

किडनी गंवाने वाली सुनीता को मदद

सहायता

मुजफ्फरपुर, कार्यालय संवाददाता। फर्जी डॉक्टरों के हाथों किडनी गवां चुकी सुनीता को मुआवजे के रूप में पांच लाख रुपये दिए जाएंगे। इस संबंध में जिला विधिक सेवा प्राधिकार के सचिव एडीजे संदीप अग्निहोत्री ने डीएम सह प्राधिकार के उपाध्यक्ष को पत्र लिखा है।

बोर्ड की ओर से दी गई स्वीकृति : प्राधिकार की ओर से बीते दिनों हुई बैठक में सकरा की सुनीता देवी को मुआवजा के लिए अनुसंशा की गई थी। क्रिमिनल इंजरी मुआवजा बोर्ड की ओर से मुआवजा को स्वीकृति दी

- मुआवजे के लिए जिला विधिक सेवा प्राधिकरण ने लिखा पत्र
- एसकेएमसीएच में भर्ती सुनीता करा सकेगी बेहतर इलाज

गई है। प्राधिकार की ओर से सुनीता को कानूनी सहायता के लिए पैरा लीगल वालंटियर की सुविधा दी गई है।

स्वास्थ्य विभाग के अपर मुख्य सचिव को पत्र लिखा गया था : सुनीता को चिकित्सीय व अन्य सहायता के लिए प्राधिकार की ओर से स्वास्थ्य विभाग के अपर मुख्य सचिव प्रत्यय अमृत को पत्र लिखा गया था। मामले

को राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोग के समक्ष भी उठाया गया था।

इस संबंध में आयोग ने जिला प्रशासन को आवश्यक कार्रवाई करने के लिए निर्देशित किया था। प्राधिकार ने सुनीता के संबंध में अखबारों में छपी खबर पर संज्ञान लिया था।

नियमित डायलिसिस पर है सुनीता : लंबे समय से सुनीता एसकेएमसीएच में भर्ती है। नियमित रूप से उसकी डायलिसिस कराई जाती है। आर्थिक संकट के कारण सुनीता के परिजनों को दर-दर भटकना पड़ रहा है। इस पर संज्ञान लेते हुए प्राधिकार ने संबंधित अधिकारियों को पत्र लिखकर इलाज, मुआवजा व कानूनी सहायता के लिए पहल की है।

Pioneer

NHRC issues notice to Sports Ministry over absence of body for sexual harassment complaints

<https://www.dailypioneer.com/2023/india/nhrc-issues-notice-to-sports-ministry-over-absence-of-body-for-sexual-harassment-complaints.html>

Taking cognizance of the reports that there are no panels in many sports federations including Wrestling Federations of India (WFI) to address sexual harassment complaints, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Thursday issued a notice to the Union Sports Ministry to reply in the matter within 4 weeks.

The move comes at a time when a section of wrestlers of international repute are staging protest at the Jantar Mantar in the national capital alleging that they have been victim of sexual harassment at the workplace.

As per the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (PoSH) Act, 2013, sports federations are mandated to have Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) in the sports federations. However as per reports the Wrestling Federation of India(WFI) as well as at least 15 of the 30 National Sports Federations do not meet this mandatory requirement.

“If the contents of the media reports, found to be true, it amounts to a violation of a law. And this is a matter of concern as it may impact the legal right and dignity of the sports persons,” said the NHRC in its statement issued here.

Notices has been issued to the Secretary, Department of Sports, Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, the Sports Authority of India,SAI, the Board Of Control For Cricket In India, BCCI, Wrestling Federation of India, and all the 15 other National Sports Federations of Handball, Volleyball, Basketball, Weightlifting, Yachting, Gymnastics, Table Tennis, Billiards & Snooker, Kayaking & Canoeing, Judo, Squash, Triathlon, Kabaddi, Badminton, Archery which either do not have even an ICC or properly functional ICCs as required in the law.

As per reports, five Federations, including the Wrestling Federation, do not even have an ICC. Four Federations do not have the stipulated number of members and another six Federations lacked the mandatory external members. It is also stated that one Federation had two panels but neither had an independent member.

Last November, during ‘Open House Discussion on Sports and Human Rights’ the NHRC had suggested a string of measures including appointment of Institutional Ombudsman

and Ethical Officer in sport bodies at national, state and district level to address the grievances of the sportspersons.

