

MINUTES OF THE 20TH MEETING OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR WOMEN HELD ON 2ND APRIL 1996 IN CHAIRPERSON'S CHAMBER

The 20th Meeting of the National Commission for Women was held on Tuesday, the 2nd April 1996. Smt. Mohini Giri, Chairperson, National Commission for Women presided over the meeting. The following were present :-

- . Ms.V.Mohini Giri, Chairperson
- . Ms.Kokila Vyas, Member
- . Ms.Padma Seth, Member
- . Shri T.N. Srivastava, Member Secretary
- . Ms.Savita, Deputy Secretary, Dr.P.S.K. Menon, and Shri S.Ravindra, Consultants were in attendance to render assistance.

Welcoming the participants to the meeting, the Chairperson congratulated Ms.Ganga Potal, and Ms.Manorama Singh, Members to contest the ensuing Lok Sabha Elections. The Commission placed on record appreciation of their services and hoped as women Parliamentarians they would endeavour to raise the status of women in the country and take up issues concerning the National Commission for Women and women in the country. The meeting then took up the Agenda items.

Item No.1 : Confirmation of the Minutes of the 19th meeting of the Commission held on 7th March, 1996

The meeting confirmed the Minutes of the 19th Meeting of the Commission held on 7th March, 1996.

Item No.2 : Approval of payment to Shri H.L.Harit, engaged by NCW to take up a study.

It was decided that Shri Harit having submitted the draft report may be paid Rs.15,000/- as part payment. The remaining Rs.10,000/- will be paid after the Study Report has been scrutinised in the Commission and on the basis of comments, final draft is prepared and submitted by Shri Harit.

Item No.3 : Holding Mahila Adalat by Braj Bhoomi Sewa Sansthan in Mathura on 25th March, 1996

Item No.4 : Holding Mahila Adalat by All India Women's Conference at Sagar on 31st March, 1996.

Ex-post-facto approval for holding P.M. Adalats was given.

Item No.5 : Holding of Mahila Adalat by India Women and Child Development Association at Bulandshahr, Ghaziabad.

The Chairperson indicated that there are some discrepancies in relation to dates of the Adalats.

some other location is indicated. After discussions, it was decided that hereafter Shri P.S. Ravindra, on receipt of a proposal for holding a Mahila Adalat would acknowledge the proposal and indicate that the actual date for holding the Mahila Adalat would be communicated later on. He will maintain a calender for the purpose and take appropriate instructions from Members and Chairperson With regard to finalisation of dates for holding a particular Mahila Adalat at a particular place. It was also decided that now that the Commission has decided to constitute a Committee under the Chairpersonship of Member, Pacma Seth to examine the proposals for Mahila Adalats, individual cases need not be put up before the Commission for approval for it may entail avoidable delay. Instead, periodically cases may be brought before the Commission for ratification.

During the course of discussion, Ms. Kokila Vyas, Member, expressed dismay at lengthy procedure and undue delay in sanctioning funds for holding Mahila Adalats in Gujarat particularly, NGO vis-a-vis State Legal Aid Society. The Member Secretary explained the difficulties in processing the cases and also doubted the wisdom of ratifying cases at a later period and not the Commission sanctioning individual cases. It was finally decided that in Gujarat where State Legal Advisory Board has rendered assistance in holding Mahila Adalat and where they have assisted NGOs, the National Commission for Women will issue

of the important functions of the Commission is to look into the grievances and complaints from women and to take necessary action. He further stated that the disposal of the complaints at the level of counsellors, consultants or a Member, may be challenged by anyone, and in that case, it would be difficult to defend such a procedure. It was decided that the cases will be disposed of only by Chairperson/Member Secretary.

Item No.7 : Payment to visiting Counsellors

It was decided that the visiting Counsellors may be paid according to their entitlements. It was also decided that each individual Counsellor will be informed in advance the days on which she is to visit the Commission. Chairperson expressed unhappiness over some of the senior Counsellors of reputed NGOs having to queue up before the Cashier in a crowded hall to receive payments. She explained that these Counsellors are persons of some status and it would be in keeping with decorum of the office of make appropriate arrangements to disburse their dues in a respectable and satisfactory manner. The difficulties in regard to providing appropriate accommodation to the visiting Counsellors was also raised. It was indicated that within the constraints, suitable arrangements may be made for their office accommodation.

Item No.8 : Any other item with the permission of the Chair

Smt. Padma Seth, Member brought up the issue of :

(a) Clearance of old and pending arrears to be paid to the

In cases where in the conduct of the Mahila Adalats only State Legal Advisory Board has rendered assistance then the National Commission for Women will process the case separately for payment.

Item No.6 : The complaint from Smt.Santosh Kaushik, Clerk/Typist, Punjab National Bank, G.T. Road, Azadpur, Delhi Branch alleging harassment at workplace.

It was decided that individual cases need not be brought before the Commission. The Member Secretary explained that in other national level commissions like NHRC, the procedure is to bring up individual cases before the full Commission. Ms.Padma Seth, Member, explained that over the years National Commission for Women has always been taking individual cases and even summoning of witnesses etc. without the full Commission approving individual cases. There is no irregularity in the Members dealing with an individual case and the matter brought before the Commission for information or guidance. In this connection, she cited as examples the cases related to HUDCO and Vayudoot.

The Member Secretary was of the view that the procedure so far followed is fraught with problems. He stated that the powers to take a view on any matter and to give directions in an individual case vest in the Commission, and not with any individual Member. In fact one