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INTRODUCTION

The National Commission for Women (NCW) was constituted on 31st January, 1992 as a statutory body at the national level in pursuance of the National Commission for Women Act, 1990 to safeguard the interests of women. It has a wide mandate covering almost all aspects of women's development, viz., to investigate and examine the legal safeguards provided for women under the Constitution and other laws and recommend to Government measures for their effective implementation; review the existing provisions of the Constitution and other laws affecting women and recommend amendments to meet any lacunae, inadequacies or shortcomings in such laws; look into complaints and take *suo- moto* notice of matters relating to deprivation of women's rights, etc. and take up the issues with appropriate authorities; take up studies/research on issues of relevance to women, participate and advise in the planning process for socio-economic developments of women, evaluate the progress made thereof; inspect jails, remand homes etc where women are kept under custody and seek remedial action wherever necessary.

In keeping with its mandate, the Commission initiated various steps to improve the status of women and worked for their economic empowerment during the year under report. The Commission's Chairperson, Members and officers have visited various parts of the country to attend meetings/seminars/workshops/public hearings

organized by NCW/Non Government Organisations (NGOs), and to investigate various cases of atrocities committed against women. Besides, they visited jails, hospitals and attended legal awareness camps on legal rights of women etc; organized by NGOs/ Women Study Centres of the Universities to gain first hand knowledge about the problems faced by women there so as to suggest remedial measures and to take up the issues with the concerned authorities. The Commission also constituted an Expert Committee to make recommendations on various women issues.

The Commission received a large number of complaints and also took *suo-moto* cognizance in several cases to provide speedy justice. The Commission sponsored gender awareness programmes, Parivarik Mahila Lok Adalats and organized seminars/workshops/consultations and took up publicity against female foeticide, violence against women, child marriages, etc. in order to generate awareness in the society against these social evils. The NGOs played a significant role in organizing these programmes.

Composition

The details of the Chairperson and Members of the Commission who served during 2009-10 are as follows:-

- i) Dr. Girija Vyas, Chairperson-Joined on 16.02.2005 to 15.02.2008 (Re-nominated and joined on 09.04.2008)

- ii) Ms. Yasmeen Abrar, Member-Joined on 24.05.2005 to 23.05.2008 (Re-nominated and joined on 15.07.2008)
- iii) Ms. Neeva Konwar, Member-Joined on 27.05.2005 to 26.05.2008 (Re-nominated and joined on 15.07.2008 to 12.02.2010)
- iv) Ms. Manju S. Hembrom, Member-Joined on 30.06.2006 to 29.06.2009
- v) Ms. Wansuk Syiem, Member-Joined on 26.09.2008
- vi) Shri S. Chatterjee, Member Secretary-Joined on 10.09.2007 to 26.03.2010
- vii) Ms. Zohra Chatterji, Member Secretary-Joined on 26.03.2010

The functions of the Commission are mainly divided into four cells, Complaints and Investigation Cell, NRI Cell, Legal Cell and Research Studies Cell. The activities of each of these cells are presented in Chapter numbers 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 respectively. The organization chart of the Commission is placed at Annexure-I.

Gist of decisions taken in the meetings as of the Commission

During the year 2009-10, the Commission held a number of meetings to decide on important issues concerning women. A brief account of the meetings is given below :-

1. Commission Meeting held on 18th June, 2009 :-

The issue for creating legal awareness among tribal women about the various provisions meant

for the welfare of women as provided in the Constitution of India and laws formulated by the Central and State Governments was discussed at length. It was agreed that a special scheme on the Legal Awareness programme (LAP) for organising in tribal belts of the states of Rajasthan, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh needs to be chalked out. The Awareness Programme in the scheme would be of two hours duration and the provision of funds would range from ₹ 5000 to ₹ 7000 per programme. The programme may be organized in at least 50 blocks of these states. For this purpose, districts having concentration of tribal population in different states need to be identified.