The human rights body had also recommended the Centre to undertake periodic audits by an independent expert agency to assess adherence to 'National Sports Development Code of India' and 'Human Rights Strategic Framework' by all national sports federations and make the reports public to ensure transparency. Those who attend the meeting included, NHRC members MM Kumar, Rajiv Jain, Devendra Kumar Singh(Secretary General), Manoj Yadava, Director General and Shri Kunal, Joint Secretary (Sports – Development), Dpt. of Sports, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Rohit Bhardwaj, Secretary, Sports Authority of India, Col. Raj Singh Bishnoi, Senior Executive Director & Head, Netaji Subhash National Institute of Sports, Patiala and Dr. Sudarshan Pathak, Chairperson, Hockey India Sexual Harassment Committee among others.

Jamshedpur डॉक्टर बन कंपाउंडर कर रहा मरीजों का इलाज

<https://samacharnama.com/city/jamshedpur/jamshedpur-doctor-treating-patients-as-compounder/cid10885406.htm>

झारखण्ड न्यूज़ डेस्क, आईएमए जमशेदपुर ने भुइयांडीह में एक फर्जी डॉक्टर के क्लीनिक चलाने का भंडाफोड़ किया है। आईएमए ने बताया कि बिना वैध डिग्री के इसके महंती डॉक्टर बनकर लोगों का इलाज कर रहा है। आईएमए ने डॉक्टर के क्लीनिक की फोटो जारी की है।

सचिव डॉ. सौरभ चौधरी ने बताया कि क्लीनिक चलाने वाला फर्जी डॉक्टर कंपाउंडर है और पैथोलॉजी टेक्नीशियन की ट्रेनिंग कर भुइयांडीह में डॉक्टर बनकर लोगों का इलाज कर रहा है। क्लीनिक में लगे बोर्ड में नाम के आगे डॉक्टर और डिग्री लिखकर मरीज और उनके परिजनों को बेवकूफ बना रहा है। उन्होंने कहा कि आखिर ये फर्जी लोग इतनी हिम्मत कहां लाते हैं। क्या सारे नियम क्वालीफाइड डॉक्टर के लिए ही बने हैं। पीसीपीएनडीटी के सख्त नियम पालन के बाद आज प्रशासनिक चूक की वजह से 27 अल्ट्रासाउंड केंद्र बंद और झोला छाप चिकित्सक बिना किसी डर-भय के लोगों के स्वास्थ्य के साथ खिलवाड़ कर रहे हैं। यहीं नहीं, एक अन्य फर्जी चिकित्सक डॉ. संजय कुमार राय द्वारा जारी मेडिकल सर्टिफिकेट भी आईएमए ने जारी किया है। आईएमए का कहना है कि यह सर्टिफिकेट जाली है, जिसे संजय कुमार राय नाम के झोला छाप डॉक्टर ने अपने लेटर हेड में बनाया है। लेटर हेड में डॉक्टर के नाम के साथ डिग्री भी लिखी गई है, जिसे आईएमए ने फर्जी बताया।

पौने छह माह बाद भी 12 फर्जी डॉक्टरों पर कार्रवाई नहीं फर्जी डॉक्टरों की जांच के लिए गठित कमेटी पौने छह माह बाद भी मामले की जांच पूरी नहीं कर पाई है। 12 फर्जी डॉक्टरों के खिलाफ आईएमए, जमशेदपुर शाखा ने शिकायत की थी, जिसके बाद 24 नवंबर 2022 को सिविल सर्जन ने तीन डॉक्टरों की जांच कमेटी का गठन किया था। कमेटी में सदर अस्पताल के चिकित्सक डॉ. विमलेश कुमार, डॉ. कुंदन कुमार सिंह और डॉ. शैलेंद्र कुमार वर्मा शामिल थे। यह कमेटी आईएमए द्वारा उपलब्ध कराए गए 12 फर्जी डॉक्टरों के खिलाफ सबूत की जांच कर निर्णय लेगी कि आरोप सही हैं अथवा गलत।

लेकिन पौने छह माह बाद भी अबतक कमेटी ने जांच पूरी नहीं की है।

इस मामले में राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोग ने भी संज्ञान लिया है और राज्य सरकार से शहर और ग्रामीण इलाके में फैले फर्जी डॉक्टरों पर की गई कार्रवाई के संबंध में रिपोर्ट मांगी है। एनएचआरसी के संज्ञान लेने के बाद स्वास्थ्य विभाग के अपर सचिव ने सिविल सर्जन ने मामले की जांच रिपोर्ट मांगी है, ताकि एनएचआरसी को भेजी जा सके।

जमशेदपुर न्यूज़ डेस्क !!!

