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Once again we are happy to launch the Meghalaya State Commission Annual Report for the year 2017-18. We are trying our able best to compile this report to enable our readers to get a sense of the amount of work undertaken by our Commission. With regards to problems, challenges faced by our women folks in the state and also the success in regaining back their dignity. We have handled various complaints placed before us around 139 cases. Apart from addressing these problems the Commission conducts other various programmes such as training on leadership training for women belonging to different women’s organization, legal awareness, Campaigns Protesting Violence against Women in the State, Research Studies, holding consultation with various Government Department, Dorbar Shnong and others.

As a Commission for Women, we continue to strive earnestly and provide a platform for the poor, the downtrodden, the weak and neglected woman to solve their problems through amicable settlements, compassion, love and understanding and especially to know about their rights while fulfilling our commitments to the task entrusted upon us. We would like to extend our appreciation to all those who have come forward by lending their help and support to us especially the Social Welfare Department, the National Commission for Women, the Ministry of Justice Government of India and others like the Meghalaya State Legal Services Authority, the Police, Health, Members of the Commission and the office and staff of the Commission.

Smti. Theilin Phanbuh
Chairperson
Meghalaya State Commission for Women
Meghalaya, Shillong
2. ABOUT THE COMMISSION

The Meghalaya State Commission for Women (MSCW) was constituted on 15.10.2004 extending its jurisdiction to the whole State of Meghalaya, with an objective to improve the status of women, investigation of violation of safeguards for women; such as to inquire into any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex for the purpose of or which has the effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise by women of fundamental constitutional rights, or of human rights, or of fundamental freedom in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field or the infringement of any right or benefit conferred on women by or under the provisions of any law for the time being in force or the mental or physical torture or sexual excesses on women including an adolescent girl and a female child.

POWERS OF THE COMMISSION

(1) The Commission shall, for the purpose of any inquiry under this Act have the same powers as are vested in a Civil Court while trying a suit under the Code of Civil procedure, 1908 (Central Act 5 of 1908), in respect of the following matters, namely:-

(a) Summoning and enforcing the attendance of any witness and examining him/her.

(b) Requiring the discovery and production of any document;

(c) Receiving evidence on affidavit;

(d) Requisitioning any public records or copy thereof from any public office;

(e) Issuing commissions for examination of witnesses.

(2) Any proceeding before the commission shall be deemed to be a judicial proceedings within the meaning of sections 193 and 228 of the Indian Penal Code (Central Act 45 of 1860) and the Commission shall be deemed to be a court for the purpose of section 195 of the ‘Code of Criminal Procedure 1973 (Central Act 2 of 1974)
3. ACTIVITIES

CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMMES

The Meghalaya State Commission for Women in collaboration with the Support Group for Women had organized 2 (two) Capacity Building Programme for Women who are representatives of the Seng Kynthei (Women’s Organisation) on the 25th September 2017 at Upper Shillong, on the 4th October 2017 at Nongmynsong Shillong. This programme was supported financially by the Department of Social Welfare, Meghalaya, Shillong.

The objective of the programme was to sensitize them on various women related issues, empowering them with information on rights, legislations and responsibilities so as to enable them to apply whatever they have learned in handling cases related to crimes against women and in sensitizing men and women in the community. Resource Persons both the programmes were from North East Network and from the Commission.

In Garo Hills, the Commission had organised the Capacity Building Programme on the 14th December 2017 at Tura, West Garo Hills. Participants from selected from different Women’s Organisation from the Five Districts in Garo Hills. The session was very interactive and participatory. Resource persons included Dr.Caroline Marak, Social Activist, District Social Welfare Officer, South Garo Hills, Convenor, Support Group for Women and from the Commission.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

