

# UPDATE ANTI - SEXUAL HARASSMENT CAMPAIGN

March 12, 2002

Dear Friends,

Greetings from India Centre for Human Rights and Law.

This 8th update comes to you after another long gap and therefore, will cover not only the 10<sup>th</sup> December Human Rights Day programmes focussing on Sexual Harassment at Work, but also different activities by the organisations on the issue with varied groups. We hope that the efforts of these organisations will enrich our work in our respective areas and possibly open up avenues for growth. Please do let us know if we have missed out on any other activities.

## Campaigns on Human Rights Day, December 10, 2001

As per our knowledge, groups in Mumbai, Pune, Delhi and Kolkata campaigned on 10<sup>th</sup> December to focus on the issue of sexual harassment.

Sanhita, at **Kolkata**, released a book on sexual harassment at workplace "The Politics of Silence" on the occasion of The Human Rights Day, December 10, 2001. The book is based on a survey carried out by Sanhita at different workplaces in Kolkata. It gives a perspective into the widespread prevalence of sexual harassment and offers practical advice to employers on developing and implementing sexual harassment policies in the context of the Supreme Court Guidelines.

The book is available from Sanhita, 89B Raja Basanta Roy Road, Kolkata 700029 at Rs. 135/- inclusive of postage charges within India.

Sakshi, **Delhi** as part of their campaign, put forth a series of three messages on the issue on All India Radio (fm), placed an advertisement in Business India 24<sup>th</sup> Dec - 6<sup>th</sup> Jan issue, with the advertisement expected in The Week and ELLE. Articles in Femina and India Today (Hindi) are expected. They also worked towards putting up posters on the issue at outlets of the fast food joint- Wimpys as well as during their other sale promotion programmes.

In **Mumbai** three groups( Sakhya, Stree Mukti Sangthana and ICHRL) came together for a one-day awareness campaign. Pamphlets on the guidelines in three languages(English, Marathi and Hindi)were distributed in the ladies compartments of the





local train and at exits of various railway stations, tapping working women across the city. Stalls for poster exhibition and pamphlets were set up at two major railway stations. Stickers were stuck in the ladies compartments of local trains. Along with this, both the print and electronic media was contacted. Star TV covered the campaign and broadcasted it on the next day's morning news; Indian Express and Marathi newspapers carried articles on the issue and the campaign. An article also appeared in Savvy-January issue.

Nari Samata Manch, **Pune** decided to observe 10<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> December as awareness raising week with respect to Vishakha guidelines. During the week, the Manch had an interaction with judges, lawyers, and journalists and women workers at Kaij (Dist. Beed). At Usmanabad, a workshop for NGO activists was organised. At Latur, the group had a meeting with 200 women workers mainly anganwadi workers, PHC staff and Self Help Group leaders. At Chandrapur, a two-day workshop was organised with grassroots workers. The group organised these meetings in coordination with local NGOs - Yuva Gram-Kaij, Gramin Bahuuddeshiya Vikas Mandal- Usmanabad, Yard - Latur and Swawalambi Prkalp - Chandrapur.

#### **Other activities on the issue**

Human Rights Law Network ( HRLN ), Delhi, a national network of lawyers and social activists, and Adhikaar, a gender rights organization, have almost completed preparing a training manual to equip Non-Government Organisations, Sexual Harassment Complaints Committees and Training and Human Resource Development personnel/teams in Government Private and Public sectors. For more details contact :-

Human Rights Law Network,  
65, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor,  
Jungpura,  
New Delhi – 110014.  
Phone – 011 4316922/4324501  
Fax – 011 4324502  
E-mail – hrlndel@vsnl.net

Adhikaar,  
Genderprice,  
DA / 8B phase 2,  
DDA flats, Munirka,  
New Delhi -110067

Hengasara Hakkina Sangha, Bangalore, has brought out two brochures 1. Sexual harassment –guidelines 2. The Do's and Don'ts of sexual harassment committee. Their contact address is:-

Hengasara Hakkina Sangha,  
1353,32 "E" Road,  
4<sup>th</sup> "T" Block,  
Jayanagar,  
Bangalore – 560041.  
E-mail: admin@hhs.ilban.ernet.in

Olakh, Baroda, has been involved in raising awareness about the guidelines at working women hostels and other efforts are on at other workplaces. They have also undertaken translation of SANHITA resource material in Gujrathi and may be involved with the



ONGC Complaints Committee. They are also planning to prepare bookmarks and stickers in Gujrathi and English.

