



RASHTRA MAHILA

CONTENTS

1. Women in Peacekeeping Mission.
2. Updates from Complaint & Investigation Cell (C&I).
3. Successful Interventions of Complaint & Investigation Cell.
4. Updates from NRI Cell.
5. Updates from Suo-Moto Cell.
6. Successful Interventions of Suo-Moto Cell.
7. Webinar on 'Trafficking in Women: Emerging Challenges, Barriers & Rehabilitation Provisions'.
8. Virtual Seminar on 'Addressing Issues & Challenges faced by North Eastern Women in Metro Cities'.
9. Virtual Consultation on Female Labour Force Participation in India.
10. Consultation on Review of Legal Age of Marriage for Girls.
11. Announcement: Call of Proposals for conducting Webinars and Research Study & Grant of Financial Assistance 2020-2021.
12. Highlights of Chairperson's Engagements.

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EMERGENCY HELPLINE FOR
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
(COVID19 RESPONSE)



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www.ncw.nic.in

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1. WOMEN IN PEACEKEEPING MISSION

Peacekeeping is a unique and dynamic instrument developed by United Nations, as a way to help countries that are torn by conflict and to create sustaining goals for peacebuilding strategy. The role of a Peacekeeper is to protect civilians, find solutions to prevent conflict, reduce violence, strengthen security and empower national authorities to assume these responsibilities for lasting peace. Indian men and women in uniform have served the cause of peace from the earliest years of United Nations Peacekeeping, and have continue to do so in some of the most challenging missions. Infact, India has been a role model in keeping up the tradition of sending troops including Women on UN Peacekeeping Missions.

Now with more women joining Peacekeeping Missions across the world in most complex environments as military and police forces, engineers, doctors and civilians; women have proven time and again that they can deliver the same potential as their male counterparts. As Peacekeeping has evolved, Women have become increasingly part of the Peacekeeping family, and making operations more effective.

Women are deployed in all areas and have made a positive impact on Peacekeeping environments. It has been debated that women are effective in their jobs in delivering peace process. It is because, research and experts have claimed that women support the role of other women in building peace and protecting women's rights. Women are able connect on an intimate level that serves the objective. According to research of mission reports, the United Nation have stated that Women in Peacekeeping demonstrates more effective peacekeeping mission. It furthers states that women Peacekeepers improve the overall Peacekeeping performance due to various natural capabilities of Women. Such as, Women Peacekeepers are able to reach out to survivors of gender-based violence and find solutions to stop violence against women and children, thereby generating critical information that would otherwise be difficult to reach in complex situations. This is due to the proven records that Women Peacekeepers are capable of building trust and confidence with the local community.

Women are also capable of involving and motivating the whole community to become part of the peace process, as they take responsibilities and make decisions as like of their own condition. In many cases, Women Peacekeepers are essential enablers to build trust and confidence with local communities to support women, for example, by interacting with women in societies where women are prohibited from speaking to men. Hence, Women are able to create greater access to communities, help in promoting human rights and encourage other women to become a meaningful part of peace and political processes.



**United Nations Award
to Indian Army Officer
Major Suman Gawani**

On the occasion of the International Day of UN Peacekeepers on May 29, 2020, Major Suman Gawani of the Indian Army received the award of "Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award" (2019). Major Suman Gawani was a Military Observer from India formerly deployed with the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

The part of the Peacekeeping intervention is to fill the gap of disproportionately negative effect that conflict has on the livelihood of women, and bring new perspectives and solutions to effectively address the needs of women and children in conflict and post-conflict settings, including those of women ex-combatants and child soldiers during the process of demobilizing and reintegration into civilian life. Hence, Women Peacekeepers serve as powerful mentors and role models for women and girls in post-conflict settings, and setting examples for them to advocate for their own rights. Hence the role and involvement of Women in Peacekeeping brings perspectives in decision-making, planning and results.

