a cruelty and criminal offence against the girl child. Banning such a practice forthwith will be highly desirable and laudable step.

Glory in Sports

- Dipa Karmakar from Tripura became the first Indian gymnast to have won a gold in the vault event of the FIG Artistic Gymnastics World Challenge Cup at Mersin, Turkey on July 8, 2018.
- Hima Das became the first Indian woman to win a gold medal in a track event at the world level. She clinched the top position in the Women's 400 meter final race in IAAF World Under-20 Athletics Championships held in Tampere, Finland on July 12, 2018.
- Indian Women's Compound Archery Team, consisting of Jyothi Surekha, Trisha Deb and Muskan Kirar won a Silver Medal at the Archery World Cup held in Berlin on July 20, 2018.



Legal

- **Victim Compensation Scheme for the survivors of Sexual Assault and Acid Attack**

The Supreme Court on July 25, 2018 approved a scheme that provides for at least the minimum compensation as detailed in the scheme to women survivors of sexual assault and acid attacks. Victims of rape and unnatural sexual assault will also be given a minimum compensation to ensure their rehabilitation. The scheme has been prepared by a committee coordinated by the National Legal Services Authority. Joint Secretary, National Commission for Women was a member of the committee. This is the first time such a scheme has been framed for the country as a whole. The scheme provides that the states can increase the amount of compensation but cannot give compensation lower than the minimum laid down in the scheme.

- **Court Judgments not to mention the name of rape victims**

The Supreme Court on July 7, 2018 reiterated that to prevent social victimization of a victim of a sexual offence, court judgments, at all levels, should not mention the name of the victim.

- **Amendment in Companies (Accounts) Rules, 2014 to ensure compliance with POSH Act**

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs vide notification dated 31.07.2018, has amended the Companies (Accounts) Rules, 2014, requiring companies to make a statement that the Company has complied with the provisions relating to constitution of Internal Complaints Committee under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 in the Director's Report.

Chairperson, Smt. Rekha Sharma

- Inaugurated a Gender Sensitization Programme at Kerala Police Academy, in Thrissur. The training programme was attended by the first batch of all women constables and women commandoes for the state of Kerala.
- Headed an Inquiry Committee, which visited Kerala on July 7, 2018 regarding the alleged blackmail and sexual abuse of a married woman for three years by five priests of the Malankara Orthodox Church, Kerala. During the inquiry, the committee met the survivor, the concerned police officials and interacted with the Head Bishop and two others of the Malankara Orthodox Church. The findings of the inquiry committee were forwarded to the concerned authorities for further action.
- Chaired and gave the keynote address at a Legal Awareness Programme, organized by Andhra Pradesh State Commission for Women at Eluru, Vijaywada on July 24, 2018.
- Inaugurated a workshop on 'Online Safety & Digital Literacy Programme for Women' conducted by NCW, Facebook and Cyber Peace Foundation at Government



Women's Post Graduate College, Panchkula on July 28, 2018. The training workshop was attended by 272 women students.

Member, Ms. Sushma Sahu

- Visited the Udaipur Central Jail, Udaipur, Rajasthan on 1st July 2018 to review the living condition of the women inmates in the prison. She was assisted by Ms. Ajita Kalra, JTE.



- Conducted a Gender Sensitization Program for police officials of Bihar at Patna on July 17, 2018.

Member Secretary, Dr. Satbir Bedi

- Attended the National Consultation on "Engagement of Women's Collectives in Panchayati Raj Institutions in addressing Intimate Partner Violence" on July 12, 2018 at UN Conference Hall, Delhi. The programme was organized by the International Centre for Research on Women and UN Women.
- Attended a National Conference on "NRI Marriages and Trafficking of Women and Children: Issues & Way



Forward" on July 27, 2018 at the New Maharashtra Sadan, New Delhi.

Seminar on Political Participation and Representation of Women in India

The Commission organized a seminar on 'Political Participation and Representation of Women in India' on July 27, 2018 in its premises at New Delhi. The objective of the programme included initiation of a dialogue on legislative measures and constitutional reforms that would ensure women's fair access to political spheres, to outline the modalities for removing barriers to equal participation of women in public life and collate suggestions and recommendations on the subject. A panel discussion on the subject was held as a part of the programme with Mr. K.F. Wilfred, Senior Principal Secretary, Election Commission of India, Ms. Padma, Angmo, Director, Election Commission of India, Smt. Rajni Yadav, Sarpanch Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh



and Ms. Tripura Venkataratnam, Former Chairperson, Telangana State Commission for Women along with other dignitaries who deliberated on the issues relating to the subject. It was highlighted that equal participation of men and women is not only a prerequisite but is an inevitable condition for democracy, justice and harmonious human existence in the society. It was concluded that effective representation of women in decision-making structures will have a bearing on policies and would result in greater political participation of women. Joint Secretary, National Commission for Women moderated the Panel Discussion.



