

Minutes of the Expert Committee on Gender and Education held on 08.06.2012 at 1400 hrs. in the Conference Hall of the National Commission for Women, New Delhi.

The following attended the meeting:

1. Dr. Charu WaliKhanna	Presiding Officer
2. Ms. Shamina Shafiq	Member
3. Ms. Neelam Nath	Member
4. Mr. Piyush Angrish	Member
5. Ms. Sangeeta Chabhra	Member
6. Mr. Ridhima Rawat	Member
7. Mr. Sandeep Masih	Member
8. Dr. M. K. Devarajan, Member, SHRC, Raj.	Special Invitee
9. Mr. Parantap Kumar Das, NCPDR	Special Invitee
10. Ms. Neelam Verma	Special Invitee
11. Ms. Yogita	Special Invitee
12. Mr. R.R.Meena, Department of Education, Ministry of HRD	Special Invitee

Leave of absence granted to Ms. Anita Mukhim

In attendance were:

1. Ms. Aarti Chawla	Coordinator
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At the outset, the Presiding Officer welcomed all the Members and there was a round of introduction.

The Presiding Officer introduced the topic. She said that, deeply concerned with rising trends of social intolerance, and more particularly crimes against women, the Commission felt the need to set up Expert Committee on Gender & Education. Undoubtedly efforts are being made to address the situation by the Government by formulating more legislation for the protection of women. Even more importantly, however, there is an imperative need to change the stereotyped mindset, specially of men and the community at large, which can only be done by purposeful and effective gender sensitization. The long-term solution lies in imparting gender sensitive values through education.

The Presiding Officer informed the Committee that the issue of Education as Catalyst in Gender & Caste Sensitisation also came up during the NHRC meeting

held on 7th February, 2012. To this end, it is important to mainstream gender sensitisation/ human rights education in schools and universities, introducing a gender sensitisation/human rights element into every subject. Despite laws being in place, the implementation is weak both at the level of administration and the community. Hence the CHALLENGE is to address the issue at the educational level in order to sensitise people to problems being faced by the weak and marginalised sections of society, specially dalit women and the girl child.

Ms. Shamina Shafiq raised the question that since age is an important factor syllabus must be accordingly designed.

Ms. Hemlata Kharia, Member, NCW highlighted the need to introduce an elementary study of the laws relating to the protection of women in the NCERT syllabus at every class / stage.

Mrs. Neelam Nath said that, among other things, NCW needs to collaborate with National Skill Development Corporation in order to address problem of dropouts. She also added that since there appears to be a tendency primarily by the electronic media to glamorise sex and treat the female body only as a commodity, it is important that a counter strategy may be similarly devised.

It was also emphasised that in cases of Crime Against Women police action and cognizance need to be taken immediately. In this context she also referred to Mr. B D Pandey's Report on the power of cognizance and their effect on law and order.

Mr. Piyush Angrish suggested that there should be a policy not only for the school going children but also for children who are dropout and can be contacted through setting up the centres at field levels in collaboration with NGOs / Police etc.

Ms. Sangeeta Chabhra says that the issues and challenges with reference to gender sensitization are urban and rural specific. She mentioned that there is an urgent need to judiciously occupy the school dropouts and involve them in productive skills. Schemes like MNREGA in many states have had an impact on women empowerment and also resulted in increasing awareness for the women of their rights. Specific policies especially related to school dropouts need to be formulated for urban/rural areas.

Mr. Ridhima Rawat said that children who are emotionally disturbed from early ages are more vulnerable for going astray. Their own school is conducting life skills not only for children but the parents as well, in view of the father's mind set arising from his position as the primary bread earner.

Mr. Sandeep Masih, says that their own school is imparting life skills and gender sensitive education and also has 25 % quota for under privileged but the problem remains the same. He was of the opinion that there is an urgent need for large number of government schools to be covered.

Representative of NCPCR said that NCPCR is working with children in conflict with law and children in need of care and protection and in close linkage of NGOs. He feels print and visual media should be used to sensitize officials dealing with children, who often are not motivated due to low salary structure.

Ms. Neelam Verma says that sex education is being imparted to the students of senior primary level from 6th class onwards under life skills through education and vocational counselling. However there is a scope for improvement.

Dr. M. K. Devarajan said that real education should include instilling civic sense. In every lesson some element of citizenry should be included along with the visual media. He gave the reference of Kerala Police Project i.e., Student Police Project and example of Commissioner of Police, Kerala, School Protection Group. Regarding crime against women he referred to success of Delhi Police Projects *Parivartan* and *Do Kadam*. He also said that nothing like conviction to prevent crime. He also gave example of Human Rights Clubs in school and colleges in Rajasthan.

Ms. Yogita says that books may not be that effective but by depiction and sensitization through ***Nukkad Nataks*** and other Visual Media may be more effective.

The representative of Department of Education, Ministry of HRD said that they have some schemes in this regard, the details of which will be provided later.

The committee unanimously agreed that the problem is vast and as stated by the representative of Department of Education, Ministry of HRD there is scope of further introducing gender / human rights / caste sensitization in the syllabus specially at the school level. Hence, in order to impact the issues involved 1 or 2 areas should be focused on and the issues should be identified by a core group, which will develop a common module to be implemented in rural and urban areas and tested on a pilot basis.

The core group will comprise of

1. Ms. Neelam Nath
2. Ms. Sangeeta Chabhra
3. Ms. Yogita
4. Mr. Piyush Angrish
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The date for the next meeting was fixed for 20th July, 2012. The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to all the Members for their valuable inputs.

Presiding Officer