- Participants responded very well to the training programmes and pointed out such that sensitization programme at the community level is urgently required for men. They also suggested that Gender awareness and capacity building through gender sensitisation in the community should be organized covering other vulnerable areas in the State.
SENSITISATION PROGRAMME OF MEMBERS OF TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The Meghalaya State Commission for Women in collaboration with the Support Group for Women had organised Sensitisation Programme for members of Traditional Institutions at Amlarem, West Jaintia Hills and Ranikor, South West Khasi Hills on the 17th October 2017 & 22nd November 2017 respectively. The objective of the programme is to encourage the local traditional institutions to promote and encourage women of the respective locality to participate in the decision making process while implementing various schemes and programmes of the Government. Dr.M.P.R.Lyngdoh, Adviser, Ka Lympung Ki Seng Kynthei was the Resource Person for both the programme and spoke about the role and responsibilities of Seng Kynthei in the Local Durbar.
SENSITIZATION OF PARENTS ON PERSONAL SAFETY EDUCATION PROGRAMME

On September 28 2017, the Meghalaya State Commission for Women in collaboration with the Support Group for Women had organized a sensitization programme with the objective of giving them necessary skills to enable them to address safety issues of their children. Resource Persons were Dr. Ardonister Lyngdoh, Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work and Ms. Alcydalyne Lyngkhoi, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Faculty members of the Martin Luther Christian University (MLCU). They highlighted about the importance of Personal Safety Education that works to allow every child the right to feel safe at every situation, using a methodology that promotes the safety of self against abuse. Other speakers during the programme were Shri. Raymond Kharshiing, Assistant Rangbah Shnong, Lawsohtun, Smti. Theilin Phanbuh, Chairperson, Meghalaya State Commission for Women, Ms. Lahun Rumnong, Programme Coordinator, North East Network and Smti. Anita Nongkhlaw, Convenor Support Group for Women

In Garo Hills, the Sensitization programme for Parents on Personal Safety Education of Children was organised on 1st March 2018 at SGSY Hall, North Garo Hills, Resubelpara. The Programme was organised by the Meghalaya State Commission for Women in coordination with the District Social Welfare Office, North Garo Hills, Resubelpara. The Resource persons were from Faith Foundation, an organisation working on Child Sexual abuse. Participants were given also activities to demonstrate their role as parents and share their experiences.

KEY RECOMMENDATION-

• Such programme is needed and useful in empowering children and adolescents to take part in their own protection and in addressing safety issues.
MEETING WITH WOMEN’S ORGANISATION

The Meghalaya State Commission for Women had organised a meeting on the 28th June 2017 with representatives of prominent women organizations unanimously to condemn the despicable act of discrimination and racism and lack of grace on the part of the management of the Delhi Golf Club against Smti.T.Lyngdoh. Following this meeting, the Commission wrote to the National Commission for Schedule Tribe and the National Commission for Women for intervention and investigation into the incident.

MEETING ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC & POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN NORTH EASTERN STATES

The NCW with the help of all the State Commission for Women from North Eastern States has prepared a report and had a discussion during the meeting on how to work and move forward with the recommendations. The report gave detailed study of women farmers, traders and the difficulties they face with necessary recommendations. There are many other recommendations for States, regions and the centre to work on accordingly. Ms.Rekha Sharma, Chairperson I/C, National Commission for Women said that the recommendation may be taken up in three modes: short term, mid-term and long term and added that the NCW will hold regular meetings to monitor how far they have reach and achieve.
INAUGURATION of NGO/WOMEN’S ORGANISATION CENTRE AT UMROI by Smti. Theilin Phanbuh, Chairperson, Meghalaya State Commission for Women

VIST TO PHC BHOIRYMBONG, RI BHOI DISTRICT
SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

To celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the National Commission for Women in Shillong, the Meghalaya State Commission for Women in collaboration with the Sports Department, Govt of Meghalaya had organised a Walkathon on the 27th January 2017 in Shillong. The event was supported by the National Commission for Women and prize money for the winners was sponsored by the office of Deputy Commissioner, East Khasi Hills District.

The walkathon was flagged off by Shri.H.Marwein (IAS), Additional Chief Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya at 7:00 am from Madan Iewrynghep. The Director of Sport & Youth Affairs, Smti.M.W. Nongbri (IAS); the Director Social Welfare, Smti.R.M Kurbah (IAS) and the Chairperson Meghalaya State Commission for Women, Smti. Theilin Phanbuh were present during the event.

