

MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION'S MEETING HELD ON 29TH
NOVEMBER, 2001

Present in the meeting were:

1. Smt. Vibha Parthasarathi : Chairperson
2. Smt. Vijay Daksh : Member
3. Smt. Poornima 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

Chairperson informed the Commission that Member (K. Santha Reddy) would be attending the meeting late as she needed to honour some other engagement.

Agenda Item No.2

Confirmation of minutes of the preceding meeting held on 9.10.2001.

The minutes of the preceding meeting were approved and adopted.

Bhama

Agenda Item No.3

Proposals relating to special studies/seminars/workshops/public hearings approved by the Screening Committee.

The proposals relating to special studies/seminars/workshops/public hearings approved by the Screening Committee on 5th October, 2001 were noted by the Commission.

Agenda Item No.4

Hiring of Taxis by Members and Officers of the Commission at the touring stations

The Commission approved the following practice for hiring taxis during the period of tour :-

Since as per TA rules, no mileage allowance for local journeys made from the duty point at the tour station is admissible except for the journey between airport/railway station to the duty point and vice versa on arrival and departure respectively, if any Member/officer needs to travel by taxi from one duty point to another outside the limits of the town, city or urban agglomeration, prior approval of the Chairperson should be taken along with the tour programme.

Further as full-day taxi hire for local journeys within the touring station is not permissible, taxis, if at all required, may be hired from point to point basis only for actual meetings/visits.

At this point Member (V.Daksh) joined the meeting.

Agenda Item No.5

93rd Constitutional Amendment Bill to make Education a Fundamental Right – Views of NCW

NCW's views were sought on the said Bill from an NGO, National Alliance for the Fundamental Right to Education. However, since the Bill has been passed in Parliament on 28th November, 2001, the matter being infructuous, was not discussed by the Commission.



Agenda Item No.6

Adoption of report of the National Workshop on Gender and Law Enforcement

Member (P.Advani) informed the Commission that the revised draft of the report had also been vetted by Shri Moolchand Sharma, Smt. Kiran Bedi, Smt. Pam Rajput and Smt. Kirti Singh. The Commission approved and adopted the report.

Agenda Item No.7

Minimum age limit etc. required for women to work in the Gulf countries

Views of the Commission had been sought on the subject from the Ministry of Labour, seeking advice on what should be the proper age of Indian housemaids for deployment for work in foreign countries. The Commission felt that young girls sent as housemaids were helpless and ignorant without any exposure to the world, and hence were extremely vulnerable. There were also reports that sexual abuse of such young maids was rampant. Young girls of the age of 12 to 17 could be passed off as 18 years old, but certainly not be accepted as 30 year old. In the light of the above, maturity is an important factor for working/living abroad and exposure to unfamiliar environs, the Commission suggested that the appropriate age for Indian housemaids to work in foreign countries should be 30 years and above.

A reply to this effect to be sent to the Government.

Agenda Item No.8

Letters received from the Members of Amnesty International regarding violation of rights of women and crimes against women.

Copies of letters sent by Members of Amnesty International had sought the following:-

Sharma

1. That all State police departments should set up a mechanism to monitor police action in cases of violence against women including action taken by Mahila Thanas and Crimes Against Women Cells including information on
 - (i) The number and nature of complaints made;
 - (ii) Data on the social background of the complaints;
 - (iii) Data on the social background of the perpetrators; and
 - (iv) Information regarding the progress of complaints.
2. A study was suggested in respect of crimes of violence against women to determine
 - (a) How the existing criminal justice system responds to the needs of women victims of violence; and
 - (b) Whether it discriminates against women victims of abuses or leads to the revictimisation of women victims of violence because of gender insensitive laws or judicial enforcement practices.
3. Instructions be issued to ensure that reasons for women withdrawing case are clearly documented in police records.

Since the Commission was itself interested in these questions and issues, it was decided that the Commission may write to the Ministry of Home seeking information on the response of the MHA with a copy to the DWCD as the query was forwarded through the DWCD.

Agenda Item No.9

Public hearing on Dowry organised by Stree Mukti Sangathana, Mumbai – Report for approval/adoption.

The report was approved and adopted.