2. Commission Meeting held on 24th August, 2009:-

Regarding item No. 18.2 of the action taken report on the recommendations contained in the 209th Report of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Demand for grants (2008-09) of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, it was apprised that as per the latest data for the financial year 2008-09, the pending cases were 5386 against 12895 complaints received. 2320 Action Taken Reports (ATRs) had been received, 7509 complaints attended and 1077 cases closed. Regarding clearance of pending cases, a committee comprising of experts on different subjects such as dowry, sexual harassment etc; and social activists was constituted to deal with and assist the Commission on the complaints received. It was decided that the experts would sit with the concerned Member for expeditious finalization of the pending cases year wise. Copies of ATRs would be sent to the complainant and if no reply is received within a reasonable time, the case

would be treated as closed. Regarding closed cases, it was agreed that these can be reopened if the complainant insisted at a later stage. Responsibility for proper maintenance of files of closed cases would be that of the Custodian/concerned Counselor.

3. Commission meeting held on 18th November, 2009 :-

- (i) Regarding pendency of LAP for the year 2007-08 and 2008-09, the Commission after deliberations decided that in those cases where no acceptance had been received for holding the programme/conducting the study during the period of one and half years i.e till March 2009, the cases should be treated as closed. In cases of files being non- traceable, copies of bill/vouchers etc. should be procured from the organizations to reconstruct the file for further processing. In future, the time table laid down for processing of cases after screening committee approval should be strictly followed. The custodians of files would be responsible for safe keeping of files. Regarding deployment of personnel on temporary basis for six months for maintenance of records of LAP and files of R&S Cell, it was decided that there was no requirement for deployment of fresh engagement of personnel. The work should be undertaken by the existing staff.
- (ii) Regarding report of the Inquiry Committee to enquire into the incident wherein Mrs. Komal Singh, an employee of Air India alleged that she was sexually molested and assaulted by the pilots of Air India flight No.IC-884 on 3rd October, 2009, the recommendations of the

above committee of NCW established that a physical push by the captain had indeed taken place. Whatever be the provocation, this sort of behavior was unacceptable. Therefore, the Commission did not agree with the point of the report which sought to 'justify the action'. The Commission asserted that physical push and unparliamentary language used against Ms. Komal Singh by the Captain was unwarranted and affected the dignity and honour of the victim both as a professional and as a woman. The Commission condemned such behaviour and that the dignity and honour of the women should be maintained at all costs.

The interim report of the Committee along with the above comments of the Commission was to be sent to all concerned authorities for appropriate action. Further enquiry would also take the opinion of the various concerned associations for framing further guidelines for prevention of recurrence of such events.

4. Commission meeting held on 21th January, 2010:-

- (i) It was decided that major national level seminars/workshops to be held in 2010 need to be planned in the month of February and March.
- (ii) Regional and State level seminars to be conducted at Chittorgarh, Udaipur, Sawai Madhopur, Dibrugarh, Jorhat and Sibsagar. The R&S Cell was to suggest topics for the same which could be conducted through local NGOs, universities, district administration.

- (iii) The Commission also noted that action on renovation of the NCW premises had not gained any momentum. The Administration was directed to take immediate necessary action so that proper seating and other arrangements could be done without further delay.

5. Commission meeting held on 12th February, 2010:

- (i) Regarding delegation of financial powers in NCW, the Member Secretary shall exercise financial powers upto ₹ one lakh. Expenditure beyond the amount would require the formal approval of the Commission. In urgent situations and in cases the Commission is unable to meet, any expenditure beyond ₹ one lakh shall be exercised by the Member Secretary in consultation with the Chairperson and ex post facto approval taken by the Commission as and when the Commission would meet.
- (ii) The preliminary report in respect of Mrs. Preeti Kohali, Agra was also placed before the Commission for approval. The same had been noted, as the Commission had already taken up the matter with the Government of Uttar Pradesh and the Ministry of Home Affairs to initiate investigation by appropriate police authorities and take subsequent action as may be warranted.
- (iii) The chairperson directed to put all other reports of various Committees of Inquiry in the agenda of the Commission's next meeting. All Members were directed to submit at the

earliest completed reports of pending enquiries, if any, undertaken by them.