More than three hundred enthusiast’s participants had registered for the Walkathon. The route of the Walkathon was via St, Edmunds to Dhankheti to Civil Hospital and culminated at State Central Library, Shillong.

Both young and old participants took part in the walkathon, men and women; boys and girls including the Chairperson and Members of the Commission and officers of the Directorate of Social Welfare, Government of Meghalaya. Our youngest participants are aged 4 (girl) and 7 (boy) and oldest participants aged 68 (male) and 73 (female).
LEGAL AWARENESS PROGRAMMES

The Meghalaya State Commission for women with the support of the National Commission for Women, New Delhi and in co-ordination with the District Social Welfare Offices had organized Legal Awareness Programmes in different districts of the State. The objective of the LAP was

- To spread awareness and to impart knowledge about the basic legal rights of women and remedies under various women related laws and to sensitise men about the rights of women.
- To create awareness about the existing support system and whom to approach for help.

8th & 9th February 2018 at Khliehriat, East Jaintia Hills

The module covered sessions on Understanding Gender, Family and Criminal Law related to women, women’s reproductive and sexual health and Procedural Guidelines. The Commission had also included special session including POSCO Act.

Resource Persons include Protection officers (District Social Welfare Officers) under the PWDV Act, District Child Protection Officers, Police, Advocates from District Legal Services Authority and District Medical & Health Officers from the respective Districts. Resource Persons had used lecture, group discussion and open discussion for highlighting different issues during the session. Some of the Resource Persons had also used games, role play to motivate the participants and to keep the programme interesting and vibrant.
8th & 9th March 2018 at Nongstoin, West Khasi Hills

ACTIVITY ON INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVOR

16th & 17th March 2017 at Umling, Ri Bhoi District

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Identify the gaps in the implementation of existing laws for women
- Implement sex education in schools and impart life skill education to prevent teenage pregnancy and early parenthood.
- Government to formulate regulations regarding the use of smart phone for young people
- Intensive awareness on steps to be taken on sexual assault cases and rape laws
4. IMPORTANT INTERVENTIONS

a. The Meghalaya State Commission for Women has summoned the Secretary of Delhi Golf Club, following a petition by Smti. Tailin Lyndoh who was asked to leave the Delhi Golf club on 24th June 2017 because she was wearing her traditional dress at the premises of the Club. The Chairperson MSWC had also called the complainant Smti Tailin Lyngdoh and Dr Nivedita Barthakur an employer to take their statement before the commission.

b. On the 6th October 2017, Chairperson, Meghalaya State Commission for Women, Smti. T. Phanbuh, and its Members met the Hon’ble Chief Minister to the Government of Meghalaya, Dr. Mukul Sangma to put forward recommendations based on its intervention, programmes and visits to most Districts in the State which needs Government intervention.
MEETING WITH HON’BLE GOVERNOR MEGHALAYA
SHRI. GANGA PRASAD ON THE 13TH NOVEMBER 2018
The Meghalaya State Commission for Women is almost in the final stage of completion of the study on the Socio- Economic Status and Problems of Single Mothers in Meghalaya and has submitted its preliminary report to the National Commission for Women. The objective of the study was to investigate into the prevalence of Single Mothers in the State and also to understand their Socio-Economic status. In addition, it did not only look at the problems and challenges faced by the single mothers but also their wellbeing in terms of materials and resources, personal, family, social network and support and also interventions to aid such mothers. The data shows that many Single Mothers mentioned that there was an inadequacy of resources to meet their needs that affects their personal well-being. The services suggested by few mothers in the study are in terms of Counselling to deal with their emotional stress and for sustainable psychological issues as well as financial support in terms of their children’s education.

5. RESEARCH

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6. CAMPAIGN

In an attempt to create awareness to prevent atrocities against women and children, Meghalaya State Commission for Women had organised flash mob in different districts and the performers were from Eastern Dance Icon, Shillong during the 16 days activism protesting violence against women. Clad in black and orange, the flash mob portrayed the harassment and violence that women face at home and public place. The colour Orange was used to symbolize a brighter future without violence (designated by the UNITE campaign to end violence against women).

