

National Commission for Women (NCW)
(07 December, 2021)

Historical Background

- The National Commission for Women was set up **as a statutory body** in January 1992 under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990.
- The **First National Women Commission** was constituted on 31st January 1992 with **Mrs. Jayanti Patnaik** as the Chairperson.
- The **Eighth National Women Commission** was constituted in August 2018 with **Ms. Rekha Sharma** NCW Chairperson.

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The mission of the National Commission for Women:

- To strive towards enabling women to achieve equality and equal participation in all spheres of life by securing their due rights and entitlements through suitable policy formulation, legislative measures, effective enforcement of laws, implementation of schemes/policies, and devising strategies for the solution of specific problems/situations arising out of discrimination and atrocities against women.

Objectives of NCW

- To review the Constitutional and Legal safeguards for women ;
- recommend remedial legislative measures ;
- facilitate redressal of grievances and
- advise the Government on all policy matters affecting women.

Constitution of the NCW:

The **Central Government shall constitute** a body to be known as the National Commission for Women to exercise the powers conferred on and to perform the functions assigned to, it under this Act.

The National Women Commission shall consist of:-

- A Chairperson, committed to the cause of women, to be **nominated by the Central Government**.
- **5 Members to be nominated by the Central Government** from amongst persons of ability, integrity, and standing who have had experience in law or legislation, trade unionism, management of an industry potential of women, women's voluntary organizations (including women activist), administration, economic development, health, education or social welfare;
- Provided that at least one Member each shall be from amongst persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes respectively;

The Mandate of National Commission for Women

The commission shall perform all or any of the following functions, namely:-

- **Investigate and examine** all matters relating to the safeguards provided for women under the Constitution and other laws,
- **present to the Central Government**, annually and at such other times as the Commission may deem fit, reports upon the working of those safeguards,
- make in such **reports recommendations** for the effective implementation of those safeguards for the improving the conditions of women by the Union or any state,
- **review, from time to time, the existing provisions** of the Constitution and

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other laws affecting women and recommend amendments thereto so as to suggest remedial legislative measures to meet any lacunae, inadequacies, or shortcomings in such legislations,

- take up cases of violation of the provisions of the Constitution and of other laws relating to women with the appropriate authorities,
- **look into complaints and take suo moto notice of matters** relating to:-
 1. deprivation of women's rights, non-implementation of laws, non-compliance of policy decisions, guidelines or instructions, etc.
 2. **call for special studies or investigations** into specific problems or situations arising out of discrimination and atrocities against women and identify the constraints so as to recommend strategies for their removal,
 3. **undertake promotional and educational research** so as to suggest ways of ensuring due representation of women in all spheres and identify factors responsible for impeding their advancement, such as, lack of access to housing and basic services, inadequate support services and technologies for reducing drudgery and occupational health hazards and for increasing their productivity,
 4. participate and advice on the planning process of socio-economic development of women,
 5. evaluate the progress of the development of women under the Union and any State,
 6. inspect or cause to be inspected a jail, remand home, women's institution or other places of custody where women are kept as prisoners or otherwise and take up with the concerned authorities for remedial action, if found necessary,
 7. fund litigation involving issues affecting a large body of women,
 8. make periodical reports to the Government on any matter pertaining to women and in particular various difficulties under which women toil,
 9. any other matter which may be referred to it by Central Government.

Issues with National Commission for Women

- The powers of NCW are only recommendatory in nature and it has no power to enforce its decisions.
- Since it is not a constitutional body it lacks legal powers to summon police officers or witnesses.
- The problem of less funding to NCW.
- Political interference in the nomination of members of NCW.
- It has no actual legislative powers. It only has the powers to suggest amendments and submit reports which are not obligatory on a state or Union Government.

Women Specific Legislation

- The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956

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- The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 (28 of 1961) (Amended in 1986)
- The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986
- The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987 (3 of 1988)
- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005
- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (PREVENTION, PROHIBITION, and REDRESSAL) Act, 2013
- The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013

Women related Legislation

- The Indian Penal Code, 1860
- The Indian Evidence Act, 1872

She is a Changemaker'

To improve leadership skills of grassroot women political leaders, the National Commission for Women (NCW) today launched a pan-India capacity building programme, 'She is a Changemaker' for women representatives at all levels, gram panchayats to parliament members and political workers including office bearers of National/State political parties.