

MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

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ACTION TAKEN REPORT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REPORT ON 'PREVENTION OF ATROCITIES AGAINST SCs'

S.No.	Recommendations	ATR
1.	<p>Existing State Laws on abolition of Devdasi system in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka are inadequate and suffer from loopholes, Central Government may therefore consider enacting a comprehensive law to abolish the system of divine prostitution known as 'Devdasi System' or by other names in different States and regions. Such a law may also bring within its ambit other customary practices leading to sexual exploitation of SC and ST women, enactment of this may be preceded by meticulous collection of customary practices leading to sexual exploitation of women across the country facilitate their incorporation within it. The national Commission for Women may take this work.</p>	<p>The recommendations have been forwarded to National Commission for Women for taking necessary action</p>
2.	<p>A Police Task Force should be set up in each concerned State Government to investigate complaints of trafficking in women and children. This task force should thoroughly investigate cases where Devdasis and /or their daughters have been pushed into brothels. It should build up information on agents, middlemen, religious priests and powerful local people who are still promoting this practice with a view to pursuing effective legal action against them. The inputs received from this investigation may be utilized for the Awareness Campaign suggested earlier. There should be regular consultation among the members of the Task Force in different States, Department of Women & Child Development should coordinate and monitor this work with the held of Ministry of Home Affairs, where necessary.</p>	<p>To strengthen the law enforcement response to trafficking and sensitize police personnel against trafficking, the MHA is in the process of setting up Anti Human Trafficking Units (AHTU) at district level. 115 AHTUs throughout the country have been set up so far.</p>

3.	<p>Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, in cooperation with Department of Women & Child Development and State Government may identify NGOs working for women in areas where women migrant workers are employed and mobilize them to provide necessary support to women migrant laborers who are increasingly becoming victims of sexual exploitation by employers and/or their agents, in registering their complaints, rescuing them and in getting necessary compensation, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment may additionally mobilize NGOs working for SCs in such areas and nearby to extend their services to SC women workers modalities of which may be worked out. Appropriate financial assistance may be provided to such NGOs for this purpose.</p>	<p>Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has been requested to take necessary action.</p>
4.	<p>Central Government may enact law or prepare draft of a model Law, which may be adopted by States, to deal with practices leading to branding of women as witches and their brutal treatment, make provision for criminal action against persons accused of encouraging and promoting these practices and participating in them and rehabilitation of victim women. The Law enacted by the Bihar Government on the subject a few years ago may be studied in this context. Department of WCD may take initiative in the matter and take assistance from NCW for preparing such a legislation and programme for rehabilitation of victim women. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment may lend their active support to them.</p>	<p>As per National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data a total of 186, 177 and 175 cases of murder and a total of 2,2 and 1 cases of culpable homicide not amounting to murder, were registered in 2006, 2007 and 2008 respectively in which the motive was 'witchcraft'.</p> <p>NCW has informed that they have not received complaints about women being killed regularly on charges of witchcraft.</p> <p>NCW has sponsored and conducted Seminars/conferences in Assam, Rajasthan and Jharkhand for creating awareness on the issue and discourage such practice.</p> <p>There is no proposal to bring legislation to deal with such practice.</p>

5.	The WCD Department of the concerned State Government may identify areas where these practices of branding certain women as witches are prevalent as well as underlying causes responsible for them and draw up a programme to curb them, sensitize the population prone to such beliefs and rehabilitate the victim women. The village Panchayats may be actively involved in sensitization campaign and its elected members may be training for this purpose. Specific villages from where such cases are reported should be specifically targeted for social mobilization through local NGOs.	All the State Governments/Union Territories have been requested to take necessary action.
6.	The areas from where such practices are reported may be specially targeted for improving access to health care since superstition about causes of ill health are a major contributory factor to these practices. The local traditional healers may also be involved in the process of such superstition. Department of WCD may take up the matter with Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to concretize this suggestion.	Ministry of Family Welfare has been requested to take necessary action.
7.	Anganwadi workers in the village may be trained to gather necessary information in time regarding tension simmering in the village which could lead to branding of women as witches and assault on them and convey it to their supervisor officers so that timely preventive action can be taken to allay the superstition, prevent the mishap and proceed against vested interest who may be involved in promoting this practice.	Anganwadi workers are honorary workers engaged to provide services to children below 6 years and pregnant & lactating mothers. The Government has been advising the State Government from time to time not to give functions not relating to ICDS Scheme to Anganwadi workers to prevent distraction from their core activities. Under these circumstances, it is not possible to give this additional work to Anganwadi workers