

**Minutes of the Meeting on Female Foeticide
held at NCPCR Committee Room on 30th April'08 at 4.00 pm.**

A Meeting on 'Female Foeticide and Infanticide' was convened on 30th April'08. The meeting was presided over by Dr. Shantha Sinha, Chairperson(NCPCR) and attended by the following:

1. Mrs. Sandhya Bajaj, Member(NCPCR)
2. Mrs. Anjuli Chib Duggal, State Investment Promotion Commissioner, Govt. of Punjab, Punjab Bhawan, New Delhi
3. Mr. Manmohan Sharma, Executive Director, VHAI (Punjab)
4. Prof. (Mrs.) Pam Rajput, Executive Director, Women Resource & Advocacy Centre, Chandigarh
5. Dr. Anish Dua, Art of Living Centre, Amritsar, Punjab
6. Mr. Chander Shekhar from Marwari Yuva Sangh, NOIDA
7. Mr. Sadhu Ram Kusla, Project Officer, PNDT Cell, Bhatinda, Punjab
8. Mr. Manoj Das, SOS Children's Village, New Delhi
9. Mr. Adarsh Kumar, General Secretary, Rashtriya Mahila Sansthan, Lucknow
10. Mr. Binod K. Sahu, Registrar (NCPCR)

2. *Mrs. Bajaj* welcomed the participants to the Meeting and explained its objectives. She expressed the concern of the Commission on the issue and solicited the cooperation of the experts/activists present for evolving concrete strategies to combat female foeticide.

3. *Dr. Sinha*, in her address, spelt out the following expectations from the meeting:

- To brain storm in order to find out as to what NCPCR can do about the issue;
- What NCPCR can add to the positive initiatives which have already been taken in this field by Red Cross Society, Bhiwani (Haryana) SGPC and some District Collectors;
- What more needs to be done in terms of advocacy, especially, at the sub-district level;

4. *Mrs. Duggal* said that the recent statements of the Prime Minister exhibits the political will to address the issue. She suggested that we may think of some innovative strategies, which may initially appear to be impossible but given the determination and concerted efforts of the stakeholders, it may yield results. She also, in the later part of discussion, mentioned that we may have both long term and short term strategies. There could be advertising agencies who may be willing to join the campaign against female foeticide. We need to identify them. Companies, like, MAX Healthcare and Ranbaxy may also come forward to fund any innovative advertisements/campaigns. She also suggested that college students who are future parents should also be targeted for advocacy on the issue of female foeticide. As short term strategies, some specific cases of female foeticide can be taken up and probed to their logical conclusions in order to find out the gaps/loopholes in the system. She wanted to know the mandate of the Commission, which was explained by Dr. Sinha.

5. *Mr. Manmohan Sharma* was of opinion that the interventions should be focused and there should be convergence of actions and schemes having ramifications on girl child. Good practices on the issues of female foeticide should also be shared and exchanged.
6. *Prof. Rajput* mentioned that there are many initiatives – both at government and non-governmental level, for addressing the issue of female foeticide. However, a reality is that such initiatives are not having much impact. She also told that the Census enumerator needs to be sensitized on the gender issues in general and the IMR and MMR in particular. She was of opinion that there should be census/survey every month in order to ascertain the sex ratio situation. It was also suggested by her that there should be impact assessment of the schemes/initiatives undertaken by various State Govts. for improving the conditions of the girl children.
7. Dr. Anish Dua apprised the participants about the initiatives of the Art of Living Foundation. 50 saints were mobilized in November, 2005 under a Programme of the Art of Living, called, 'Faith for Action against Sex Selection'. He also mentioned about the Statewide Campaign organized by his Foundation in 2007. This Campaign was called "Beti Sneh Sanjivani Yatras" for the missing daughters of Punjab, basically a Campaign against the practices of sex selection (widely known as female foeticide). This Campaign started from Talwandi Saabo and after passing through 16 Stations in districts of Bhatinda, Mansa, Patiala, kapurthala and Fatehgarh Sahib, concluded at the historical Gurudwara Fatehgarh Sahib in Punjab. Spiritual and religious Leaders, NGOs activities, Political Leaders, educational institutions and medical fraternity were part of this Campaign.
8. Mr. Chander Shekhar, representative of Marwari Yuva Manch, informed about the prevalent practice of sex selection among Marwari Communities and his Organisation is trying to bring attitudinal change in the Community.
9. Mr. Sadhram Kusla, brought to the notice his relentless struggle in identifying and prosecuting Feticide Cases in Bhatinda. He complained about the pressure exerted on him for withdrawing the cases from Court and wanted to know if NCPCR could do something about it.
10. Mr. Manoj Das of SOS, Children Village India, New Delhi, suggested that Anganwadi & ASHA Workers should be part of any concerted campaigns. He also suggested that there could be an Action Research Project on Female Foeticide in order to ascertain not only what is happening on this issue in the protect area but also to know what strategies could be effective to address the problem.
11. Mr. Adarsh Kumar, General Secretary, Rashtriya Mahila Sansthan (an All India Women Organisation), handed over his written suggestions on the issue to the Chairperson (NCPCR). He mentioned that the practice of sex selection is also prevalent in U.P. Hence, there could be campagin against this evil practice under the leadership of NCPCR. He pledged all cooperation of his organization in this regard.

12. Dr. Sinha, while concluding the meeting, said that there could be evidence-based Public Hearings on the issue of female foeticide. Gram Panchayats and Youths Clubs could be roped in for the campaign against Sex Selection practices. Mapping and 'social auditing' of nursing homes should also be undertaken.

13. In the last, the followings were agreed upon :

- (i) The Group should have its next meeting in June / July;
- (ii) The Agenda of the next meeting of the Working Group would be to plan actions for 'Public Hearings' on foeticide as well as violence on children with focus on girl children; and also to map out 'Nursing Homes' having ethical or good practices.

14. The Meeting ended with a Vote of Thanks to Chair and other participants by Mrs. Bajaj, Member (NCPCR).