

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE. CENTRAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE UNDER 'EQUAL REMUNERATION, ACT, 1976 HELD ON 24.06.2008 AT 11:00 A.M IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, SHRAM SHAKTI BHAWAN, NEW DELHI

The first meeting of the newly reconstituted Central Advisory Committee on Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 was held on 24th June; 2008 at 11.00 A.M at New Delhi under the Chairmanship of Shri Oscar Fernandes, Hon'ble Minister of Labour & Employment (IC): List of participants is annexed.

2. While extending a warm and cordial welcome: to the members of the Committee, the Chairman expressed happiness at the convening of the meeting of the newly constituted Committee. He regretted the long Interval since the last meeting and assured the members that all efforts would be made to convene the meeting at least once in three months. The Chairman expressed his view that women workers form an integral part of the Indian workforce. Their participation rate for women Was 25.63% in 2001, which is an improvement. He further mentioned that while there has been an improvement in the work participation rate of women, it continues to be substantially less in, comparison to the work participation of men: In rural areas, women are mainly involved as cultivators and agricultural labourers. In urban areas almost 80% of women workers are in unorganized sector. Government has taken up a number of initiatives to give effect to the guidelines and norms laid down by the Supreme Court to protect women workers.

3. Secretary(L&E) felt that since the last meeting was held nine years back, the minutes of the that meeting may not be of much relevance. She suggested that the committee could make a fresh beginning from this meeting.

4. One of the members, Ms. Jaya: Ar.unachalam: expressed that there is a need to give social security; such as insurance coverage to women workers. She further suggested that Women workers should be organised in á better way and given proper training. Ms. Jaya Arunachalm added that the Social Security Bill should, be passed at an early date. She suggested that all have to come together to see that things change for the betterment of women workers. She also highlighted the

importance of education of women workers and suggested that scholarship should be given to their children. She requested the Government to ensure better facilities to them. The Hon'ble Labour Minister mentioned that the Government is willing to provide better facilities for skill development of Women workers.

5. Ms. Renukadevi Barkatali, INTUC felt that the Labour Department is neglected in her state (Assam). She also mentioned that the latest data has not been collected from the State. She further stated that the kind of advisory boards or Women cell as in the Ministry of Labour & Employment are not in existence in the State of Assam where more than 4 lakh women are working in the Plantation Sector. The Ministry should take steps to constitute Advisory Boards, Women Cell etc. in the States she also expressed that the Social Security Bill should be implemented at the earliest She suggested that the Central Government should put some pressure on State Governments to implement all the Acts which are in favour of women. She felt that the Ministry of Labour and Employment should play a more active role in this direction. Replying to the issues raised by the Members, Chairman mentioned that the Government has received suggestions that women should be given comparatively lighter jobs in the Construction Industries. He assured the Committee that the Government will look into the issues raised by the member. He also mentioned that both the Central and State Governments are responsible for Labour Laws in their respective jurisdictions and assured that the Government will try to see that these laws are implemented. Secretary (L&E) added that the Ministry is closely monitoring the implementation of all the Labour Laws. Chief Labour Commissioner (Central) mentioned that most of the laws applied both to Central and State sphere and his organization inspect the units and files prosecutions. He expressed the view that the scope of Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 is to only ensure that there should be no discrimination in the wages and suggested that the scope of this Act should be widened. Secretary (L&E) mentioned that the Area Officer Scheme of the Ministry is useful for improving the implementation of various Labour Laws.

6. During the discussion, Ms. Jyotsna Sivaramayya from Institute of Social Studies Trust mentioned that the contractors are denying Provident Fund to the women workers and are not giving Cards to them. In response, Hon'ble Minister replied that Ministry is suggesting that Panchayats take the responsibility of issuing such cards

to the women workers.

7. Ms. Shyamala Bhandary, Advocate & Notary suggested that a subcommittee be formed to study the Equal Remuneration Act and steps taken by the Government for its implementation. Hon'ble Minister replied that all the State Governments have their own. Committees for this purpose.

8. The representative of the National Commission for Women suggested for modifications in some Sections of the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976. It was also suggested that, in the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme, women should be given works which suit them. When Hon'ble Minister enquired about the kind of work to be entrusted, she replied that women have traditional skills like handicrafts which could be given to them under the Scheme. She also mentioned that the Commission is in the process of publishing a Draft National Policy for Women in Agriculture

9. On, asked about the status of the State Welfare Boards, CLC(C) replied that the Welfare Boards have not been constituted in the States. Ms. Jaya Arunachalam of Working Women's Forum mentioned that in Tamil Nadu all the Boards have been dissolved.