The flash mob was organised at Shangpung, West Jaintia Hills, Nongstoin West Khasi Hills, Ampati, South West Garo Hills and Tura, West Garo Hills.
Through the flash mob the Commission appealed to the public to join hands in protesting against the different forms of violence against women and have tried to demonstrate the issue of sexual assault which needs to be severely condemned and punished. This was an innovative mean that the Commission had used to reach out to the masses.

Large crowd had gathered in market and public places and responded to the performance.
7. PUBLICATION AND INFORMATION MATERIALS

With the support of the Department of Social Welfare, the Meghalaya State Commission for Women has completed the production of two documentary film on Trafficking and Sex Work, ‘Breakthrough, Is my voice Heard & In the Shadows-voices of victims of Human Trafficking” in collaboration with the Department of Social Work, Women’s College.

The objective of the production is to highlight the present scenario and causes, screening of the documentary at various levels to create sensitization and awareness of Trafficking and Sex Work and for wide publicity.
8. CASES REGISTERED AT THE COMMISSION FROM APRIL 2017-MARCH 2018

TOTAL NO OF CASES REGISTERED : 139
NO OF HEARINGS CONDUCTED : 27

NO OF CASES SOLVED : 36
NO OF CASES UNDER PROCESS : 33
NO OF CASES FORWARDED TO CONCERN DEPARTMENT : 67
NO OF CASES WITHDRAWN : 3
9. SANCTIONED AND IMPLEMENTATION 2016-17

- An amount of Rs. 19,25,000/- (Nineteen Lakhs Twenty Five Thousand) was sanctioned by the Government for organising programmes in the State and for publication of documentary during 2017-18 vide letter No.MSCW/BA/2004/ Pt.II/1754/46 ‘A’ dated 1st June 2017.

- An amount of Rs. 44,31,212/- (Forty Four Lakhs Thirty One Thousand Two Hundred and Twelve) was sanctioned by the Government vide letter No.SW/ MSCW/BA/2004/pt.III/2310 dated 20th June 2018.

10. SELECTED SUCCESS CASE STORIES

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<th>Maintenance Claim – complaint dated 12th April 2017</th>
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<td>An aggrieved woman had approached the Commission with a request for financial support from her husband who has deserted her and her three daughters and has left them in a financial crisis. The respondent is an employee in a Bank and has failed to maintain the family including the children’s education since May 2016.</td>
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On 9th June 2017, an agreement was signed by both parties for payment of maintenance money and to also bear all the educational expenditure of the children with effect from June 2017.

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<th>Harassment- complaint dated 22 June 2017</th>
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<td>An aggrieved woman had approached the Commission with a complaint that she was harassed by the local headman of her village. He has requested from her to utilise her agricultural land for poultry farming since she was working in Shillong and was under medical treatment. But after a couple of years instead of returning the land back, he tried to snatch away her land claiming that she is never in the village.</td>
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With the intervention of the Commission, both parties were called for hearing and the matter was settled amicably. On 19th June 2018, the village authorities handed over the land document to the complainant which was witnessed by the Commission and by both parties.

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<th>Maintenance –complaint dated 12th October 2017</th>
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<tr>
<td>An aggrieved woman separated from her husband for the last seven years had approached the Commission with a request for financial support from her husband for her two daughters and to help her restore back all her belongings taken away by her in laws.</td>
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On 31st October 2018, an agreement was signed by both parties for maintenance amount to be deposited into the children’s bank account with effect from November 2017 till the children attain the age of 25 years or if married before the said age.
11. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEGHALAYA STATE COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

The Meghalaya State Commission for Women in its intervention programmes and visits to most Districts in the State hereby put forward on priority the following recommendations which need Government intervention on the following issue as below:

- Taking into consideration the increased no of cases received in the Commission, it is recommended and proposed to have separate cell at Tura & Jowai to help women avail and access the services of the State Commission for Women and to redress their grievances promptly & effectively.