Orissa Post

NHRC seeks ATR on Koraput migrant workers

<https://www.orissapost.com/nhrc-seeks-atr-on-koraput-migrant-workers/>

Kendrapara: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sought an Action Taken Report (ATR) from the Koraput district Collector on the issue of migrant workers who had to walk from Bangalore to Koraput after being refused their wages. Acting on the petition filed by rights activist Radhakanta Tripathy, the apex right body May 10 sought a detailed reply within four weeks. The petitioner stated that distress migration is a chronic problem and cited that workers who were not paid wages were forced to migrate to their native place and walk from Bangalore to Koraput. He alleged that there was gross negligence on the part of the Odisha government to protect the rights of these workers and narrated the accounts of three different migrant families who were subjected to barbaric acts.

Citing the case wherein justice still eludes a 60-year-old migrant worker Chamru Paharia of Nuapada district, who had left for Maharashtra with two middlemen, Tripathy narrated the ordeal of this construction worker. He said when Paharia asked for his wages, the agents chopped five of his toes and three of his fingers. During Rath Yatra in the year 2019, Paharia left for Nagpur with the two middlemen, Dolamani Satnami and Bidesi Sunani, who belonged to his native Tikrapara village. The duo who took Paharia to Maharashtra refused to give him wages and cut eight of his fingers following a heated argument over payment of wages. Paharia lost consciousness at that point and woke up to find himself admitted to Nagpur city hospital by the RPF. Scared of running into the agents, he ran away from the hospital.

At the station, he was helped by strangers and was able to travel to Bolangir where he was spotted by a familiar villager who brought him back to his village. The victim, Tripathy said, is yet to get justice and the real criminals are yet to be tried under the law. In 2013, the right hands of two migrant labourers from Odisha were chopped off by a labour contractor and his accomplices in Kalahandi district. In this case, at least the conviction order of the criminal contractors has been passed by the district court.

In Gajapati district hand and leg injury of the migrant worker Sanka Murmu has been coloured as a railway accident, the petitioner said. These are the ground realities of the poor migrant workers in the state, Tripathy alleged. He further stated that these facts and circumstances revealed the naked truth of a defective society, economy, politics, and governance in the Koraput-Bolangir-Kalahandi districts in Odisha. He requested the NHRC for a permanent solution to the issue and suggested certain short-term and long-term measures to check the plight of distress migration.

Tribune

Ignoring the safety of women players

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/features/ignoring-the-safety-of-women-players-507553>

Sexual harassment complaint against WFI chief has brought to fore inadequacy of redressal committees in sports bodies

Vinayak Padmadeo & Indervir Grewal

Surprise was writ large on the faces of wrestlers Bajrang Punia, Vinesh Phogat and Sakshi Malik when they first sat on dharna on January 18 demanding action against Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, president of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI). Earlier that day, the grapplers, who had shared two Olympic bronze medals and a World Championship medal, had rocked the very foundation of the Indian sports ecosystem when they alleged that some of them had been sexually harassed at the hands of Singh, a six-time BJP MP from Kaiserganj in Uttar Pradesh.

After the shocking allegations, one checked the WFI's website to see whether the body had an Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) in place to address such issues and if the wrestlers had filed any such complaint with the committee. The WFI did have a committee. Curiously named 'Sexual Harassment Committee', it is headed by current secretary general VN Prasood and joint secretary Jai Prakash as convener.

The five-member committee, as mandated under the guidelines of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013, also known as 'POSH Act', had two other male members. Sakshi Malik was the only woman member of the committee.

She laughed off insinuations from the WFI that despite being part of the committee, the Rio Olympics bronze medal winner never raised one case of sexual harassment with the body. "I had no idea that I was part of any such committee. Mujhe toh bata dete (I should have been notified, at least). This is how the WFI works," was the quick rebuttal from Sakshi Malik.

The WFI's committee is a clear violation of the guidelines where the ratio of members has to be divided equally among men and women. "Provided that at least one-half of the total members, so nominated, shall be women", the chairperson of the ICC also has to be a senior woman officer. If the WFI or the Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWLF) have erred

in the composition of members, with no external or independent member, there are others like the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), who, too, have got the composition wrong.