Visit of Foreign Delegates and other Delegates to the Commission:

1. Parliamentary Committee of Timore-Leste Visits NCW

A Parliamentary Committee on Poverty Reduction, Rural Development and Gender Equality Delegation of the National Parliament of Timore-Leste led by Mr. Osorio Florindo (President of the Committee) recently visited the National Commission for Women and interacted with the Chairperson, the Members and the officers.

After the brief presentation on NCW, the Chairperson explained that the Commission has three important units – the Complaints and Investigation Cell, the Research and Study Cell and the Legal Cell. She explained that the Legal Cell proposed and reviewed laws related to women while the Research and Study Cell conducted research on women – related issues and generated awareness about the rights and problems related to women.

On the question regarding working of the Commission, Dr. Vyas said that the Commission takes up suo-moto cognizance of cases and sets up inquiry committees to investigate into the cases and thereafter the inquiry reports are sent to the concerned state or departments for remedial action.

2. Visit of Mexican delegates

Mr. Cicilio Garza, Coordinator-in-Chief of the World Youth Conference 2010 visited National Commission for Women and interacted with the Chairperson and Members of the Commission.

Welcoming the visiting delegates, Dr. Girija Vyas, Chairperson, NCW deliberated on the similarities between Mexico and India. Then, Mr. Garza gave a brief on the World Youth Conference 2010 which is to be held in Mexico. He opined that years back in 1985, United Nations had declared the year as the International Year of Youth, and now it was time for its review and rejuvenation. The main agenda would be to have a more integrated, comprehensive and coherent public policy for the youth.

Mr. Garza further urged upon the Commission for support and input. Dr. Vyas assured the visiting delegation that the Commission would certainly respond positively.

3. Nepali delegates visits NCW

A delegation of 12 women editors and journalists from various media organizations of Nepal visited the NCW and interacted with Chairperson, Members, Member-Secretary and officers.

Welcoming the delegates, Member Secretary, Shri S. Chatterjee explained some of the main functions of NCW, which comprised of redressal of complaints, review of laws, research on women issues and proposing amendments to laws, etc.

Answering a question, NCW Chairperson, Dr. Girija Vyas said that India had quite a few stringent laws relating to atrocities committed against women but their implementation was tardy. She said that the civil society and the media had a big role to play in creating awareness about such laws among women.

Intervening in the discussion, Law Officer Shri Yogesh Mehta said that Government of India was reviewing the law on rape and widening the definition of rape as well as drafting relief, rehabilitation and

rescue programmes for women victims of sexual assault.

Members of the Nepali delegation expressed their concern about the issue of trafficking which plagues both India and Nepal and hoped that India and Nepal would work together to combat problems that were common to both the countries.

4. Visit of the Chairperson and the Members of Bihar Legislative Council

The Chairperson and the Members of Bihar Legislative Council visited the National Commission for Women and interacted with the Commission Members and Officers to discuss bilateral issues.

Some of the suggestions that emerged after the meeting were:-

1. The Commission would write to the Ministry of Railways to reserve separate compartments for women in trains which apparently is being discontinued in many trains.
2. The Commission would write to the Bihar Government for implementation of Compulsory Registration of Marriage.
3. Implementation of Swadhar Yojana may be taken up with the State Government.
4. The Commission would extend support in organizing seminars and conferences on women issues to the State Commission for Women, who will send proposals in this regard.

Foreign Visits of the Chairperson, Member

1. Chairperson's Bhutan Visit :-

Dr. Girija Vyas, Chairperson visited Bhutan for a period of four days as a Member of Indian Parliamentary Delegation from Lok Sabha.

2. NCW Chairperson attends United Nations General Assembly meeting at New York:-

Dr. Girija Vyas, Member of Parliament and Member of the Indian Parliamentary Delegation spoke at the Second Committee of the 64th Session of the United Nations General Assembly Meeting held in New York on the issue of eradication of poverty and other developmental issues.

She mentioned that eradication of poverty had gained urgency in the context of on-going economic crisis which due to massive unemployment had pushed millions of people into poverty and threatened to reverse the years of development gains. It was, therefore, imperative that poverty eradication continued to receive the highest attention of the United Nations and the International community.

