

MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION'S MEETING HELD ON 16TH
AUGUST, 2001

Present in the meeting were :

- (1) Smt. Vibha Parthasarathi : Chairperson
- (2) Smt. Vijay Daksh : Member
- (3) Smt. Poomima Advani : Member
- (4) Smt. K. Santha Reddy : Member
- (5) Kum. Anusuiya Uike : Member
- (6) Smt. Nafisa Hussain : Member
- (7) Smt. Reva Nayyar : Member Secretary
- (8) Kum. R. Bhama : Deputy Secretary

At the outset CP welcomed all present.

Agenda Item No.1

Leave of absence.

Since the entire Commission was present, leave of absence was not required.



Agenda Item No.2

Confirmation of Minutes of the preceding meeting held on 27th June, 2001.

The minutes of the preceding meeting held on 27th June, 2001 were approved.

Agenda Item No.3

List of Legal Awareness Programmes recommended by Screening Committee and approved by the Chairperson.

The Legal Awareness Programmes approved by the Screening Committee on 13th July, 2001 were noted by the Commission.

It was decided that at the end of the year, the year long approvals would be seen to assess whether the State wise allocations were fairly distributed/which States appear to be active and keen on such an activity.

It was also decided that incomplete proposals should not be put up before the Screening Committee. Wherever lacuna are noticed, details should be called for in advance so that complete proposals are placed before the Screening Committee.

Agenda Item No.4

Proposal for Public Hearing on Prevention of Child Marriage.

The proposal was welcomed. CP suggested that Member (K.S.Reddy) should collect State wise data for the last 10 years. Proposal was approved in principle at the rate of Rs.20,000/- per hearing.

Member (K.S.Reddy) said, 10 States are to be selected; the

suggested that a campaign be released on 'Akha Teej', on which mass child marriages are held.

It was also decided to have posters prepared on the subject for distribution in each of the public hearings.

Agenda Item No.5

Course Curriculum on Gender Sensitisation of Media Personnel prepared by Indian Institute of Mass Communication – for approval of the Commission.

The Course Curriculum was found to be inadequate and sub-standard. It was decided to send it to a few media experts including experts on print and electronics media and then place before the Commission for approval/adoption.

Agenda Item No.6

Course Curriculum on Gender Sensitisation of Judicial Officers/Status update – for approval of the Commission.

Member (P.Advani) stated that the outcome of a meeting of judicial academies held in Bangalore on 4.8.2001 was also circulated to Members. The module was found to be good. Only minor modifications were suggested.

Member (K.S.Reddy) suggested that importance of Parivarik Mahila Lok Adalats should be stressed. The reluctance to give dates for holding PMLAs should be put in as an example of how women's cases get marginalised. The course curriculum was adopted by the Commission accepting the suggestion of M(K.S.Reddy).

The Government has recently sanctioned a proposal for Fast Track Courts. It was decided that Chairperson would write to the Law Ministry emphasising the importance of women's issues and to include cases, where a woman is a complainant, to be listed in the Fast Track Courts.

Agenda Item No.7

'Gender Equity : Making it Happen' – NCW Publication for approval.

Member (K.S.Reddy) had certain suggestions to offer regarding implementation of the schemes and the issue of accountability. The publication was approved and adopted. M(K.S.Reddy) would discuss her comments with M(P.Advani).

It was decided that in a second volume, there was a need to look into overlapping of different schemes.

The Commission also would look into the poor reach of the schemes and decided on looking into its efficacy by either (a) Choosing a scheme and examining its implementation or (b) Choosing a State to examine implementation of different schemes.

Agenda Item No.8

Inquiry Report on the inquiry into the allegation of luring girls from Cochin University Hostel and using them as carriers for drug trafficking – Report for approval.

The report and its recommendations were approved and adopted with one additional recommendation regarding control of funding by UGC of the University as UGC provides grants. M(K.S.Reddy) would include the recommendation.

The report would then be sent to Government.



Agenda Item NO.9

Paper by Dr. Sarala Gopalan on “Vision 2020 – The Profile of the Empowered Women” for approval.

The paper was found to be very good. A letter to this effect would be sent to the Chairman, Planning Commission from Chairperson, NCW.

Agenda Item No.10

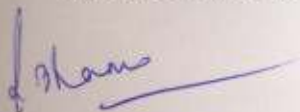
Prostitutes meet organised by Society for Development Research and Training, Pondicherry held on 8.6.2001 at Pondicherry and (2) discussion with women in prostitution in Mahabalipuram on 8.6.2001 on Sex Tourism organised by Ms. Shyamla Ashok – Reports for approval.

The Commission felt that the label ‘Sex Workers’ should not be used as it imparts respectability, acceptance and licensing, which is not correct. The organisation should be asked to edit the report using the word prostitutes. The report should also be amalgamated with the tour report of M(P.Advani).