The IOA's seven-member POSH committee is headed by six-time world champion boxer MC Mary Kom and has five women. The treasurer Sahdev Yadav and advocate Shlok Chandra are the only male members in the body.

"It is important to have a 50:50 ratio for the probe to be impartial. We have to give both the accused and the victim equal opportunities to make their case. Initially, we have to see whether the complaint merits an investigation, and after we are satisfied, only then we proceed for depositions and calling of witnesses," said a former member of the Internal Complaints Committee of the Sports Authority of India (SAI).

The Gymnastics Federation of India, the Table Tennis Federation of India, the Handball Federation of India and the Volleyball Federation of India are a few of the major sports associations that do not have a redressal committee for safeguarding of women athletes and support staff. Other federations, including the Badminton Association of India and the Archery Association of India, do not have independent members in its ICC. The National Human Rights Commission has sent notices to all federations and asked them to submit a detailed report within four weeks. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court has given all ministries, government departments and federations eight weeks' time to constitute those bodies.

In fact, the SAI is, perhaps, the only body involved in the sports ecosystem of India that has worked towards safeguarding women athletes and coaches. Names and contact information of the ICC members is displayed on notice boards at all its centres. Under a strict policy, if an employee of SAI is accused of such an act, he is promptly suspended pending enquiry. If found guilty, the employee stands to lose employment status. Interestingly, the names of its ICC members are conspicuously missing from its website.

Winning is all that matters

Lack of awareness and will is what makes most of the sports federations indifferent to such serious issues. The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) had brushed aside a similar complaint in 2015 filed by several shooters against the Kazakh rifle coach, Stanislav Lapidus, for misconduct. The complaint filed on behalf of juniors alleged that the coach "asked for sexual favours from a few junior shooters". The NRAI's disciplinary committee was assigned to deal with the issue. By then, the NRAI top brass had already given a clean chit to the coach and called it a derogatory allegation.

Activist and advocate of gender equality in sports, Dr Payoshni Mitra, says that the reason why sports bodies the world over are indifferent towards the safety of women is because the culture of sports promotes winning medals and making money.

“Historically, the sports culture is limited to the idea of winning at all costs. It prioritises winning medals, making money. In such an environment, safety of women athletes isn’t prioritised,” Dr Mitra explains.

“Sports associations also tend to listen to those who are inside, like the officials and sports administrators. I have followed the wrestlers’ case and saw a video where he (Brij Bhushan) slapped a male athlete; clearly, he is misusing the power and gets away with it most of the time,” she adds.

What Dr Mitra was hinting at was a close-knit group of administrators and coaches which sometimes derails the entire complaint to save its own.

In June last year, a female cyclist complained that the chief coach of the sprint team was making sexual overtures during an overseas training stint in Slovenia. The coach was promptly removed from his duties after a preliminary investigation. A year prior to this case, however, a woman cyclist’s complaint against an assistant coach deputed at the Indira Gandhi stadium was dealt with differently. Despite complaining twice, the coach was only given a warning. The cyclist from Ludhiana has since quit the sport.

No cases, no worries

In states, the situation is anything but different. Lack of awareness and indifference towards gender sensitisation and safety of women athletes is rife.

There is a general sense of confusion among sports associations and coaches about proper procedure in a sexual harassment case in Punjab. While some federations confirm, without giving much detail, that they have formed committees to deal with such issues, other bodies admit they have no such panels.

“Honestly, I am not aware of the proper procedure, or even if there is a committee,” said a female hockey coach when asked if she knew how to handle a sexual harassment complaint from one of her trainees. “We have never been told about these things. Even when I was a player, this issue never came up,” she added.

Incidentally, the Punjab hockey federation has a committee for such complaints. It is headed by former India captain Pargat Singh, who is also the chairman of the advisory committee in Hockey Punjab. “Thankfully, we have never had any such incident in hockey,” said an official of the federation.

A member of the Punjab Volleyball Association, however, admitted that the body did not have any specific committee for sexual harassment, adding that any such complaint is handled by the national body. “The national federation forms a disciplinary committee, and if there is any case, it takes necessary action against the state body. But we have not had any such case so far,” the official said.

According to Raja KS Sidhu, secretary general of the Punjab Olympic Association (POA), one of reasons why there are no sexual harassment cases in Punjab sports associations is the involvement of renowned former players in most of the sports federations. "As an Olympic association official, I deal with all the federations. In my long association with the POA, I have never had a sexual harassment complaint. I have dealt with many complaints, mostly about selection issues. I always take the complaint as written, and then confront the relevant federation," Sidhu said.