In this context, she said the United Nations have a very important role to play in ensuring that developing countries are assisted in the development process through improved market access, debt relief and transfer of critical technology at affordable rates. Human development in all its aspects should not be lost sight of while pursuing globalization of economy. Greater flexibilities are also required in international regimes to ensure primacy of the development dimensions.

On the issue of role of women in development, she said that gender equality and empowerment of women are vital as this has a multiplier effect on the socio-economic growth. It is, therefore, essential that active involvement of women and their participation is ensured in planning and decision

making, education, improved access to productive resources.

Dr. Girija Vyas also endorsed the view of the United Nations on US Embargo on Cuba. Dr. Vyas said that for the last 17 years in a row, the General Assembly, while deliberating this agenda item, "has categorically and overwhelmingly rejected the imposition of laws and regulations with extra-territorial impact". "Unfortunately, these repeated resolutions remained unimplemented", she said. "The nearly five decade-old United States embargo on Cuba, including its extra-territorial aspects, continues to remain in force. We share the views expressed by the international community in its opposition to the embargo" she added.

Press Conferences

1. Press Conference on July 4th, 2009 at Conference Room, NCW on Schemes for Rape Victims:-

Deeply disturbed by the rising incidents of rape, gang-rape, NCW had asked for early implementation of the scheme for relief and rehabilitation of the rape victims. NCW had written to the Prime Minister to make the anti-rape law effective by extending it to cover the heinous nature of sexual crimes against women and children.

Briefing media persons, NCW Chairperson Dr. Girija Vyas said that the need for a review of laws on sexual assault was felt by NCW as the present law did not define and reflect newer forms of sexual assault on women and children. She urged the Government to change the definition of rape to include in its various other types of sexual assault. The recommendations were based on the National Consultations held on the issue organized by NCW.

2. Press Conference on 25th July, 2009 at Symposia Hall, NASC Complex, Pusa, New Delhi during the National Seminar on Schemes for Rape Victims :-

Speaking on the occasion to media persons, Dr. Girija Vyas said that the rape victims were not only subjected to mental and physical trauma but also confronted with stigma and social ostracism for being victims of such a heinous crime. She said that the rape victims undergo two crises – one when she is raped and second during trial. The scheme was an attempt to enable the victim to live with dignity. She said that a budget of '68 crore as rehabilitation grant had been set aside for this scheme.

3. Press Conference on 24th August, 2009 at 12.30 P.M. in the Silver Oak Hall, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi on the recommendations on amendments to Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986 :-

Perturbed over indecent representation of women on television, NCW was in favour of necessary changes in the law to bring in its ambit the electronic media.

The NCW has proposed certain amendments in the Prohibition of Indecent Representation of Women and Children Act, 1986 to make punishment for those violating it more stringent and make the law applicable to television channels.

A recommendation in this regard has been sent to the Ministry of Women & Child Development, NCW Chairperson Dr. Girija Vyas said at a press conference here today.

To widen the scope of the Act and its applicability, the definition of “advertisement” is also proposed to be amended.

Advertisement will include any notice, circular, label, wrapper or other document, besides visible representation made by means of any light including laser light and smoke, Vyas said.

4. Press Conference on 27th August, 2009 at India Islamic Cultural Centre during the inauguration of NRI Cell:-

The NCW has launched a special NRI cell which will be a non-stop shop for all issues related to NRI weddings and related disputes.

Speaking to media Dr. Girija Vyas said that the Commission receives a lot of complaints from Indian women being deserted by their NRI husbands. Through the cell for which the Overseas Affairs Ministry had named the Commission as a, nodal agency women can get their disputes solved through mediation. The cell would accept and process all complaints related to Indian women deserted by their spouses abroad.

5. Press Conference for launch of NRI Cell (at NCW office) on 24th September, 2009 at 11.00 a.m. at its premises at No. 4, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Marg, ICCW Building, New Delhi :-

Speaking to press, the NCW Chairperson said that the NRI cell would function as a nodal agency for dealing with complaints regarding NRI marriages. The body has been nominated as the coordinating agency at the national level for dealing with issues pertaining to NRI marriages by the Overseas Indian Affairs Ministry, she said.