The Commission desired that the compilation of all public hearings on dowry should be completed before Member (P.Advani) completes her tenure.



Agenda Item No.10

Training programme for Tribal Women Chairpersons/Sarpanchs organised by Adivasi Gramin Utthan Samiti held on October 5-6, 2001 at Jobat – Report for approval/adoption.

The report was approved and adopted.

The Commission felt that at the time of completion of the tenure, the retiring Chairperson/Members should furnish to the Commission a list of good NGOs, whom they recommend for further networking with the Commission and also a list of undesirable NGOs, who have not performed satisfactorily for necessary action.

Agenda Item No.11

Seminar on Tribal Women's Economic Backwardness held at Ranchi – Report for approval/adoption.

The report was approved and adopted.

Agenda Item No.12

Seminar on Tribal Women organised by Pt. Deendayal Upadhaya Samiti Mahila Mandal, Gwalior on 25-27th February, 2000 – Report for approval/adoption.

Although the content of the report was found to be alright, the language was found to be sub-standard. It was decided that the report would be sent back for further editing or even better, be written in Hindi within 15 days since the report had already been delayed for 2 years.

Agenda Item No.13

Workshop on Control and Elimination of Female Foeticide organised by CHETNA on 19th Sept. 2001 – Report for approval/adoption.

The report was approved and adopted and found to be very good.

Botoms

A copy of the recommendations would be sent to the following Departments of Government of India:-

- i) Department of Women & Child Development
- ii) Ministry of Home Affairs
- iii) Ministry of Law, Justice & Company Affairs
- iv) Department of Family Welfare
- v) Department of Health
- vi) Ministry of Information & Broadcasting

It was decided that posters issued by the organisation, FOGSI may be obtained by the Commission.

It was also decided that the Commission would bring out a publication on 'Female Foeticide' which would include material on the following:

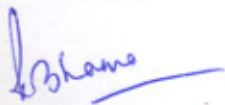
- (i) Workshop sponsored by NCW
- (ii) Objectionable advertisement in respect of geneselect.com , of which NCW had taken suo moto notice.
- (iii) Posters issued by NCW
- (iv) The successful booking under PNDDT Act of a practicing doctor in Faridabad and the arrest of a doctor under PNDDT in Madurai.
- (v) Good and bad practices of IMA (reference also made to the initiative reported in the Surat tour report of CP on February, 2001.

It was also decided that at the time of the release of the publication, a copy of the film 'Silent Scream' may be obtained and screened.

Agenda Item No.14

Workshop on Control and Elimination of Female Foeticide organised by Bonded Labour Liberation Front, on 15/9/2001 at Kurukshetra – Report for approval/adoption.

The report was found very good and approved and adopted by the Commission.



Agenda Item No.15

Public hearing on the Impact of Globalisation on Women Workers on 26-27 September, 2001 in Kerala organised by SEWA (Kerala) – Report for approval/adoption.

The report was approved and adopted and found to be excellent.

Agenda Item No.16

Public hearing on Dowry organised by Mahila Punarwas Samool Samiti, Jaipur on 18th August, 2001– Report for approval/adoption.

The report was approved and adopted.

Agenda Item No.17

Study on Economic Empowerment of Tribal Women in M.P. – by SHODH – Report for approval/adoption.

The report was approved and adopted.

Agenda Item No.18

Report of Public hearing on Dowry Harassment and Dowry Death organised by VIMOCHANA on 7th September 2001, at Bangalore– for approval/adoption.

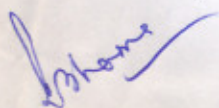
The report was approved and adopted.

At this point Member (K.S.Reddy) joined the meeting (at 12.30 p.m.).

Agenda Item No.19

Study of Survey for the Development and Free of Exploitation Life of Women belonging to SC & Gujjar Women in Western U.P. – Report for approval/adoption.

The report was approved and adopted.



Agenda Item No.20

Workshop on Role of Women in 21st Century organised by Works and Action for Rurals, Babarpur, Bijnor, U.P. held on 25-26th April, 2001- Report for approval/adoption.

The report was approved and adopted. However, the subject was found to be too broad based. It was felt that Screening Committee should examine this aspect while approving proposals.