Sanhita has developed an Information kit for academic institutions. They made a representation before the senate members of Calcutta University in October. Calcutta University has finally initiated a discussion regarding the implementation of the guidelines. Another presentation was made at the meeting organised by the Women's Study Centre, Calcutta University on the occasion of International Fortnight, Protesting Violence against Women.

Sanhita also co-facilitated the meeting with NCW for Public Sector personnel. The objective of the meeting was to assess the implementation of the guidelines in various organisations and share experiences.

They conducted awareness programs in Bank of India and Reserve Bank of India and have facilitated sessions on sexual harassment at workplace for the newly recruited officers of IAS and WBCS (West Bengal Civil Service) at the Administrative Training Institute.

Programmes on TV, Radio(FM) were facilitated by Sanhita, and newspapers both English and Bangla reported on the issue which was possible after intense lobbying. Women reporters while discussing the issue repeatedly shared their experiences of sexual harassment within their workplace.

Nari Samata Manch, during the past few months, organised gender-sensitization programs with trade unions and with various NGOs in Maharashtra. Subsequent meetings with NGOs in Pune covered discussions on Vishaka, its implementation and role of NGOs on Complaints Committees. The group also organised a conference for NGOs, trade unions, representatives for government offices, universities and anganwadi workers during which resolutions were passed. The conference had speakers from state Women's commission, Dalit Mahila Forum, Janwadi Mahila Sanghatana, Molkarin Sanghatana, Women's Studies Centre, University of Pune. They also organised a special meeting for employers to inform about the guidelines.

ICHRL along with SNTD University has begun an action research project on the issue in one of the govt. hospitals and attached medical college with support from state women's commission. The project aims at understanding the extent and phenomenon of sexual harassment and assist the authorities in developing appropriate policy and mechanisms to deal with sexual harassment.

ICHRL is using a Marathi pamphlet, created in collaboration with Nari Samata Manch, to introduce and inform about the issue to trade unions. An English poster and pamphlet are being used for employers.

### **Other issues**

The Medha Kotwal case is likely to come up for hearing sometime after March, developments of which will be conveyed.

Most of you would have heard about or read about or been involved with the Rajasthan groups in the struggle of Ms Sushila Nagar for justice. Ms Sushila Nagar is the only



Woman Judicial officer belonging to the Scheduled Caste in the State of Rajasthan till date. And her struggle began in March 1992 when posted at Ajmer as Additional Munsiff and Judicial Magistrate. Finally to add insult to injury Ms SN was suspended on 20 April 2001. 6 inquiries have been initiated. A committee has even been formed to suggest further action against Ms SN. Ms S.N was not given a chance to defend herself nor was a personal hearing given despite a specific request.

Presently the inquiries are at various stages. As for Ms SN's complaint against 6 judicial officers only 2 have been chargesheeted. And the others have been given a clean chit. A committee as per the Vishaka Guidelines has not been formed and the struggle continues.

**Please lend your support to the Rajasthan groups actively working on this issue.**

2 of the groups are:-

Vividha  
B-86 Bajaj Nagar Extension, Jaipur- 302 015.  
Rajasthan ;

PUCL Rajasthan  
Kavita Srivastav ,  
76, Shanti Niketan Colony,  
Kisan Marg,  
Jaipur 302015.  
kavisriv@yahoo.com

P.E Usha's struggle also continues. Please lend support . You can contact her at  
Usha P.E.,  
Streevedi, R.G. 206 Kochulloor,  
Medical College,  
Trivandrum 695011, Kerala.  
E-mail - usha\_p\_e@yahoo.com

That's all for now. If any of you have information with regard to the NCW Bill please do let us know.

In Solidarity

Adv. Mini Mathew, Ms. Neeta Raymond, Ms. Renuka Mukadam.  
India Centre for Human Rights and Law.  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor, CVOD Jain School.  
84, Samuel Street, Dongri,  
Mumbai - 9

Tel: 3759657/ 3716690. Fax : 3790699  
Email: huright@vsnl.com