6. Press Conference on 5th October, 2009 in the Conference Room on relief and rehabilitation to victims of acid attacks:-

Dr. Girija Vyas, while interacting with the media, said the NCW prepared a draft of the Prevention of Offences (by Acids) Bill, 2008. The Bill proposes to classify acid attacks as a separate offence. The bill which has been sent for approval to the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development specifically deals with acid attacks. It includes schemes to treat and rehabilitate victims.

7. Press Conference on 13th October, 2009 at 3.30 p.m. in the conference room on Section 125 of Cr.P.C. regarding maintenance to Women and Children:-

Addressing reporters on the issue of major changes to Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code relating to maintenance, Dr. Vyas said the procedure for filing claims should be made simplified and made time bound with a cap on disposing claims within five hearings. Also, alternative methods of serving of means and private courier services should be explored.

8. National Conference on implementation of Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 on 13th November, 2009 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi :-

Speaking to the press, NCW Chairperson Dr. Girija Vyas said that from cradle to grave women were subjected to emotional, physical and psychological violence. She said Uttar Pradesh topped the list of domestic abuse cases across India with 3,892 cases registered under the Act. Delhi was second with 3,463 cases while Kerala with 3,190 cases occupied the third slot.

9. Press Conference on Ruchika's case on 23rd December, 2009:-

Expressing deep anguish over the recent judgment giving a light sentence to former Haryana Director General of Police S P S. Rathore for molesting a minor girl, the National Commission for Women asked the Haryana Government to reinvestigate the case.

"The NCW is anguished as efforts are alleged to have been made to hamper proper investigation at every stage in this particular case", Dr. Vyas said.

Dr. Vyas has written to the Haryana Chief Minister to identify the lacunae in investigation in the case and explore the possibility of filing an appeal against the judgment. The Chairperson said, "It is learnt that the charge of abetment to suicide was withdrawn by the police". Though the cop had been held guilty, he was given just six months jail.

10. Press Conference on Activities of NRI Cell on 21st January, 2010:-

Holding a Press Conference on the issue of NRI marriages, NCW Chairperson, Dr. Girija Vyas suggested that there should be a comprehensive separate legislation for Non-Resident Indian (NRI) affairs as the phenomenon of holiday husbands – NRI grooms, who marry in India for dowry and desert their wives – was on a steady rise.

Dr. Vyas said the Commission's NRI Cell, which was set up six months back, had received as many as 177 complaints relating to marital discord. About 331 such complaints have been received by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs in the past one year. "A maximum of 130 complaints were received from the US followed by Britain 44 and Canada 37. Among the states, maximum of 87 complaints were

received from Punjab, followed by Delhi 59 and Haryana 21," Dr. Vyas added.

11. Women Reservation Bill, 6th March, 2010:-

The NCW held a press conference at the Commission on the Women's Reservation Bill. Apart from the media, representatives from various women organizations attended the press meet. Chairperson thanked political parties like the Congress, BJP, JD(U) and the Left for supporting the Bill for providing 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies.

She appealed to the Samajwadi Party and the Rashtriya Janata Dal to support the Women's Reservation Bill.

Important Meetings/workshops organized by the Commission:

1. Seminar on 'Violence against Women' held in Mumbai.
2. Seminar on relief to rape victims conducted at NASC Complex, Pusa, New Delhi on 25th July 2009.



Dr. Girija Vyas addressing the Inaugural Session on the Seminar on "Relief and Rehabilitation to Victims of Rape".



At the Interactive Session on "Seminar on Relief and Rehabilitation to Victims of Rape". (From Right) Dr. Girija Vyas.

3. A consultation on PC & PNDT Act was held in December 2009 at Jodhpur in Rajasthan.
4. National Consultation on 'Maintenance' was held in Bangalore in October, 2009.
5. Regional level Conference on 'Women's Right' was held at Shillong in February, 2010.
6. Seminar on 'Child Marriage' was held at Chittorgarh in March, 2010.
7. Seminar on 'Marriagable Age' was held on 27th August, 2009 at Vigyan Bhawan.



