

## Women's panel probes female foeticides

A fact-finding team of the National Commission for Women (NCW) Thursday visited various places in Orissa to probe the discovery of least 34 decomposed female fetuses.

The team led by NCW member Manju Snehlata Hembram visited the sites in Nayagarh district and inquired about the steps taken by the administration to check female foeticides, Nayagarh district health chief M.M. Alli Beg told IANS.

'The team also discussed the issue with villagers as well as health, police, administrative officials and social and child right activists,' he said.

The ghastly matter came to light when seven female fetuses, some eight-month old and all stashed away in polythene packets, were found at the Pratapgarh cave near Duburi in Nayagarh district, some 100 km from Bhubaneswar.

Subsequently, the police discovered 132 polythene bags with medical waste and some 25 aborted fetuses and newborns from different places of the district.

The police also discovered three fetuses in a drain in Golanthara village in Ganjam district.

In New Delhi, NCW chairperson Girija Vyas said: 'We have constituted a three-member inquiry committee, which is likely to submit its report within a week.'

Vyas said: 'Over 70 percent health officials posted in remote areas of the country are not familiar about the difference between the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act (PNTD) Act and Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MPT) act. They need to be educated at the earliest.'

She added that the existing laws should be made more stringent to put an end on female foeticides.

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