Agenda Item No.21

Draft Report on the Workshop on Female Infanticide/foeticide organised by PRAKRITI on 6-7th November, 2001 at Madurai – Draft report for NCW's comments.

The draft report of the workshop was sent by PRAKRITI for feed back and comments of the Commission.

The following comments were made by Chairperson and Member (K.S.Reddy), who attended the workshop:-

The Speaker His Holiness Madurai Atheenan was very good as he also compared the position in different religions in respect of foeticide. Another positive aspect was the presence of male audience, who comprised 1/3rd of the total.

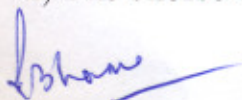
The negative aspects were:

a) The banner mentioned only infanticide without mentioning foeticide.

b) No other religious leader was present, a local Pastor was invited at the last minute on the initiative by NCW.

c) There was only one gynaecologist.

d) The choice of the lawyer speaker was also not very good.



e) No one from the administration participated; most participants were field workers. The administration officials were later invited at the last minute at the insistence of NCW.

Some changes and additions were suggested on the recommendations of Group IV.

The above would be communicated to the organisation, who would also be asked to expedite the report.

Agenda Item No.22

Reconciliation of Accounts – Difference in Bank balance as per Cash Book with balance as per Bank Statement – of Rs.11,593/-

The Reconciliation of Accounts was noted by the Commission.

Agenda Item No.23

Public hearing on Rehabilitation of Devdasis held at Raichur organised by Council for Social Development on 15.10.2001 – Report for approval/adoption.

The report was approved and adopted.

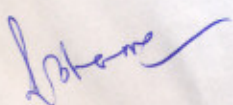
It was also decided that in stations, where Canara Bank does not have a branch, demand draft may be sent, the charges for the demand draft would be deducted from the financial assistance provided by NCW.

Agenda Item No.24

Any other item with the permission of the Chair.

- (i) Proposal for a public hearing on the problems of women affected by factions in 6 districts of Andhra Pradesh.**

Member (K.S.Reddy) has submitted a proposal for consideration of the Commission in its meeting held on 13.3.2001. The proposal was



approved in principle, the budget estimate should be resubmitted after revision. Approval to be sought by circulation.

Member (K.S.Reddy) had sent a revised budget proposal to the Chairperson, on November 28, 2001 which was then placed before the Commission as supplementary agenda item.

(ii) Meeting to discuss draft Bill on Sexual Harassment at Workplace.

Since the Bill has to be finalised, it was decided to hold a consultation on 10th December, 2001 at IIC from 04.00-8.00 P.M. to be followed by dinner. Suggestions for names of persons to be invited were sought. The names suggested by Members were listed, Member (P.Advani) was requested to submit a final list to the Chairperson.

(iii) Proposal to organise regional workshops and a national workshop on Women in Allied ~~and~~ Agricultural and Allied Enterprises.

Member (K.S.Reddy) moved the proposal.

It was decided that 4 workshops should be held. Two subjects would be discussed by each workshop as the agenda proposed in the note was too large. In each workshop, agriculture and animal husbandry would be discussed along with one other subject depending on its local importance. Suggestion was made for adding Horticulture as it was an important emerging aspect.

It was also decided that the report of the National Task Force on Technological Empowerment of Women in Agriculture, constituted by the Commission earlier, would be got completed. Files of Mrs. Indira Basavaraj, former Member, who was looking after the said Task Force would be traced.

CP and Members were once again requested to prepare a list of files to be handed over along with the handing over note specifying the actions left incomplete by them to be carried on by the Commission after the retiring Members complete their tenure.

Advani

(iv) News item regarding decision to close down Mahila Jail in Tihar Jail.

The Commission took note of a news item appearing in SAMNA, a Mumbai newspaper, which reported on a decision to close down the Tihar Women's Jail due to lack of funds and security personnel. The Commission decided to take up this matter with the appropriate authorities.

(v) Member (V.Daksh) initiated some points pertaining to the minutes of the preceding meeting of the Commission.

Chairperson observed that the meeting began by referring to the minutes and adopted them. Once adopted, minutes are not to be re-opened, at the end of the meeting.

The meeting was thus closed.

