

The Times Of India, Bombay, 09 Oct 2007

Law for women and kids' rights mulled

New Delhi: The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has recommended a legal framework, fraught with problems of enforcement, that will give women and children (between the age of 0-6 years) access to health, nutrition, education and medical benefits. The commission has also suggested punitive action against the administration in case there is a lapse in implementation.

NCPCR chairperson Shanta Sinha said, "There is need for a law that would take punitive action if children in a village have not been immunised for months together because of the absence of an auxiliary nurse midwife (ANM) or the required dosages.

There is need for law that guarantees protection for children of informal sector and migrant workers. It is of utmost importance that there is a debate on the basic entitlement of children in the 0-6 years of age and explore the need for providing

them the fundamental rights."

Sinha added that there was need for a legal process to protect mothers as well. "There is need for a legal process by which a poor woman in labour can complain about non-availability of a doctor or even a trained midwife. There is also a need for a law that mandates the state to provide for all services and procedures any woman can demand in a primary healthcare centre, sub-centre or a general hospital. There is need for a law on provision of maternal entitlements enabling exclusive breast-feeding," she added.

Experts in the field of child rights on Monday began a two-day consultation on giving a legal backing to areas such as basic health and nutrition, protection measures, early childhood care and education to children in the age group of 0-6 years.

There is, however, ambiguity on how these laws will be implemented and enforced on a scale that would make them effective, INN