Dr. Girija Vyas addressing Inaugural Session of Seminar on "NRI Marriages" at India Islamic Centre, New Delhi



(From Right) Dr. Girija Vyas releasing a report on the occasion of a Seminar of NRI Marriage at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi

8. Seminar on Implementation of PWDV Act was held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on 13th November, 2009.



Dr. Girija Vyas addressing a Seminar on "Implementation of PWDV Act" at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi

9. Consultation on 'Dayan Pratha' was held at Udaipur in December, 2009.
10. A workshop on 'Child Marriage' was held at Jodhpur in December, 2009.

Commission's NewsLetter : Rashtra Mahila

Rashtra Mahila, a monthly newsletter of the Commission, published in English and Hindi,

continues to disseminate information about the Commission's programmes to women activists, members of legal fraternity, administrators, members of the judiciary, representatives of NGOs, scholars and students all over the country.

The newsletter highlights the activities of the Commission as well as success stories with regard to complaints lodged before the Commission, and also important court and Government decisions affecting women. Despite the increasing cost of printing, the newsletter is available to all its readers, free of cost. The monthly newsletter is also available on the website of the Commission i.e. www.ncw.nic.in

NCW will be Coordinating Agency for NRI Marriages:-

One of the recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women (EWc) (14th Lok Sabha) on the subject "Plight of Indian Women deserted by NRI husbands" was to evolve a well defined/ coordinated mechanism to deal with the issue of problematic NRI marriages to enable the aggrieved women to get a respectable solution to the problem. This recommendation was deliberated at an Inter Ministerial meeting comprising representatives from Ministries of Overseas Indian Affairs, External Affairs, Home Affairs, Law and justice, Women and Child Development, National Commission for Women (NCW) and National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). It was decided that the National Commission for Women will be the coordinating agency at the national level to receive and process all the complaints related to Indian Women deserted by their overseas Indian husbands.

The State Governments/ Union Territories Administration and Indian Missions/ Post abroad have been requested to take note of this decision and to take further action accordingly.

Memorandum Of Understanding Signed With UNIFEM

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed on 28.1.2010 between the National Commission for Women and UNIFEM. The scope of agreement of the MOU is as follows:-

- a) engage in developing strategies to reduce all forms of violence against women including developing of strategies and organizing policy dialogues to end trafficking of women in India and through studies , action research and other methods map areas in India that are vulnerable or prone to trafficking of all kinds and the interventions would also focus on Prevention in source areas; Law enforcement; Rehabilitation; Strengthening policies.
- b) Organizing policy dialogues on the convention on ending all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) which would include creating public awareness, reviewing the progress made by the Government of India on implementation of the said Convention
- c) Assist in rendering all possible assistance to the complaints relating to women abandoned by their NRI spouses, including networking with NGO's , community organizations in India and abroad and recommend the Government on any policy or issue relating to the NRI marriages.

Organize consultations, workshops on any issue relating to women. Consequent upon the agreement, a working group has been constituted consisting of two officials from UNIFEM , two officials from NCW and representatives from Ministry of Women & Child Development , NHRC and MHA.

Visit to Custodial Institutions

As per Section 10 (10) of the National Commission for Women Act, one of the functions of the National Commission for Women is to inspect or cause to be inspected jails, remand homes, women's institutions or any other place of custody, where women are kept as prisoners, or otherwise and take up with the concerned authorities for remedial action, if found necessary. In order to assess and analyze the condition of women in custody, the Members of the Commission visited the following jails during the year 2009-10 and made the following observations/ recommendations :-

● **Sawai Madhopur Jail in Rajasthan**

A Member of the Commission inspected the Sawai Madhopur Jail on 05.07.2009 and observed that the area given to female inmates was very small leading to overcrowding. The inmates had been accommodated more than the capacity. The environment of the jail was not neat and clean. The inmates of the Jail made a request to provide them television sets in their rooms.

The matter regarding pending cases was also discussed with the Jail Superintendent. The Jail Superintendent was directed to make a proposal and submit to State Government for increasing the area to be earmarked for the female inmates in the

jail to reduce overcrowding and providing television sets in their rooms for recreation purposes.