The United Nations have imperative to recruit and retain Women Peacekeepers, as they believed that Women Peacekeepers have proven that they can perform the same roles to the same standards and under the same difficult conditions, as their male counterparts. In 1993, women made up 1% of deployed uniformed personnel. In 2019, out of approximately 95,000 Peacekeepers, women constitute 4.7% of military contingents and 10.8% of formed police units in UN Peacekeeping missions. While the UN encourages and advocates for the deployment of women to uniformed functions, the responsibility for deployment of women in the police and military lies with Member States. The UN Police Division had launched 'the Global Effort' to recruit more female Police Officers into National Police Services and into UN Police operations around the world. The 2028 target for women serving in military contingents is 15%, and 25% for military observers and staff officers. The 2028 target for women serving in formed police units is 20%, and 30% for individual police officers.

As the part of Action for Peacekeeping Declaration of shared commitments, the Members States including India are supporting the uniformed women's participation in peacekeeping for achieving the gender parity targets. The Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative views Women as critical entity to enhancing Peacekeeping Operation performance through supporting women's full participation in peace processes and making peacekeeping more gender-responsive, including deployment opportunities for women officers in national services, recruitment and training of women in national services to deployment to peace operations, as well as helping national services perform better at home, and also increasing the number of uniformed women in peacekeeping at all levels and in key positions.

Along with Major Suman Gawani, Commander Carla Monteiro de Castro Araujo, a Brazilian Naval officer working in the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) also received the "Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award" (2019). Both the lady achievers were honored during the virtual celebration of International Day of UN Peacekeepers on May, 29, 2020.

2. UPDATES FROM COMPLAINT & INVESTIGATION CELL

Mode of Complaint	Complaints Received	Complaints Closed (Old+New)
Offline+Online	2914	981
WhatsApp	270	212

3. SUCCESSFUL INTERVENTIONS OF C&I CELL

1. A lady from Nuh, Haryana, approached the Commission with grievance of being physically harassed by her husband and in laws. She complained of been driven out of the house and her 5-months-old baby was forcibly kept with the husband. The SP and SHO of Nuh were immediately contacted for immediate action in the matter, and they visited the lady's house for recording her statement, wherein she only wished and pleaded for custody of her 5-months-old baby. Appropriate actions were taken by the Police authorities by contacting the Child Welfare Committee of Nuh and Palwal. The matter was regularly followed by the Commission and soon the matter was resolved and the lady was united with her baby. The family had acknowledged the support of the Commission for ensuring justice to their daughter.

2. The Commission received a complaint from a girl from Nagaur district in Rajasthan, and she alleged that her family has been physically assaulting her for not agreeing to marry the boy the family had chosen for her. She stated that she was subjected to regular harassment until she would agree to the family's condition. She requested the Commission to look into the matter and ensure her safety. The Police authorities were informed, and they visited the girl's house to register her statement. She was also taken to the SDM office and her statement were recorded before SDM against the brutality of her family members. Due actions were taken, and with the coordination of the Commission, the girl was safely taken to *Naari Nikentan* Shelter in Ajmer by the Police Authorities.

4. UPDATE FROM NRI CELL

Mode of Complaint	Complaints Received	Complaints Closed (Old+New)
Online	41	31



Always remember to check and verify the background of Groom in case of NRI Marriages to avoid conflict.



5. UPDATES FROM SUO-MOTO CELL

Cases Taken-up	ATR Replies Received (Old+New)	Cases Closed (Old+New)
26	21	22

6. SUCCESSFUL INTERVENTIONS OF SUO-MOTO CELL

India witnessed the rampant cases of COVID on raise and the warriors on duty were continuously harassed for doing their duties in the frontline. They were labelled as carriers of the virus and subjected to public dismay, the Commission had taken cognizance of several such reported incidents.

1. The Commission acted on the media report captioned, "Nine-month pregnant, Nalasopara woman, who died of corona virus, was rushed to four hospitals, all denied assistance"; wherein its was reported that a 27-year-old pregnant woman passed away because the four hospitals the husband visited covering 70 km between Nalasopara and Mumbai had allegedly all refused to treat her due to being a COVID positive patient. The Commission had instructed the concerned authorities in Mumbai to investigate the matter and appropriate action to be taken against those found guilty in dereliction of responsibility to deliver civilian duties at times of emergency, due to which the woman died.