"The reason we have not had sexual harassment cases is because most of the associations have highly accomplished and respected former players involved in some capacity. There is Pargat Singh in hockey, Kartar Singh in wrestling, Jaipal Singh in boxing, and many others," he added.

Timeline of the wrestlers' protest

Jan 18, 2023: Wrestlers begin protest at Jantar Mantar and level allegations of sexual harassment against WFI president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. The sports ministry seeks explanation from the WFI.

Jan 19: Wrestlers say they have evidence against Singh and will file an FIR if need be. Wrestlers meet Sports Minister Anurag Thakur, but no solution is found.

Jan 20: Wrestlers write to the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), demanding Singh's resignation, formation of an inquiry committee and dissolution of the WFI. The IOA constitutes a seven-member panel under MC Mary Kom.

Jan 21: Wrestlers call off protest after the Sports Minister says an Oversight Committee will be formed to probe the allegations and Singh will step aside till the probe is completed. The WFI submits response to ministry, denies allegations of sexual harassment. Ministry asks the WFI to suspend all ongoing activities.

Jan 23: Mary Kom is made head of the five-member Oversight Committee.

Jan 31: After wrestlers complain they were not consulted before forming the panel, former wrestler and BJP member Babita Phogat is included as sixth member.

April 16: The WFI announces election on May 7 after Oversight Committee report is submitted to the sports ministry, which does not make the report public. Singh says he will not contest for the president's post.

April 23: Wrestlers return to the protest site, saying seven female wrestlers, including a minor, have filed a sexual harassment complaint against Singh in Delhi. They want findings of the Oversight Committee to be made public.

April 24: Sports ministry says absence of ICC under the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Act is one of the 'major findings' in the report. The ministry asks the IOA to form an ad hoc committee to conduct the WFI elections within 45 days.

April 25: Wrestlers move the Supreme Court seeking registration of FIR against Singh. The SC issues notice to the Delhi Police.

April 27: The IOA forms a three-member panel. IOA president PT Usha criticises wrestlers, saying instead of taking to the streets, they should have approached IOA.

April 28: The Delhi Police informs the SC it will register an FIR against Singh. The SC directs the Delhi Police to make an assessment of threat perception to grapplers and provide adequate security. Wrestlers say they will continue their protest until Singh is sent behind bars.

May 3: Usha meets wrestlers. Late in the night, wrestlers and the Delhi Police get involved in a fracas in which two protesters are injured.

May 5: After farmers' unions and khaps join protest, wrestlers form two committees.

May 6: Sports ministry formally opens talks with wrestlers as a two-member delegation, led by SAI director general, visits Jantar Mantar.

2022 में लॉकअप में 175 लोगों की मौत...

<https://jantaserishta.com/local/telangana/175-people-will-die-in-lockup-in-2022-2328062>

हैदराबाद: पुलिस हिरासत में रहने के दौरान तरह-तरह की वजह से मौतें हो रही हैं. लॉकअप से होने वाली मौतें हर साल बढ़ रही हैं। 2022 में देश भर में एक साल में 175 लोगों की मौत लॉकअप से हो जाएगी, जो स्थिति की गंभीरता को दर्शाता है। इस हद तक, राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोग (NHRC) के लॉकअप से होने वाली मौतों के आंकड़े केंद्रीय गृह मंत्रालय द्वारा संसद में प्रस्तुत किए गए हैं। गृह मंत्रालय की रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक, पिछले पांच सालों में देश के तमाम राज्यों में कुल 669 लोगों को घरों में बंद किया गया है.

मालूम हो कि हाल ही में मेदक जिले में कादिर खान की हवालात में मौत से प्रदेश में सनसनी फैल गई है. मरियम्मा की हिरासत में हुई मौत ने राचकोंडा आयुक्तालय में भी संदेह पैदा कर दिया है। रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि गुजरात राज्य में पिछले पांच वर्षों में 80 लोगों की हिरासत में मौत हुई है। इस बीच, गुजरात में देश में लॉकडाउन से सबसे ज्यादा मौतें दर्ज की गईं। महाराष्ट्र, राजस्थान और तमिलनाडु जैसे राज्यों में भी लॉकअप में मौत की संख्या अधिक दर्ज की जा रही है।

