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## ROLE OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR WOMEN IN SAFEGUARDING WOMEN'S RIGHTS

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### Abstract

Women's rights are fundamental to achieving gender equality and ensuring social justice. In India, the National Commission for Women (NCW) plays a pivotal role in protecting and promoting the rights of women. The NCW is entrusted with various responsibilities aimed at safeguarding the rights of women. The NCW continuously reviews existing laws and recommends necessary amendments to ensure they align with contemporary challenges faced by women. To empower women, the NCW organizes awareness campaigns, workshops, and training programs. The NCW monitors and evaluates the implementation of various government schemes and policies related to women's welfare. Over the years, the NCW has played a crucial role in advocating for women's rights and bringing about significant reforms. Despite its significant contributions, the NCW faces several challenges in fully achieving its mandate. The National Commission for Women plays a vital role in upholding and safeguarding women's rights in India. While it has made significant strides in addressing gender issues, strengthening its authority and resources can further enhance its effectiveness.

**Keywords:** National Commission for women, gender equality, functions of NCW, right of women, achievements of NCW

### Introduction

Women's rights are fundamental to achieving gender equality and ensuring social justice. In India, the National Commission for Women (NCW)<sup>73</sup> plays a pivotal role in protecting and promoting the rights of women. Established in 1992 under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990, the NCW serves as a statutory body dedicated to addressing issues concerning women and ensuring their empowerment. The commission is tasked with investigating and addressing gender-based discrimination,

ensuring justice for victims, and advocating for policies that benefit women in all spheres of life. One of the primary functions of the NCW is to address grievances related to discrimination, domestic violence, workplace harassment, dowry issues, and other forms of exploitation.

### Functions and Responsibilities of NCW

The NCW is entrusted with various responsibilities aimed at safeguarding the rights of women. Some of the key functions<sup>74</sup> include:

<sup>73</sup> <http://ncw.nic.in/>

<sup>74</sup> <http://ncw.nic.in/functions>

### Reviewing Legal Provisions and Policies

The NCW continuously reviews existing laws and recommends necessary amendments to ensure they align with contemporary challenges faced by women. It also proposes new legislations when required. Through this process, the commission ensures that outdated laws are revised and new ones are framed to address emerging issues.

### Handling Complaints and Providing Redressal

One of the primary functions of the NCW is to address grievances related to discrimination, domestic violence, workplace harassment, dowry issues, and other forms of exploitation. Women can file complaints directly with the NCW<sup>75</sup>, which then investigates and takes necessary action. The commission acts as a bridge between victims and law enforcement agencies, ensuring that their grievances are taken seriously and resolved effectively.<sup>76</sup>

### Conducting Research and Studies

The commission undertakes studies and research on various issues affecting women, including gender bias, socio-economic disparities, and violence against women. These studies help in formulating policies and recommendations for government intervention. By generating reliable data and insights, the NCW contributes to informed policy-making and advocacy efforts.<sup>77</sup>

### Spreading Awareness and Conducting Educational Programs

To empower women, the NCW organizes awareness campaigns, workshops, and training programs. These initiatives educate women about their rights and encourage them to stand against discrimination and violence. The commission collaborates with NGOs, educational institutions, and government agencies to reach as many people as possible.

### Intervening in Legal Cases

In cases where women's rights are being violated, the NCW can intervene and offer legal assistance. The commission also helps women seek justice in courts by providing them with legal support and guidance. This function is crucial in ensuring that women, especially those from marginalized communities, have access to the judicial system.

### Monitoring and Evaluating Government Policies

The NCW monitors and evaluates the implementation of various government schemes and policies related to women's welfare. It ensures that these initiatives are effectively reaching the intended beneficiaries. By holding government authorities accountable, the commission ensures that gender-sensitive policies are implemented efficiently.