- The Commission is functioning from a rented house. The escalating rent as per government rate is sky rocketing every five years. Hence the Commission request the Government to allot Government Land and to construct the office building cum Multi-Facilities Centre in the New Town-Ship at Mawdiangdiang Village to realize the millennium goals for Empowering Women in the State. The Commission had earlier sent a proposal to Director, Meghalaya Urban Development Authority with copies to the Principal Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya and to Director Social Welfare Vide Memo No. MSCW (Urban Affairs/14/58/8700-52 Dated Shillong the 02th April 2014. Meanwhile any Government building if available may kindly be allotted on priority to the office of the Meghalaya State Commission for Women.

- The Chairperson met the Hon’ble Prime Minister. Shri. Narendra Modi on his visit to the State in May 2016 and apprised him of the pendency of cases related to crime against women and children with a request to allot necessary fund for setting of Fast Track Court in the State. As a follow up the Joint Secretary, Ministry of Law and Justice has advised the State to tie up with the Hon’ble High Court for setting up of FAST TRACK Courts as well as Family Court in all the District in the State. The Commission requests the Government to sincerely take up the matter at the earliest.
The increase trends of maintenance cases file in the Commission by destitute and Single Mothers is aggravating and depressing; The Commission felt an urgent need to enact Special Law to contain the deplorable situation and the ripple effect of families of Single Mothers in the State.

The State Level Committee & the District Level Committee on Crime against Women and Girls needs to be strengthen, the District Level Committee should be provided with a Corpus Fund to help the immediate urgency need of victims and that the Committee should be entrusted with the power to take suo-moto cognizance if any reported cases of crimes/offence committed against Women and Children.

To upgrade the infrastructure, manpower and professionalism in the Forensic Science Laboratory of the Police Department.

To upgrade the Post of Member Secretary to a full time sanctioned Post with senior level officials to be appointed to the post.

To speed up the recent proposal to appoint additional manpower to ensure smooth functioning of the Commission.

To review and further empower the Commission by amending the Powers and Functions of the Meghalaya State Commission for Women Act & Rules 2005.
# 12. COMPOSITION

**MEGHALAYA STATE COMMISSION FOR WOMEN**

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<th>Sl. No</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Smti. Theilin Phanbuh</td>
<td>Chairperson</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Smti. Gamchi T. R. Marak</td>
<td>Vice-Chairperson</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Dr. N. Sutnga</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Smti. Rebina Subba</td>
<td>Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Smti. Nakilin G Shylla</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Smti. Bharati B Sangma</td>
<td>Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Sister Judith Shadap</td>
<td>Co-opted Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Smti. Iadalyne Tariang</td>
<td>Member Secretary</td>
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13. NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS

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**Assaulted trio give statement to Women’s Commission**

By One Reporter

With a sense of relief, the three girls who were assaulted by the vigilante group on the orders of the State Council under the Women’s Commission for Women’s Empowerment (Women’s Commission) said they were happy with the statement issued by the commission.

The girls, who were assaulted in the early hours of the morning, were brought to the Women’s Commission office in a police vehicle.

**MSCW on obscene posts**

Women’s Commission (MSCW) has issued a statement in response to the report published in the Meghalaya Guardian.

MSCW has expressed concern over the publication of pictures of women in a compromising position.

**Women’s panel summons golf club sex**

The Women’s Panel, which has summoned members of the Golf Club, has also issued a statement.

The panel has expressed concern over the allegations of sexual harassment at the club.

**Call for more women in electoral politics**

Women’s Commission (Womcom) has called for more women to be involved in electoral politics.

Womcom has stated that women should be encouraged to participate in elections.

**MSCW asks Assam counterpart to intervene in missing woman’s case**

By One Reporter

Arunachal Pradesh: The Meghalaya State Commission for Women (MSCW) has written to its counterpart in Assam seeking information in the case of a woman from Junin Hills who went missing from Guwahati.

MSCW Chairman Thelmin Prakrit said that the Commission has written to the Assam State Commission for Women (ASCW) seeking information on the case.

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