2. The Commission came across a video on Twitter wherein a man who happened to be a neighbor, was harassing and abusing a lady doctor working in Civil Hospital, Surat, Gujarat, for carrying out her duty as doctor was not allowed to enter the building. The Commission immediately took up the matter with Surat Police and they visited the lady doctor's apartment for registering her statement. However she refused to file a formal complaint, but based on her written statement itself, the Police under Sec. 107 and 151 of Cr.PC acted to warn against the man. Since the doctor requested to amicably settled the matter. The Police instructed the man to apologize and not repeat such incidents.

3. In another reported incident captioned as, "AIIMS doctor attempts suicide over casteist, sexist harassment, RDA writes to Health Minister over inaction" was heard by the Commission. It was reported that a lady dental surgeon at AIIMS hospital in Delhi attempted suicide allegedly due to gender and caste-based harassment by senior faculty members. Upon intervening in the matter, the Commission was informed by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare that, the Director of AIIMS had constituted a high-level committee to investigate the incident, and the reports of the findings would be submitted at the earliest. Furthermore, the Commission instructed to ensure the safety and treatment of the lady dental surgeon who survived from overdosing on medication used to treat depression.

7. WEBINAR ON “TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN: EMERGING CHALLENGES, BARRIERS & REHABILITATION PROVISION”

Trafficking of women and children is one of the worst human rights violations, and research states that it is the third largest organized crime, after drugs and the arms trade across the globe. According to NCRB (MHA) Report 2018, it is evident from the Table (given below) of data statistics that the cases of women trafficking in the country have been high during the last three years.

Trafficking in Women and Children are primarily for domestic servitude, sexual slavery, forced armed recruitment, forced labour and forced marriages. Women after they are rescued, also face social stigma, shame, poor working and living conditions and are not adopted by the society and sometimes even family. Other consequences are, trafficked women are vulnerable to various health problems including physical, mental, STDs, HIV and reproductive health complications.

The Government of India had made several legislations to ensure that trafficking of women and children menace is put to an end, and some of the endeavors are worth mentioning here. The Ujjawala Scheme led by the Ministry of Women and Child development is a central initiative to address a comprehensive scheme for "Prevention of Trafficking for Rescue, Rehabilitation and Re-Integration of Victims of Trafficking for Commercial Sexual Exploitation". The scheme primarily aims at preventing trafficking of Women and Children for Commercial and sexual exploitation through social mobilization and involvement of local community by series of activities like rescue of victims, repatriation in case of cross border victims, sheltering in safe custody for rehabilitation, and reintegrate them back in the society. It is also imperative that spreading awareness on the subject is very important through advocacy, media outreach and community mobilization.

Another similar endeavours from the Government is carried out by the SALSAs known as the Compensation Scheme for Women Victims/Survivors of Sexual Assault/Other Crimes 2018. The scheme was formulated on the specific directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, that must ensure to provide compensation for the women victims of various crimes. The scheme specifically provides under the eligibility clause that woman who has suffered grievous physical injury or any mental injury requires compensation.

Keeping in mind the dire need to actively stay involved in the effort to spread awareness and build safety measures of women against trafficking, the National Commission for Women had organized a Webinar on “Trafficking in Women: Emerging Challenges, Barriers and Rehabilitation Provision” on July 10, 2020. The Webinar was for facilitating a deliberation on the subject with participation from esteemed Lawyers, Academicians, Civil Activist, Scholars and Media. The objective was to identify gaps in the current legislation on trafficking and to examine the feasibility of a comprehensive legislation on trafficking. Consequently, the Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill 2018, introduced in Lok Sabha by the Minister of Women and Child Development in July, 2018, was also discussed while highlighting the challenges with specific focus on combating the trafficking in women for commercial sexual exploitation. Several suggestions and recommendations on the aspects was shared by all experts during the two Sessions slated as below:

- i). Changing scenario of Women Trafficking and need for newer methods of Prevention: This session involved defining strategies for identification of vulnerable groups, and undertaking a sustained educational campaign with livelihood projects across source area in coordination with Police and Intelligence Authorities;
- ii). Rescue and Rehabilitation of Rescued Trafficked Women: This session involved modalities to organize rescue operations in a manner that all those involved including facilitators, middlemen are prosecuted, and victim is rehabilitated and to receive assistance for serving as crucial witness by SLSA.