### Achievements of NCW

Over the years, the NCW has played a crucial role in advocating for women's rights and bringing about significant reforms.<sup>78</sup> Some notable contributions include:

**Amendments to Laws:** The NCW has recommended amendments to various laws, such as the Domestic Violence Act, Dowry Prohibition Act, and Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act. These amendments have strengthened legal protection for women.

**Handling High-Profile Cases:** The commission has taken suo-motu cognizance of high-profile cases of gender-based violence and has worked to ensure justice for victims. Its proactive approach has brought national attention to several critical issues.

**Initiatives for Economic Empowerment:** Programs to support women entrepreneurs and self-help groups have been promoted to enhance economic independence. Financial literacy and skill development programs have been implemented to improve women's socio-economic status.

<sup>75</sup> <https://ncwapps.nic.in/onlinecomplaintsv2/>

<sup>76</sup> <http://ncw.nic.in/procedure-dealing-complaints>

<sup>77</sup> <https://prsindia.org/policy/report-summaries/working-of-national-commission-for-women-and-state-commission-for-women>

<sup>78</sup> <http://ncw.nic.in/sites/default/files/NWC20172021.pdf>

**Helplines and Support Services:** The NCW operates helplines to assist women in distress, providing immediate support and guidance. These helplines have been instrumental in ensuring timely intervention and assistance.

**Awareness Campaigns on Cybercrime Against Women:** With the increasing instances of cybercrimes against women, the NCW has initiated awareness campaigns and training sessions to educate women about online safety and legal recourse.

**Collaboration with International Organizations:** The NCW collaborates with global organizations to align its efforts with international best practices and enhance the effectiveness of women's rights advocacy in India.

### Challenges Faced by NCW

Despite its significant contributions, the NCW faces several challenges in fully achieving its mandate:

**Limited Powers:** The commission can make recommendations but lacks enforcement powers, which limits its effectiveness in ensuring justice. Strengthening its statutory authority could enhance its role in law enforcement.

**Inadequate Resources:** There is often a shortage of financial and human resources, affecting its ability to address all complaints effectively. Increased funding and expansion of its workforce could improve its efficiency.

**Social and Cultural Barriers:** Deep-rooted patriarchal norms continue to pose obstacles to the implementation of women-centric policies and laws. Raising awareness and changing societal attitudes remain long-term challenges.

**Delays in Legal Proceedings:** Many cases handled by the NCW involve prolonged legal battles, making it difficult for victims to receive timely justice. Legal reforms are needed to fast-track such cases.

**Limited Outreach in Rural Areas:** Although the NCW has made efforts to reach rural women, the lack of awareness and accessibility in remote areas remains a challenge. More

grassroots-level initiatives are needed to ensure inclusivity.

### Recommendations for Strengthening NCW

To enhance the effectiveness of the NCW, several steps can be taken:

**Granting Enforcement Powers:** Providing the commission with greater legal authority can help it take direct action against offenders.

**Increasing Financial and Human Resources:** Expanding the NCW's budget and workforce will enable it to handle more cases and reach a larger population.

**Expanding Regional Outreach:** Establishing more regional offices and collaborating with local organizations can help extend the commission's reach to rural and underserved areas.

**Strengthening Collaboration with Law Enforcement:** Enhancing coordination with police and judiciary can lead to faster resolution of cases.

**Leveraging Technology:** Digital platforms can be used to spread awareness, handle complaints efficiently, and provide legal assistance remotely.

### Conclusion

The National Commission for Women plays a vital role in upholding and safeguarding women's rights in India. While it has made significant strides in addressing gender issues, strengthening its authority and resources can further enhance its effectiveness. Empowering women and ensuring gender equality require a collective effort from the government, civil society, and individuals. The NCW remains a beacon of hope in the fight for women's rights, striving to create a more just and equitable society.<sup>79</sup> By continuously evolving and addressing emerging challenges, the commission can further its mission of ensuring a safe and empowering environment for women in India.

<sup>79</sup> <https://ncwwomenhelpline.in/>