Gender Sensitization of Police Officials

The Commission conducted three gender sensitization programmes in the States of Kerala, Bihar, and Uttarakhand during July 2018. The target participants in the programme were the State Police officials up to the rank of ASI/SI. The programme focused on bringing an attitudinal change in the police officers while dealing with cases related to women and violation of their rights. The programmes were conducted by officials/counsellors from the Commission and also assisted by outside experts to take special sessions on dealing with cases related to breach of cyber laws. The details of programmes are as follows:

● Workshop at Thrissur, Kerala

Held on July 5, 2018 at Kerala Police Academy, Thrissur, the workshop was attended by 500 women police trainees and 100 male police officers. The programme was conducted by Ms. Avni Bahri, Sri. Piyush Chhabra, Ms. Vandita Nain of the Commission along with the outside expert Sri. Nitish Chandan of Cyber Peace Foundation and Prof. Krishna Menon of Ambedkar University. Smt. B. Sandhya, Addl. Director General of Police(Training), Govt. of Kerala was also present in the programme. The programme also included a special technical session on dealing with cases of cyber crimes.

● Workshop at Patna, Bihar

Held on 17th July, 2018, the workshop was attended by around 200 police officers upto the rank of ASI. The programme was inaugurated by Smt. Sushma Sahoo, the then member, NCW and was conducted by a



team of NCW comprising Shri Sarvesh Kumar Pandey, Smt. Geeta Rathi Singh and Shri Parveen Singh from NCW with Shri Rakesh Tandon of Cyber Peace Foundation as an external expert.

● Workshop at Dehradun, Uttarakhand

Held on July 20, 2018, the workshop was attended by around 150 police personnel. The NCW team to conduct the programme comprised Smt.



Kanchan Khattar, Shri Sarvesh Kumar Pandey and Smt. Geeta Rathi Singh. Shri Nitish Kumar Singh of Cyber Peace Foundation was also associated as an external expert.

Suo Motu Cognizance of Cases

Month	No. of Cases taken up	No. of ATR replies received	No. of Cases closed	Inquiry Committees/ Fact Finding Team Constituted
July	28	24	09	02

Inquiry/Fact Finding Committees

- The Commission took suo-motu cognizance in the matter of alleged sexual assault of a woman by an SHO in North Delhi and constituted a three-member Fact-Finding Team. The team met the police officials from North District and were informed that no official complaint had been received in the matter and no information about the source of the news could be established.
- Taking suo-motu cognizance of a case 'Woman Gives Birth under Culvert in Odisha, Elephant Destroyed her House' which appeared in NDTV, the Commission took up the matter with the Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of Odisha. Appropriate action was taken for rehabilitation of the woman and disciplinary proceedings were initiated against erring officials.
- The Commission took cognizance of a news article captioned published in the Indian Express on July 2, 2018 regarding sexual exploitation of a young woman and girls on the highway cutting through Neenmuch, Mandsaur and Ratlam districts of Madhya Pradesh and sought intervention of the State Government in the matter to initiate strict legal action and also take measures for rehabilitation.

Successful Intervention by NCW

The Commission received a complaint from a woman employee of a private hospital regarding denial of paid maternity leave to her in contravention of the provisions of Maternity Benefit Act, 1961. The Commission sought a written reply from the respondent hospital and also called them for a hearing before the Commission. However, the respondent hospital instantly complied and paid maternity benefits to the complainant, which was confirmed by the complainant.

North East Cell

The National Commission for Women, in collaboration with the concerned State Commissions for Women, conducted training programmes on Homestay Tourism in Shillong, Imphal and Itanagar on July 18, 20 and 23, respectively. The programme is a part of the National Commission for Women and Airbnb initiative to promote women entrepreneurship and help families in the North-eastern region to supplement their income through promotion of tourism with the unique experience of home-sharing, on a global platform.

Status of Complaints received in the C&I Cell in July 2018

Month	Complaints Received	Complaints Closed (Old + New)
July 2018	1192	686

BALANCE MATTER

INSPECTION OF JAILS/PSYCHIATRIC HOMES

- **Regional Mental Hospital Thane**

A team led by Shri Alok Rawat, Member, NCW and assisted by Ms. Nazia (JTE) inspected the female wing of Regional Mental Hospital Thane on July 26, 2018. The team observed that: (i) there were 630 female inmates on the date of inspection (ii) the inmates, during interaction with the team, expressed their satisfaction with the facilities provided by the hospital and the staff. (iii) Some of inmates informed that their family was not keeping in touch with them. (iv) in many cases, women inmates were not accepted by their families even after they have been cured (v) Kitchen and washroom facilities were clean and adequate (vi) regular yoga classes were conducted in the female ward (vii) the medical facilities were found to be adequate (viii) Lack of recreational activities for the inmates (ix) the buildings required maintenance with provision for meshing to keep vectors out of the wards. The NCW team also strongly endorsed the use of song and dance therapy for treatment of inmates.

BALANCE MATTER LEGAL

- **Bodily Integrity of Women cannot be infringed**

The Supreme Court while hearing a PIL seeking a ban on the practice of Female Genital Mutilation by certain communities in India, observed that the bodily integrity of women cannot be infringed without her consent.

- **Single mothers not to be compelled to disclose the name of child's father in birth certificate: Madras HC**

The Madurai Bench of Madras High Court has held that single mothers are not legally obliged to disclose the name of their child's father, while registering the birth of child.