आरोप लगाया जा रहा है कि हिरासत में लिए गए लोगों की मौत का मुख्य कारण पुलिसिया अत्याचार है. हवालात में हुई मौतों के मामले में आलोचना हो रही है कि पुलिस के खिलाफ नाममात्र की कार्रवाइयों के अलावा कोई सख्त कार्रवाई नहीं हो रही है. राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोग के प्रस्तावों के अनुसार, 201 मामलों में, पीड़ित परिवारों को रुपये दिए गए। सरकारों द्वारा 5,80,74,998 मुआवजा दिया गया है।

NHRC seeks ATR from Gajapati DM, SP

<https://www.dailypioneer.com/2023/state-editions/nhrc-seeks-atr-from-gajapati-dm--sp.html>

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sought an ATR (Action Taken Report) from the district Collector and SP of Gajapati district on the death of a pregnant minor student in the district.

The petitioner of the case Radhakanta Tripathy, a human rights activist and lawyer, moved the NHRC alleging that one minor Dalit girl, who was studying in class 8th of Jhirjira Ashram School, which is being run by the ST/SC Development Department in Gajapati, died on account of medical negligence on May 6, while she was undergoing treatment at the District Headquarters Hospital, in Paralakhemundi. She was unearthed four months' pregnant. It is alleged that the school authorities did not inform the parents about her pregnancy earlier.

Tripathy contended that the death of pregnant student poses serious questions of violation of human rights and hence, sought intervention of the Commission inter-alia for legal action against the wrong doers, compensation to the bereaved family and proper counselling, mental care, regular medical check-up and focus on studies by the students in the State-run schools.

The NHRC sought for the reports within four weeks. The NHRC also forwarded a copy of the petition to the Chief Secretary and the DGP for information and further action.

Tribune

Ignoring the safety of women players

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/features/ignoring-the-safety-of-women-players-507553>

Sexual harassment complaint against WFI chief has brought to fore inadequacy of redressal committees in sports bodies

Vinayak Padmadeo & Indervir Grewal

Surprise was writ large on the faces of wrestlers Bajrang Punia, Vinesh Phogat and Sakshi Malik when they first sat on dharna on January 18 demanding action against Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, president of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI). Earlier that day, the grapplers, who had shared two Olympic bronze medals and a World Championship medal, had rocked the very foundation of the Indian sports ecosystem when they alleged that some of them had been sexually harassed at the hands of Singh, a six-time BJP MP from Kaiserganj in Uttar Pradesh.

After the shocking allegations, one checked the WFI's website to see whether the body had an Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) in place to address such issues and if the wrestlers had filed any such complaint with the committee. The WFI did have a committee. Curiously named 'Sexual Harassment Committee', it is headed by current secretary general VN Prasood and joint secretary Jai Prakash as convener.

The five-member committee, as mandated under the guidelines of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013, also known as 'POSH Act', had two other male members. Sakshi Malik was the only woman member of the committee.

She laughed off insinuations from the WFI that despite being part of the committee, the Rio Olympics bronze medal winner never raised one case of sexual harassment with the body. "I had no idea that I was part of any such committee. Mujhe toh bata dete (I should have been notified, at least). This is how the WFI works," was the quick rebuttal from Sakshi Malik.

The WFI's committee is a clear violation of the guidelines where the ratio of members has to be divided equally among men and women. "Provided that at least one-half of the total members, so nominated, shall be women", the chairperson of the ICC also has to be a senior woman officer. If the WFI or the Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWLF) have erred

in the composition of members, with no external or independent member, there are others like the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), who, too, have got the composition wrong.

The IOA's seven-member POSH committee is headed by six-time world champion boxer MC Mary Kom and has five women. The treasurer Sahdev Yadav and advocate Shlok Chandra are the only male members in the body.

"It is important to have a 50:50 ratio for the probe to be impartial. We have to give both the accused and the victim equal opportunities to make their case. Initially, we have to see whether the complaint merits an investigation, and after we are satisfied, only then we proceed for depositions and calling of witnesses," said a former member of the Internal Complaints Committee of the Sports Authority of India (SAI).

The Gymnastics Federation of India, the Table Tennis Federation of India, the Handball Federation of India and the Volleyball Federation of India are a few of the major sports associations that do not have a redressal committee for safeguarding of women athletes and support staff. Other federations, including the Badminton Association of India and the Archery Association of India, do not have independent members in its ICC. The National Human Rights Commission has sent notices to all federations and asked them to submit a detailed report within four weeks. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court has given all ministries, government departments and federations eight weeks' time to constitute those bodies.

