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## NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR WOMEN CHAMPIONING WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN INDIA

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### Abstract

The National Commission for Women is a statutory body in India dedicated to safeguarding and promoting the rights and welfare of women. The NCW was constituted on January 31, 1992, in response to the growing concerns about gender discrimination, violence against women, and inadequate legal protection. The NCW plays a crucial role in addressing various issues concerning women's welfare. The commission investigates complaints related to domestic violence, sexual harassment, dowry, and other crimes against women. It has the authority to summon individuals and request official reports in such cases. The NCW organizes awareness campaigns, workshops, and legal literacy programs to educate women about their rights and legal protections. The National Commission for Women has been instrumental in advocating for women's rights and ensuring justice for them. However, to enhance its effectiveness, it needs greater authority, better funding, and stronger enforcement mechanisms.

**Key words:** National Commission for Women, Safeguarding Women's Rights, Role of National Commission for Women, gender justice, women empowerment

### Introduction

The National Commission for Women (NCW) is a statutory body in India dedicated to safeguarding and promoting the rights and welfare of women.<sup>158</sup> Established in 1992 under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990, the NCW serves as an advisory body to the government, addressing issues related to gender equality, women's rights, and empowerment.<sup>159</sup>

### History and Background

The NCW was constituted on January 31, 1992, in response to the growing concerns about gender discrimination, violence against women, and inadequate legal protection. The commission was formed to ensure that constitutional and legal safeguards for women are implemented effectively and that grievances are addressed efficiently.

### Objectives of NCW

The primary objectives of the National Commission for Women include:

- Reviewing legal and constitutional provisions related to women.

<sup>158</sup> <http://ncw.nic.in/>

<sup>159</sup> <http://ncw.nic.in/commission/about-us>

- Recommending measures to improve laws and policies affecting women.
- Investigating complaints and cases of women's rights violations.
- Promoting and conducting research on women's issues.
- Raising awareness about gender equality and women's empowerment.<sup>160</sup>

### Functions and Powers of NCW

The NCW plays a crucial role in addressing various issues concerning women's welfare. Some of its key functions include:

#### Safeguarding Women's Rights

The NCW reviews and suggests amendments to laws related to women, ensuring they align with constitutional and international standards. It has played a significant role in recommending changes to laws like the **Domestic Violence Act, 2005**, and the **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013**.

#### Addressing Grievances

The commission investigates complaints related to domestic violence, sexual harassment, dowry, and other crimes against women. It has the authority to summon individuals and request official reports in such cases.<sup>161</sup>

#### Conducting Research and Studies

NCW undertakes studies on issues affecting women, such as female foeticide, trafficking, workplace discrimination, and health concerns. These studies help in shaping policy recommendations.

#### Spreading Awareness

The NCW organizes awareness campaigns, workshops, and legal literacy programs to educate women about their rights and legal protections.

#### Reviewing Government Policies

The commission evaluates existing government policies and programs to ensure they are

effectively benefiting women. It provides suggestions for policy improvements.

### Notable Contributions and Initiatives

Over the years, the NCW has taken several important initiatives:

**Legal Aid and Support:** Providing free legal aid to women in distress.

**Helpline for Women:** Launching a 24x7 helpline for women in need of immediate assistance.

**Campaigns Against Cyber Crimes:** Conducting programs to spread awareness about cyber safety for women.

**Monitoring Violence Against Women:** Regularly reporting on cases of domestic violence, rape, and harassment.

### Challenges Faced by NCW

Despite its significant role, the NCW faces several challenges:

**Limited Powers:** The commission lacks enforcement powers and can only recommend actions, not implement them.

**Underreporting of Cases:** Many women hesitate to report violence due to societal pressure and stigma.

**Legal Gaps:** Existing laws still have loopholes that need to be addressed for better protection of women's rights.

### Conclusion

The National Commission for Women has been instrumental in advocating for women's rights and ensuring justice for them. However, to enhance its effectiveness, it needs greater authority, better funding, and stronger enforcement mechanisms. A collaborative effort between the government, civil society, and the public is essential to achieve true gender equality in India.

<sup>160</sup> <http://ncw.nic.in/functions>

<sup>161</sup> <https://ncwapps.nic.in/onlinecomplaintsv2/>