● **District Jail for Women Shillong :-**

A Member of the Commission visited the District Jail for women, Shillong on 22nd September, 2009 and met the Jail officers including Medical Officers. On inspection it was found that there are two dormitories available for inmates which are very well kept and maintained. There were seven inmates housed in the jail. Though the building was old but the surrounding was very clean and orderly maintained.

The facilities available were Vocational Training and Income Generation Activities like basket weaving, candle making, tailoring. The training for these activities were provided by a NGO called WISE. There was a kitchen garden and facilities for outdoor and in-door games were also available. The inmates were also provided Counseling by the Counselors of North Eastern Hill University. The health needs/ problems were well attended by a Medical Officer. The inmates were looking satisfied, healthy and happy.

However, the following recommendations were made:-

1. That the Meghalaya State Commission for Women (MSCW) should help the inmates of the jail to get Legal Aid for speedy disposal of the cases as the Commission has a Lawyer.
2. That the Meghalaya State Commission for Women can follow – up these cases.
3. That the Counseling and psychological support be given by NSCW and its partner NGOs.

Further, as a result of interaction between the Member of the NCW, MSCW, Jail Officers and Media, the following points emerged for consideration:-

- a) Setting up of a Special Cell for women in Ganesh Das Hospital for women victims whereby they could be given speedy treatment and examination of rape victims, counseling etc. The Cell has to be women friendly.
- b) Non- functioning of Women's Desk at the Police Stations.
- c) NCW has to extend more help to Meghalaya with regard to Crimes against women as the number of cases was rising rapidly.

● **Jowai District Jail:-**

Member of the Commission visited the Jowai district jail on 23rd September, 2009 and met the District Jail Officials and Medical Officer. At the time of inspection, there was only one female inmate of 40 years of age. The Jail was well maintained with the provision of television for recreation and vocational training like stitching, art and craft. The Member was very much concerned about the safety and welfare of the lone inmate housed in the jail.

It was suggested that the State Commission for Women should provide legal help to the inmate. The Secretary of the Jaintia Youth Federation agreed to bail her out. There was also interaction with the media.

● **Sikkim State Prison, Rongyek and District Prison, Namchi :-**

The jails were visited by a Member of the Commission on 26th September, 2009. She met the

senior Superintendent of Police (Prisons) and other jail officials who briefed her about the cases of the inmates and the facilities provided to the inmates. In all there were nine women prisoners. The prison was based on the ideology of Mahatama Gandhi. The prison administration has initiated the uphill task of reformation, rehabilitation and reintegration of criminals back to society with an honest approach and challenge to reform the criminals in suitable ways by introducing the vocational programmes/trades like mushroom cultivation, furniture making with Buddhist carving, preparation of handmade tea from prison tea garden, bamboo crafts and products, tailoring, envelope making, floriculture and orchid farming, goetery, dairy farming, bakery and confectionery and screen printing etc. There was also a proposal to start a hardware and networking computer course, a mechanical workshop, an unit each for welding works, masonry, plumbing, electrical wiring etc. The proposal for a tourist spot had already gone to the State Government. The facilities provided to the inmates were satisfactory in District Prison Namchi and good in Sikkim prison.

● **Sawai Madhopur Hospital:-**

A Member of the Commission visited the hospital on 27.11.2009 and inspected the facilities

being provided to the patients. The hospital was in worst condition. Animals were roaming in the premises of the hospital. The life line drug store, Female and Labour wards were also inspected. There was mismatch in the accounting of number of medicines given free of cost to Below Poverty Line (BPL) families. It was reported that the posts of Radiologist, Anesthetist and Surgeon are lying vacant, Further there was need for one police outpost near the hospital.

The hospital administration was instructed to make arrangements for constructing boundary wall of the hospital and fixing the main gate at the entrance so as to prohibit the entry of the animals in the premises of the hospital. It was also instructed to the Hospital Administration for taking action against those employees who were not discharging their duties properly. For filling up the vacant posts in the hospital, it was suggested that they should take up the matter and coordinate with the Health Ministry of the State Government. The Member also met a woman patient who gave birth to her eighth female child and as a result her husband left her. The Hospital administration was impressed upon to help the patient out.