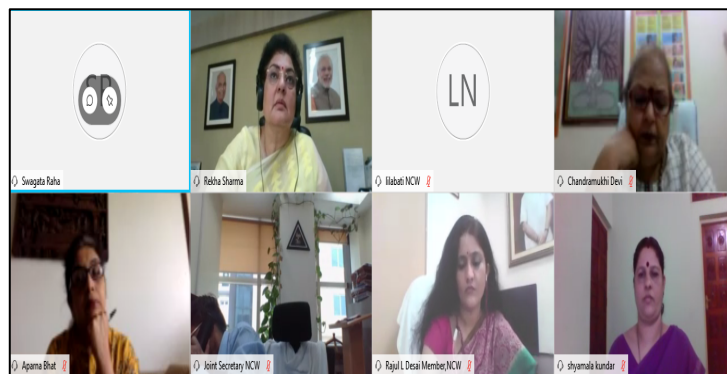


Table: Incidents of Missing Women during 2016-2018, Source NCRB (MHA) Report 2018.

Year:	Maharashtra	West Bengal	Madhya Pradesh	Delhi	Chhattisgarh	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu
2018	33964	31299	29761	13272	9412	12525	10403
2017	29279	28133	26587	12202	7383	10230	9564
2016	28316	24937	26587	12067	6649	8414	

8. CONSULTATION ON REVIEW OF LEGAL AGE OF MARRIAGE FOR GIRLS

(FROM LEGAL CELL): On July 17, 2020, the Commission organized a Consultation to review the legal age of marriage for girls in India, through a video conference format. The objective of the Consultation was to explore the possibility of increasing the Age of Marriage for girls in India, and to understand the correlation between age of marriage and Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR), Total Fertility Rate (TFR), Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) and Child Sex Ratio (CSR) in India. Through the consultation, the Commission aimed to examine the age of motherhood, imperatives of lowering Maternal Mortality Rate, measures to define improvement of nutritional levels, abolition of child marriages and other related issues.

Keeping in mind the progress of rising education levels among women, the reviewing of legal age to marriage will add advantage to girls in India who can explore their social and economic opportunities. Another reason for the same is to keep check of women population and gender balance, and prevent women from being forced into early motherhood and its multiple complications, due to child marriage practices. Thus, the Consultation also kept in mind to address the challenges of their healthcare, reproductive and sexual rights. The Consultation was attended by esteemed Lawyers, experts from health research organization, activists from civil society and media.

9. WEBINAR ON “ADDRESSING ISSUES & CHALLENGES FACED BY NORTH EASTERN WOMEN IN METRO CITIES & EMPOWERING THEM”

(FROM NORTH EAST CELL): Women and girls all over the world continue to face discrimination and other social challenges. They are often victims of abuse and violent crimes. The Constitution of India guarantees to all Indian equality (Article 14), no discrimination by the State (Article 15 (1), equality of opportunity (Article 16), equal pay for equal work (Article 39 (d)). Of late there has been an increase in the number of incidents of racial attack, molestation and prejudices specially directed towards people from North East and in particular women. Studies have shown that racial discrimination against North East people is higher in metropolitan cities. The inability to understand other culture leads to huge disparity and misjudgement. Often, it is the lack of respect for someone’s cultural practices that causes many undesired hostilities. North East students and women are often gullible to the many miscreants in the streets because of language problem, both as a woman and also due to their status of being a migrant, and opinion formed upon one’s appearance and cultural differences. Recently, there were reported incidences of women from North East who faced harassment due to their physical features and labelled as the contagion of coronavirus.