In fact, the SAI is, perhaps, the only body involved in the sports ecosystem of India that has worked towards safeguarding women athletes and coaches. Names and contact information of the ICC members is displayed on notice boards at all its centres. Under a strict policy, if an employee of SAI is accused of such an act, he is promptly suspended pending enquiry. If found guilty, the employee stands to lose employment status. Interestingly, the names of its ICC members are conspicuously missing from its website.

Winning is all that matters

Lack of awareness and will is what makes most of the sports federations indifferent to such serious issues. The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) had brushed aside a similar complaint in 2015 filed by several shooters against the Kazakh rifle coach, Stanislav Lapidus, for misconduct. The complaint filed on behalf of juniors alleged that the coach "asked for sexual favours from a few junior shooters". The NRAI's disciplinary committee was assigned to deal with the issue. By then, the NRAI top brass had already given a clean chit to the coach and called it a derogatory allegation.

Activist and advocate of gender equality in sports, Dr Payoshni Mitra, says that the reason why sports bodies the world over are indifferent towards the safety of women is because the culture of sports promotes winning medals and making money.

“Historically, the sports culture is limited to the idea of winning at all costs. It prioritises winning medals, making money. In such an environment, safety of women athletes isn’t prioritised,” Dr Mitra explains.

“Sports associations also tend to listen to those who are inside, like the officials and sports administrators. I have followed the wrestlers’ case and saw a video where he (Brij Bhushan) slapped a male athlete; clearly, he is misusing the power and gets away with it most of the time,” she adds.

What Dr Mitra was hinting at was a close-knit group of administrators and coaches which sometimes derails the entire complaint to save its own.

In June last year, a female cyclist complained that the chief coach of the sprint team was making sexual overtures during an overseas training stint in Slovenia. The coach was promptly removed from his duties after a preliminary investigation. A year prior to this case, however, a woman cyclist’s complaint against an assistant coach deputed at the Indira Gandhi stadium was dealt with differently. Despite complaining twice, the coach was only given a warning. The cyclist from Ludhiana has since quit the sport.

No cases, no worries

In states, the situation is anything but different. Lack of awareness and indifference towards gender sensitisation and safety of women athletes is rife.

There is a general sense of confusion among sports associations and coaches about proper procedure in a sexual harassment case in Punjab. While some federations confirm, without giving much detail, that they have formed committees to deal with such issues, other bodies admit they have no such panels.

“Honestly, I am not aware of the proper procedure, or even if there is a committee,” said a female hockey coach when asked if she knew how to handle a sexual harassment complaint from one of her trainees. “We have never been told about these things. Even when I was a player, this issue never came up,” she added.

Incidentally, the Punjab hockey federation has a committee for such complaints. It is headed by former India captain Pargat Singh, who is also the chairman of the advisory committee in Hockey Punjab. “Thankfully, we have never had any such incident in hockey,” said an official of the federation.

A member of the Punjab Volleyball Association, however, admitted that the body did not have any specific committee for sexual harassment, adding that any such complaint is handled by the national body. “The national federation forms a disciplinary committee, and if there is any case, it takes necessary action against the state body. But we have not had any such case so far,” the official said.

According to Raja KS Sidhu, secretary general of the Punjab Olympic Association (POA), one of reasons why there are no sexual harassment cases in Punjab sports associations is the involvement of renowned former players in most of the sports federations. "As an Olympic association official, I deal with all the federations. In my long association with the POA, I have never had a sexual harassment complaint. I have dealt with many complaints, mostly about selection issues. I always take the complaint as written, and then confront the relevant federation," Sidhu said.

"The reason we have not had sexual harassment cases is because most of the associations have highly accomplished and respected former players involved in some capacity. There is Pargat Singh in hockey, Kartar Singh in wrestling, Jaipal Singh in boxing, and many others," he added.

Timeline of the wrestlers' protest

Jan 18, 2023: Wrestlers begin protest at Jantar Mantar and level allegations of sexual harassment against WFI president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. The sports ministry seeks explanation from the WFI.

Jan 19: Wrestlers say they have evidence against Singh and will file an FIR if need be. Wrestlers meet Sports Minister Anurag Thakur, but no solution is found.

Jan 20: Wrestlers write to the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), demanding Singh's resignation, formation of an inquiry committee and dissolution of the WFI. The IOA constitutes a seven-member panel under MC Mary Kom.