10. Prof. Alka Balram Kshatriya, Member of Parliament (RS) mentioned that the condition of women labour is, worse in rural areas in comparison to urban areas. Most of the women workers are engaged in construction work and there is no Act for the welfare of these women workers, due to which their conditions is deteriorating: Therefore, she felt that an Act should be made for them. She stated that in construction works, women workers have to do heavy work like carrying of construction material etc. She further mentioned that their children are staying with them at the construction sites and their education is ignored due to frequent shifting of work sites. Wages are not equal for the male and female workers. There is no provision for the registration of these women workers. She suggested that there should be some provision for their registration. Committee should think something for these domestic workers and migrant girls. She also suggested that there should be some laws for protecting the interest of female workers engaged in Call Centres.

11. Smt Geeta Jayant Gokhale, BMS highlighted the plight of women workers

engaged in beedi making. She mentioned that the implementation of labour laws is poor. Women beedi workers are not getting, enough leaves (Tendu patta) and tobacco for making beedies. She mentioned that inspectors are not visiting the Beedi Making Units. She further raised issues regarding domestic workers and migrant girls and said that they are being exploited. She suggested that the Committee should think something for these domestic workers and migrant girls. She also suggested that there should be some laws for protecting the interest of female workers engaged in Call Centres.

12. Ms. Pammi Bajaj mentioned that the children of women workers are engaged in selling of books/magazines etc. on the roads and the Committee should do something for providing education and better employment for them.

13. Dr. P.K.Mohanti, Joint. Secretary Ministry Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation mentioned that under the Swaran Jayanti Awas Yojana, his Ministry is constructing 1.5 million houses and 70% of the units are to be registered in the name of women. He also informed that the Ministry is contemplating a model law in this direction.

14. Shri Shrada Prasad, Director General of Employment & Training (DGE& T) gave a brief about Women's training & participation in the industry to the members. He mentioned that women's participation has increased as compared to last year. He also informed that the percentage of reservation for women in the training institutions has increased from 25% to 30%

15. DGET further informed that out of 7000 seats in ITIs, 3500 seats are for regular training courses and 3500 for short term training courses. He stated that an exclusive women ITI is being set up. At present there are 625 women wings in the ITIs. He informed that last year, the Ministry of Labour & Employment had started skill development initiative course for increasing requirements of the industries. He mentioned that there are 966 employment exchanges in the country but women specific employment exchanges are very few in number. He pointed out that there is a need to increase the infrastructure of the ITIs to have 10 more vocational training institutes in different parts of the country. It was informed that a project under Public

Private Partnership is under consideration.

16. Secretary (L&E) mentioned that the next meeting of the Central Advisory Committee could be held at the end of August, 2008. She also informed that by amending the Payment of Bonus Act, 1965, the construction workers are now within the ambit of the Bonus law. She also informed that a number of Acts are in the pipeline at various stages. She informed that 2.25 lakh smart cards have been issued under the "Aam Admi Bima Yojana" Scheme. She mentioned that a separate Bill will be formulated to take care of the security, convenience and comforts of women workers, particularly for those working in BPOs. She stated that *at/least* 10 Bills are proposed be passed in the forth coming Monsoon Session of Parliament. She also informed that the Ministry is holding meetings with the North Eastern States to review the position of various laws and. very soon we will have a complete picture. She pointed out that representatives from Ministry of Small and Medium Entrepreneurs and Rural Development will be invited in the next meeting.

17. Finally, the Hon'ble LEM expressed his gratitude to the members for sparing their valuable time to attend the meeting and assured that their views and comments will be kept in mind when preparing the Ministry's action plans etc. He also assured the members that the committee will now meet more frequently

18. The meeting ended with a vote of thanks by Joint Secretary(C&WL Division).

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS OF CENTRAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON 24.06.2008 AT 11.00 AM IN THE COMMITTEE
ROOM.SHRAM SHAKTI BHAVAN NEW DELHI .**

Non Official Members

1. Ms. Jaya Arunachalam, President, Working Women Forum(India)
2. Ms. Renuka Devi Barkatali, President, INTU,e, Assam
3. Prof. Alka Kshatriya, MP (RS)
4. Ms. Sahil Singh
5. Ms. Geeta Jayant Gokhale, Vice President, Bharatiya Majdoor Sangh
6. Ms. Shyamala Bhandary
7. Ms. Joytsana Sivaramaya, Institute of social studies Trust
8. Ms. Pammi Bajaj

Ex-officio Members

- 9 Smt. Sudha Piliai, Secretary (L&E).
- 10 Sh. S K Dev Verman, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Labour & Employment
11. Dr. P.K. Mohanty, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation
12. Shri Munish Kumar, Director; Planning commission
13. Ms. Kusum Mishra, Deputy Secretary, National Commission for Women,
14. Sh. Sharda Prasad, Joint Secretary//GE&T, Ministry of Labour & Employment
15. Sh. S.K. Mukhopadhyay, Chief labour Commissioner, Ministry of Labour & Employment
16. Smt. Harjot Kaur,Director, Ministry of Labour & Employment
17. Sh. R.P. Batra,. Under Secretary, Ministry of Labour & Employment