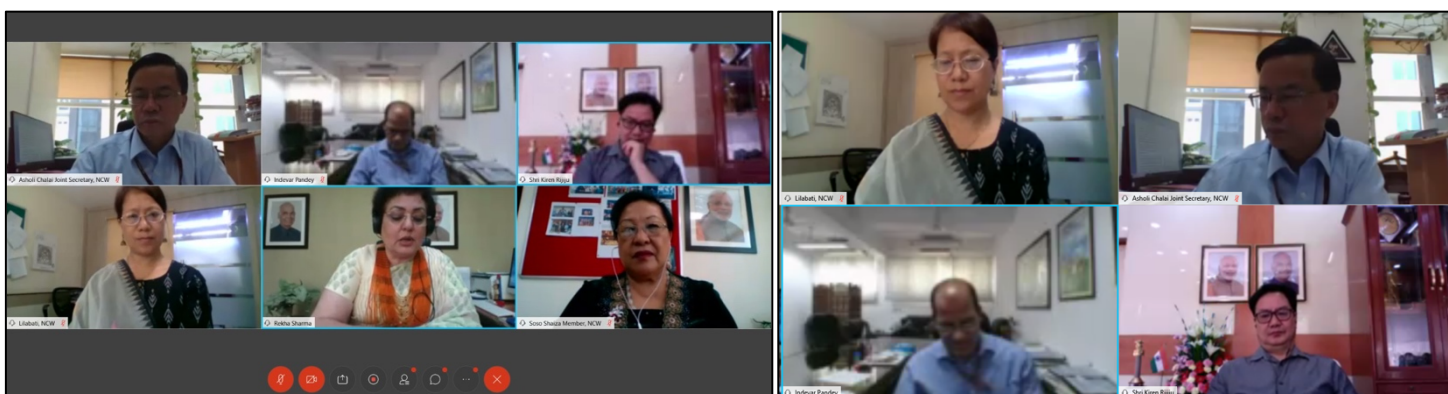


Hon'ble Minister of State (I/C) Sh. Kiren Rijju

In an effort to bring out a strategy to address issues of women from the Northeast region, the Commission organized a virtual seminar on, ‘Addressing Issues & Challenges faced by North Eastern Women in Metro Cities & Empowering Them’, on July 29, 2020. As the title suggests, the virtual seminar was a session with a focus to bring out a comprehensive understanding of challenges and prejudices faced by North East women living in metro cities; and to bring out recommendations from participants for appropriate strategies to ensure safety of women from the region. The virtual seminar was graced by Sh. Kiren Rijju, Hon'ble MoS (I/C), Ministry of Youth Affair, & Ministry of Minority Affairs) as the Hon'ble Chief Guest, and gave remarkable highlights on all aspects of the subject that needed to be addressed. The virtual seminar was attended by participants from the North East region, who were from the background of lawyers, social activists, academicians, media and students. It also involved diverse stakeholders including Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), North East Council, State Governments and Delhi Police as Panel Speakers during the webinar sessions.

Some of the points that emerged from the deliberation of the Webinar are as follows:

- ➔ Allocation of welfare funds for security of women from North East living in metro cities at times of natural calamity and disaster must be considered by concern Ministry and authorities including states government.
- ➔ Support and counselling centres for women from Northeast in cities with special focus on their grievances and all round safety.
- ➔ Fast Track Courts must be implemented for speedy trial for cases in regards to crimes against women from North East in metro cities.
- ➔ A consolidated data of gender-based crimes against women from North East in metro cities must be monitored and timely updated, so as to strengthened the existing mechanism in their protection and safety.
- ➔ The model of SPUNER by Delhi Police is a good example that should be replicated across major cities in the country where North East population resides; and special preference should be given to women safety.
- ➔ Concerned authorities and law enforcement agencies in the cities must initiate ICT enabled Support Helplines for grievance redressal of women from North East.
- ➔ Ministry and states government should dedicated working women hostels for women from North East must be created in metro cities.
- ➔ There should be provision of job security and social benefits in terms of accommodation and payment from employers in unorganized sectors, and by creating awareness on implementation of laws related to women in unorganized sectors.
- ➔ Safety audit at places and accommodation where working women and students from North East resides must be regularly monitored for ensuring their security around the locale and the people.
- ➔ Legal Awareness Programmes, Gender Sensitization Workshops and Capacity Building Programmes should be conducted at all levels to students, working women and for Police Personnel must be conducted for handling gender-based cases sensitively in regard to women from North East region.



10. VIRTUAL CONSULTATION ON FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN INDIA

(FROM LEGAL CELL): The National Commission for Women in collaboration with the V.V.Giri National Labour Institute had collectively taken the decision to organized five Regional Consultations on matters relating to working women, especially those in the unorganized sector to understand the factors affecting female labour force participation in India. Previously, the Consultations were held in association with recognized National Law Universities in Cuttack, Guwahati, Bengaluru and Gandhinagar. The objectives of these regional consultations were envisaged to understand employment trends for women and factors responsible for declining female work force. Other factors like inter-relationship of crimes against women, gender-based violence, workplace harassment, issues of safety, security and dignity, the impact of marriage, pregnancy, child birth and other care responsibilities were also considered in order to bring out detailed understanding of issues of women in the unorganized sectors, thereby identifying the impact of prevailing laws and the gaps on addressing FLFP.