M(V.Daksh) suggested that case histories of each would have been more informative.

M(P.Advani) was requested to get clarification on

- (a) Methodology adopted – the meaning of ‘their own perspective’ for conducting the meet.
- (b) In the last page of the report to clarify how many clients women entertain (3-4 clients or 10-15 clients) per day, since two different figures feature in the Report.



Agenda Item No.11

Workshop on “The Working of Family Courts in India” – Proposal forwarded for approval.

The role of all community in rendering justice should be explored as an alternative, not as a replacement of family courts, through strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions, development of Mangalam Project etc.

Agenda Item No.12

Public hearing on Dowry organised at Calcutta on 24th May, 2001 by Sanlaap, Calcutta – Report of the public hearing – Report for approval/adoption.

The report was approved.

Agenda Item No.13

Public hearing on Dowry organised at Patna on 23rd May, 2001 by ADITHI, Patna – Report of the public hearing for approval/adoption.

The report was found very good and approved.

Agenda Item No.14

National Seminar on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee Celebration of UN Declaration of Human Rights – A Critiques on 13-14 November, 1998 organised by Indian Social Institute, New Delhi – Report for approval/adoption.

The report was taken as read.



Agenda Item No.15

Setting up of one or two Homes for providing temporary shelter and rehabilitation to Dains in Jharkhand.

The proposal to set up separate shelter homes for “witches” (dains) was not approved as it would label them as dains and alienate them even further from the mainstream.

Agenda Item No.16

Declining Sex Ratio – The Task Ahead – Workshops on Female Foeticide/Infanticide.

It was decided that as was done in the annual convention held on 24th June, 2001, local religious leaders of at least 4 faiths should participate in each meeting. Sanction for each should not exceed Rs.25,000/-. CP also desired to see the file of PRAKRITI, Chennai.

Agenda Item No.17

Three-day Regional Conference of the National Commission for Women, State Commission for Women and NGOs of the Southern Region to be held at Panaji, Goa from 12-14 September, 2001.

The Commission took note of the programme. Members were invited to send suggestions with regard to NGOs to be invited, the names would be sent to DS by 23rd August, 2001.

The local issues for discussion for the 3rd day were suggested as sex tourism, meeting with successful Panchayat Members/Chairpersons etc. Chairperson would decide on the selection in consultation with the Goa

Public hearing on dowry problems of women organised by Aryika Gyanmati, Mata Mahila Avam Bal Kalyan Samiti, Bhind – Report thereof for approval/adoption.

Since M(A.Uike) had separately sent an objection on the report, Member Secretary would look into it. In future, no financial assistance would be extended to this NGO.

Agenda Item No.19

Report titled Status of Women in India – 2000 update of the report of the committee on the Status of Women 1974 by Dr. Sarala Gopalan, formerly Secretary, Ministry of Human Resource Development – Report for approval/adoption.

The report was found to be excellent. It was decided to show it to at least one Member of the Committee on the Status of Women in India for suggestions to enrich it. The name of Dr. Veena Majumdar was suggested.

Agenda Item No.20

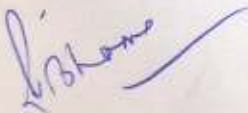
Implementation of the National Policy for Empowerment of Women, holding of seminars on Legal and Judicial Empowerment to be organised in different parts of the country.

The Commission noted the proposal.

Agenda Item No.21

Impact of Mining on Health of Women – A case study of Dubna – Guruda Manganese Mines, Dist. Keonjhar, Orissa – Report for approval/adoption.

The report was approved remarking that it was a very good report.



Agenda Item No.22

Workshop on Empowerment of Women with Special Reference to Women's Health held on 25-26 November, 2000 at S.V. University, Tirupati – Report for approval/adoption.

The report was approved with the following comments:

- (a) Recommendations should need to be categorised topic wise.
- (b) The individuals who had helped in organising would be thanked by name in the acknowledgement.

Agenda Item No.23

PRAJA Project at NCW and transfer of all files relating to complaints to the Complaints Cell.

CP desired Members to transfer all such files to the Complaints Cell by 17th of August, 2001.

Other interventions were made regarding the working of the Complaints Cell. M(V.Daksh) felt some of the interventions made by PRAJA were not acceptable. She also commented adversely on the behavior of some of the counsellors. She felt that complaints, which are addressed to NCW should not be sent to the States, use should be made of the local NGOs. Further, she said that in some of the cases she had successfully used the help of NGOs at the local level and had developed a net work with several NGOs. CP desired that the network with the NGOs, names and addresses be shared with the Commission. CP also clarified that the primary mandate of the Commission is not to investigate into **every** complaint but is to look into the violation of women's rights and in this context dealing with some complaints as classic examples, enables the Commission to know the ground realities and problems.

M(A.Uike) felt that the list of cases being sent to States should be informed to Members before they are actually sent.

