

The National Commission for Women is a statutory body established under the National Commission for Women Act 1990. Its aim is to review the constitutional and legal safeguards for women, recommend remedial legislative measures, grievance redressal and advise the government on policies affecting the women.

Actions and Initiatives by the NCW

① Civil Sphere

- ↳ Proposed amendments to the Hindu Marriage Act 1955 to omit epilepsy as grounds for divorce.
- ↳ Proposed the Dowry Prohibition Act
- ↳ Has been instrumental in the campaign against Triple Talak.
- ↳ In Maimon Baskari's Nuh case, fought for the right of the victim to marry a person of her own choice.
- ↳ In Fakhruddin M. Shaik v. Jaitunbi Mubarak Shaik case, the Commission intervened to seek maintenance beyond the iddat period for Muslim women.
- ↳ Adopted a strategy for assisting women in the redressal of their grievances, facilitating speedy delivery of justice by organising Parivarik Mahila Lok Adalats in different parts of the country.
- ↳ Its Research Cell looks into the emerging problems of Indian women due to discrimination and gender bias and disability bias.

② Criminal Sphere

- ↳ Proposed amendments to IPC, 1860 to curb the sale of minor girls.
- ↳ Proposed the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Bill which was passed in 2005.
- ↳ Has undertaken the creation of a National Digital Database of Acid Attacks for speedy redressal and compensation.
- ↳ Intervened in Bhateri gang rape case and supported the victim and provided her protection. Also played a role for the actions taken in the Imrana and Marine Drive rape cases.
- ↳ Has undertaken inspection of jails and promoted the idea of violence-free homes.

Shortcomings

- ① No teeth against government agencies
 - ↳ silent spectator to the issues of sexual violence against women by police and army in J&K, north east, Chhattisgarh.
- ② Ineffective
 - ↳ Inability to effectively strategise and tackle problems faced by women in public and private sphere.
 - ↳ NCRB report shows an rising rate of crime against women.
- ③ Biased
 - ↳ At times exhorted bias and prejudice due to influence of the prevalent patriarchy in our society.
- ④ All bark and no bite
 - ↳ Has been criticized as toothless and spineless as the body is only recommendatory and has no power to enforce its decisions.

Way Forward

- Its needs structural retrofitting to remain effective
- ① NCW should have concrete legislative power.
 - ② NCW should have power to take legal actions against the lackadaisical attitude of Internal Complaint Committee towards grievance redressal of women facing harassment at workplace.
 - ③ NCW should have financial autonomy.
 - ④ The power to select its own members should remain with itself and not with the Union Government to avoid the Commission being politicized.
 - ⑤ It should be given constitutional status so that it can have legal powers to summon police officers or witnesses.

It is not only the duty of the state but also the duty of the citizens to be aware of the misconducts taking place in our society against women. Both the strengthening of the NCW and public awakensness and participation of women themselves will make the working of NCW more ~~just~~ justiciable.