On July 9, 2020, the final Consultation was held in association with Delhi National Law University with participations from experts and practitioners working on gender and labour issues including scholars, government representatives, State Commissions on Women, international organizations and civil organizations.

From the final regional Consultation of the day, the Commission was able to list out range of factors through region specific findings that effect women's paid work, and highlighted key findings and necessary policy interventions and undertaking action plans at all regional level for addressing the issues related to declining female labour force participation in India. Other factors like the challenges of women in transition from informal to formal sector and the specific scenarios prevailing in these sectors vis a vis woman in STEM, and in position of higher responsibility were registered in the recommendation lists. All these Consultations also bought out shared information of good practices from national/regional and state-level experiences addressing FLFP in country; thereby developing an overall set of recommendations for informing policy makers and programmer to counter and mitigate FLFP issues at all regional levels.

12. HIGHLIGHTS OF CHAIRPERSON'S ENGAGEMENT

1. On July 9,2020, NCW Chairperson, Smt. Rekha Sharma was invited by Advocate Abha Singh for a close conversation on topic of "Violence and Unemployment: Challenges faced by Women in Lockdown", through online interaction.
2. Smt. Rekha Sharma was invited as Chief Guest to a national webinar on "Countering Cyber Violence & Hate Speech Against Women", organized by Government College of Daman, Department of Sociology on July 17, 2020.
3. Online session on topic of, "Women Empowerment in Contemporary Times" was organized by Internal Complaints Committee, Central University of Gujarat on July 21, 2020, where NCW Chairperson appeared as Chief Guest to inaugurate the event.
4. Chairperson delivered a key speech as Chief Guest on July 22, 2020, a webinar on "Some Concerns on Gender Bias & Stereotyping in the Society", organized by Women Empowerment Cell, Central University of Kashmir.
5. Smt. Rekha Sharma chaired an online panel discussion on, "The Changing Landscape of Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace", organized by Metis Posh, Bangalore on July 24, 2020.
6. NCW Chairperson attended a webinar as Guest Speaker on topic of, "Cyber Crime against Women: Prevention & Solution", organized by Bhagidari Jan Sahyog Samiti and National Service Scheme K R Mangalam University held on July 27, 2020.

Follow NCW Chairperson
Smt. Rekha Sharma
@sharmarekha
chairperson-ncw@nic.in

11. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Commission advertised the 'Call for Proposals' announcements on website and social media from July 10 onwards. The Call for Proposals was for conducting webinars and research studies by accredited organization and institutions in India. The Commission would grant aid of financial assistance to selected / approved proposals to carry out the said activities for the Financial Year of 2020-2021.

The Research Studies Proposals were called in the following themes:

- 1) NRI Marriages: Issues concerning NRI Marriages particularly harmonizing domestic laws with International private laws including how pre-nuptial agreements could help address issues in such Marriages.
- 2) Women Mental Health:
I. Mental Health and Quality of Life of Married Working Women in India
II. Workplace Mental Health & Wellbeing.
- 3) Domestic Violence:
I. Implementation of Domestic Violence Act and effectiveness thereof
II. Violence against Women: with special reference to Counselling
- 4) Cyber Crime Against Women in India:
I. Precautions and Strategies in Prevention of Cyber Crimes.
II. Harassment of Women in Digital Space
- 5) Migrant Women Workers:
I. Migrant Women Workers: Issues and Challenges
II. Women Migrant Workers and Labour Law: Identifying gaps and exploring remedial measures
III. Challenges to implementation /analyzing grassroots impact of law and policy measures

The Webinar Proposals were called in the following themes:

- 1) Women & Mental Health;
- 2) Cyber Security – Challenges especially for Women Users;
- 3) Domestic Violence – Legal Framework for enforcing Women's Rights
- 4) Women Migrant Workers.