

## **The Verdict of the Jury:**

While cases of abuse of domestic workers are sometimes reported in the press, the extent to which this happens and the manner in which the workers are tested and tried by employers and the fate they face even before the law... as revealed through these testimonies, is a blur on our society as a whole. That vulnerable women, who provide such an indispensable service to us are treated in such horrendous ways is a challenge to those of us who hold responsibility in government. Keeping in mind that the Indian Government has voted in favour of Convention 189 – Decent Work for Domestic Workers, it is only a natural requirement that measures are taken to protect them. Since the GOI aims to be inclusive and recognizes the contribution of such workers in the informal sector to the economy, it is imperative that legislative measures are put in place.

We therefore feel the following steps should be taken as soon as possible:

- That domestic workers be included in existing labour laws which will need to be reviewed and amended in this light.
- More specifically, the agencies who place such workers should also be regulated by a specific administrative order from the Ministry of Labour.
- A specific law is also required to regulate human trafficking of workers from different states. A National Coordinating body should be established for the purpose of regulating trafficking of domestic workers. The coordinating body should have all the information (registration, name, address) regarding the worker taken from one place to another and this information should be mandatory by law
- The Ministry of Labour should also put in place a support system for the victims of physical and verbal abuse and harassment. There should be a helpline number for domestic workers where workers in distress can call and immediate support can be provided. In addition, a redressal

mechanism should also be created at the city, block and district levels where by issues relating to salary, physical abuse or any other harassment can be negotiated.

- The domestic workers should themselves organise and create vigilance committees so that they themselves can support those that are ill treated. They should be made aware of their rights and different laws that relate to their well being.
- Attempts should be made to harness the power of the media in order to spread awareness about issues related to domestic workers.
- Efforts need to be made to sensitize police, district and jail administration officials about issues related to domestic workers by organizing workshops at different levels.
- Particular note should be taken of those children who are made to engage in domestic work as the law forbids children below the age of 18 to engage in such work.
- In order to render justice to this large section of workers, the Government of India should by all means create a Comprehensive Legislation to safeguard the rights of these workers.

The Jury also decided to take suo motto the case of Sabina Yasmeen, whose dead body was found in the month of January this year at her employer's house, to ensure justice is delivered.

***Shri NP Nair***

Name: Jury Member