Jan 21: Wrestlers call off protest after the Sports Minister says an Oversight Committee will be formed to probe the allegations and Singh will step aside till the probe is completed. The WFI submits response to ministry, denies allegations of sexual harassment. Ministry asks the WFI to suspend all ongoing activities.

Jan 23: Mary Kom is made head of the five-member Oversight Committee.

Jan 31: After wrestlers complain they were not consulted before forming the panel, former wrestler and BJP member Babita Phogat is included as sixth member.

April 16: The WFI announces election on May 7 after Oversight Committee report is submitted to the sports ministry, which does not make the report public. Singh says he will not contest for the president's post.

April 23: Wrestlers return to the protest site, saying seven female wrestlers, including a minor, have filed a sexual harassment complaint against Singh in Delhi. They want findings of the Oversight Committee to be made public.

April 24: Sports ministry says absence of ICC under the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Act is one of the 'major findings' in the report. The ministry asks the IOA to form an ad hoc committee to conduct the WFI elections within 45 days.

April 25: Wrestlers move the Supreme Court seeking registration of FIR against Singh. The SC issues notice to the Delhi Police.

April 27: The IOA forms a three-member panel. IOA president PT Usha criticises wrestlers, saying instead of taking to the streets, they should have approached IOA.

April 28: The Delhi Police informs the SC it will register an FIR against Singh. The SC directs the Delhi Police to make an assessment of threat perception to grapplers and provide adequate security. Wrestlers say they will continue their protest until Singh is sent behind bars.

May 3: Usha meets wrestlers. Late in the night, wrestlers and the Delhi Police get involved in a fracas in which two protesters are injured.

May 5: After farmers' unions and khaps join protest, wrestlers form two committees.

May 6: Sports ministry formally opens talks with wrestlers as a two-member delegation, led by SAI director general, visits Jantar Mantar.

NHRC seeks ATR on Koraput migrant workers

They're denied wage, forced to walk home from B'loru

RAJESH BEHERA
■ BHUBANESWAR

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sought an Action-Taken Report (ATR) from the district Collector of Koraput on the issue of migrant workers who had to walk from Bengaluru to Koraput.

Acting on a petition filed by rights activist and lawyer Radhakanta Tripathy, the

NHRC sought the ATR within four weeks.

The petitioner stated that distress migration is a chronic problem in the district. He further pointed out that workers were not paid wages and were forced to migrate to their native place and walk from Bengaluru to Koraput.

He alleged that there was gross negligence on the part of the Odisha Government to protect the rights of the workers.

Citing the case wherein justice still eludes a 60-year-old migrant worker, Chamru Paharia of Nuapada district, who had left for Maharashtra

with two middlemen, Tripathy narrated the ordeal of the construction worker. When Paharia asked for his wages, the agents chopped five of his toes and three of his fingers. During Rath Yatra in the year 2019, Paharia had left for Nagpur with Dolamani Satnami and Bidesi Sunani, who belong to his native Tikrapada village. Not only did they eventually refuse to give him wages, but in the aftermath of a heated argument over money with Paharia, they cut eight of his fingers. Paharia allegedly lost consciousness at that point and woke up to find himself

at Nagpur city hospital.

The RPF had admitted him there. Scared of falling into the hands of the agents, he ran from the hospital. At the station, he was helped by strangers and was able to travel to Balangir. There, spotted by a familiar villager, Paharia was brought back to Tikrapada. Once at home, Paharia was reportedly so scared of the middlemen that he refused to get treatment, lest they shouldn't discover where he was. The victim was yet to get justice and the real criminals were yet to be tried under law, Tripathy pointed out.

In Odisha in 2013, the right hands of two migrant labourers were chopped off by a labour contractor and his accomplices in Kalahandi district. In this case at least conviction order of the criminal contractors has been passed by the district court.

In Gajapati district hand and leg injury of the migrant worker Sanka Murmu had been coloured as railway accident.

These are the ground realities of the poor migrant workers in the State, Tripathy alleged.

These facts and circumstances reveal the

naked truth of a defective society, economy, politics, and governance in Koraput-Kalahandi-Balangir districts. Thus, simply sympathising with them without delving deep into issue of their marginalisation and generational poverty, is violence against the poor SC/ST and vulnerable strata of the society, Tripathy contended.

He requested the NHRC for a permanent solution of the issue and suggested certain short term and long term measures to check the plight of distressed migrant workers.