Agenda Item No.24

Appointment of Advocate on Retainership/Preparing a panel of advocates for consultation.

The Commission decided that Members may send names by 22nd August, 2001 for consideration of the Commission for

- (a) Engagement of an advocate on retainership.
- (b) Panel of advocates for consultation along with specific areas of expertise if any.

The names suggested in the agenda note would also be considered.

Meanwhile, Shri Subrat Birla, who was engaged on an emergent matter may be continued on similar urgent matters till a name is finalised.

Agenda Item No.25

Ex-post facto approval of expenditure of Rs.14,73,998/- incurred on four regional workshops on Gender and Law Enforcement followed by National Workshop held on 1-2 June, 2001.

Members commented adversely on the actual expenditure far exceeding the budget. The main Heads under which the excess expenditure incurred was on the travel cost of NGOs, hospitality to NGOs, which were a direct result of the number of invitations which were sent far in excess of the capacity of the hall.

CP opined that it was a bad experience indeed one that shook her as NCW was not prepared to offer much to so many people. Under no circumstances should this be repeated; we should learn lessons from this experience. It was decided that in future, invitations should be sent by Administration only and the list should be approved by CP. Also to avoid duplication in claims, photostat copies of the invitation letter should not be entertained, as a policy matter.

- (a) Approval of the budget of Rs.8 lacs by the Commission – Date of approval by the Commission.
- (b) Printing of the reports of the regional workshops – The numbers printed and their distribution.
- (c) Expenditure over and above budget, that the Commission should take a decision on what percentage of excessive expenditure is acceptable. If the expenditure goes beyond the acceptable limit, what action would be taken.

Many questions were raised to which replies were given point wise by M(P.Advani). On all these points, it was decided that CP would look into the issue of approval of the budget including the excess expenditure.

Agenda Item No.26


Proposal to hold 6 regional and one national level workshop on the problems and prospects for development of tribal women.

It was decided that in view of the disturbed conditions in the North-East and the fact that Jammu & Kashmir was not within the Commission's mandate and that most of the tribals in Andaman & Nicobar Islands do not come out to be a part of the mainstream life. Three regional meetings, one each at Ranchi, Bhopal and Nasik were approved. M(A.Uike) would restructure the budget in consultation with Shri T.N. Sabharwal and Dr. P.S.K. Menon, which would be then be put up to CP.

Agenda Item No.27

Construction of the Office Building of NCW at Jasola Institutional Area.

The Commission noted the proposal and approved the engagement of HUDCO for architectural consultancy.



Reference received from PM's Office regarding the step taken by the Government of Rajasthan to protect rights of women.

The Commission noted the reply already sent to the Government and approved it.

Agenda Item No.29

Study report on 'Development and Empowerment through Education and Training of Financially and Socially Weaker Rural Women' – Report for approval and adoption.

The Commission discussed the report and suggested that the concept of Self Help Groups should be introduced. It was decided that M(V.Daksh) would revise the recommendations and again bring the report to the Commission.

Agenda Item No.30

Release of women from prison – who are over 65 years of age and who are undergoing the last year of their sentence.

At the first reading, the suggestion was found very good. However, before taking a decision, it was decided that several points need to be looked into. M(S.Reddy) should get a copy of the current status from the IG, Prisons of each State as also the Supreme Court judgement regarding release of women, who are above 65 years of age. CP suggested that NGOs also need to be prepared to help in integrating the released women into society, after their release, for the fear that a majority of them, being both poor and away from their families may not be welcomed back. What happens to such women needed to be thought through.

Bhane

Agenda Item No.31

Report of the inquiry into the kidnapping of 7 minor girls in Muzaffarnagar District – Report for approval.

The report was approved and adopted along with its recommendations. M(V.Daksh) suggested that on some suitable occasion, Smt. Birmala be honoured by the Commission.

Agenda Item No.32

Report on the Consultative Meeting on the Agriculture and Gender Issues at IARI – Report for approval.

The report was approved along with its recommendations.

Agenda Item No.33

Any Other Item with the permission of the Chair.

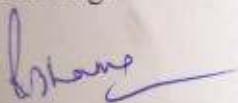
(1) Maternity Benefits to Smt. Sangeeta Sharma, Receptionist, NCW.

M(V.Daksh) raised the issue of payment of maternity benefits to Smt. Sangeeta Sharma, Receptionist.

It was decided that Chairperson would look into the matter.

(2) Permission to use petrol instead of CNG.

M(V.Daksh) said that looking to the CNG crises, drivers should be allowed to use petrol at the discretion of the Member. Chairperson said she would take a decision after ascertaining what other organisations were following.



M(P.Advani) informed that NCW had been invited to interact with the Constitutional Review Committee on 23rd August, 2001. It was decided that a brain storming should be held with some Constitutional Experts, for which Members should suggest names of invitees.

The meeting ended with a Vote of Thanks to the Chair.

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