CHAPTER III

STATE COMMISSIONS FOR WOMEN (ASSAM, MEGHALAYA AND TRIPURA): STRUCTURE, FORMATION, FUNCTIONS AND STATUS

As stated in the previous chapter establishment of the UN is a major landmark in recognising equal rights and status of women with that of men. The Charter of the United Nations recognises equal rights of women in order to provide them an equal social status along with men. Consequent upon the adoption of UDHR, UN established CSW, adopted CEDAW etc. to ensure equality between men and women.

As an important member of the UN and as a signatory member of CEDAW, India formed the Committee on the Status of Women in 1974 in order to protect and promote women’s rights. On the basis of the recommendation of the Committee the Govt. of India adopted the National Commission for Women Act, 1990. The Act provides for the establishment of National Commission for Women which came into being on 31st January 1992.

Till date twenty eight States and six Union Territories of India have enacted Acts for establishing State Commission for Women (SCWs) in their respective States. In Northeast India all the seven States have enacted the Act and established SCWs. In this chapter we shall discuss about the structure, formation, functions and status of ASCW, MSCW and TCW in the light of their respective Acts.

Formation and Structure:

Assam State Commission for Women:

The Assam Government, after the establishment of National Commission for Women in 1992, promulgated an Ordinance for the constitution of the State Commission for Women on 24th November, 1993 on the occasion of Women’s Day during the “Quami Ekta” Week. Accordingly it was passed by the Assam

Legislative Assembly (Assam Act No. XXI of 1994) and received the assent of the Governor on 5th May, 1994.

Section 3 of Chapter II of the Assam State Commission for Women Act deals with the constitution of the Commission. According to section 3(2) the Commission shall consist of the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson who are nominated by the State Government. Sub section 3 of the same section postulates that seven members to be appointed by the State Government (of whom at least one shall belong to the Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes) from amongst persons of ability and integrity and who have served the cause of women or have had experience in law or administration concerning the advancement of women or leadership of any voluntary organisation of women for protection and promotion of common interest of women.

The first Assam State Commission for Women was constituted\footnote{Memo NO.SWD.79/93/64-A, Dated Dispur, the 25th January, 1994.} by the Governor of Assam with the following persons.

1. Smt. Mridula Saharia Chairperson
2. Smt. Hema Bharali Member
3. Smt. Sabita Das Member
4. Smt. Anandi Rabha Member
5. Smt. Aleya Kurmi Member
6. Smt. Abola Gohain Member
7. Dr. (Ms.) Shahnaaz Rahman Member
8. Ms. Jashomoyee Devi Member
9. Professor (Dr.) Lakshyahira Dutta Member
10. Ms. M. Hagjer Barman Member-Secretary

At present, the Assam State Commission for Women consists of a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson, six Members and one Member-Secretary.
Meghalaya State Commission for Women:

The Meghalaya State Commission for Women Act, 2005 (Act No. 7 of 2005) was passed by the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly and received the assent of the Governor on the 29th April, 2005. The Act was published in the Gazette of Meghalaya on 2nd May, 2005.

The jurisdiction of the Commission extends throughout the State of Meghalaya. The MSCW was established in order to look after the violation of women’s rights such as fundamental constitutional rights, human rights and to recommend measures for improving the status of women etc. 97

Chapter-II of the Act deals with the constitution of the Commission. According to Section 3(2) the Commission shall consist of-

(a) a Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson to be nominated by the State Government from amongst eminent women who have served the cause of women and who have sufficient knowledge and experience in dealing with women’s problem.

(b) four members to be appointed by the State Government from amongst the persons of ability and integrity who have served the cause of women or have had experience in Law or Administration of matters concerning the advancement of women or leadership of any trade union or voluntary organization for women for protection and promotion of common interest of women.

The first Meghalaya State Commission for Women was established with the following persons.

1. Dr. Biloris Lyndem  
   Chairperson
2. Smt. Hasina Kharbhiih  
   Vice Chairperson
3. Smt. Wanda K. Blah  
   Member
4. Dr. June Shullai  
   Member
5. Smt. Sophia R. Marak  
   Member
6. Smt. Minoti Sharma  
   Member
7. Smt. I.D. Lyngwa  
   Member-Secretary

At present the MSCW has one Chairperson, four Members and one Secretary to discharge the functions laid down in the MSCW Act, 2005.

Chart-3.2

Structure of Meghalaya State Commission for Women

Smt. R. Wajri  
Chairperson

Smt. M. Kharkongor  
Member
Smt. W. Tariang  
Member
Smt. G. R. Marak  
Member
Dr. A. Ingly  
Member

Source: Office of the Meghalaya State Commission for Women, Shillong
Tripura Commission for Women:

The Tripura Commission for Women Act, 1993 (Tripura Act No. 1 of 1994) was passed by Tripura Legislative Assembly in the year 1993 and it received the assent of the Governor of the State on 1st January, 1994.

Chapter- II of the Act deals with the constitution of the Commission. According to Section 3(1) of the Act, the State Government within three months from the date of coming into force of this Act shall constitute a body to be known as the Tripura Commission for Women.

Section 3 (2) of the Act states that the Commission shall consist of one Chairperson, one Vice Chairperson and five members (one shall be a member of Scheduled Caste and one shall be a member of Scheduled Tribe) to be appointed by the State Government from amongst the persons of ability and integrity, who have served the cause of women or have had experience in law or administration of matters concerning the advancement of women or leadership of any trade union or voluntary organisation for Women for protection and promotion of common interest of women.

Following the provisions of the Act the first Tripura Commission for Women was constituted on 5th February 1994 with the following persons. 98

1. Ms. Manjulika Basu Chairperson
2. Ms. Mangaleswari Debbarma Vice Chairperson
3. Dr. Tapati Chakraborty Member
4. Ms. Anurupa Mukharjee Member
5. Ms. Karabi Debbarma Member
6. Ms. Indubala Das Member
7. Ms. Sahana Sengupta Member
8. Ms. Minakshi Sen Bandyopadhaya Member-Secretary

At present, the Tripura Commission for Women comprises of one Chairperson, one Vice Chairperson, four other Members and one Member-Secretary.

Chart 3.3

Structure of Tripura Commission for Women

Source: Office of the Tripura Commission for Women, Agartala

Appointing Authority:

Assam State Commission for Women (ASCW):

According to Section 3 (1), of the Assam State Commission for Women Act, 1994 the State Government through notification in the official gazette shall constitute the ASCW. According to subsection 2 & 3 of the same section, Chairperson and Vice Chairperson shall be nominated and appointed by the State Government and Members shall be appointed by the State Government.

Meghalaya State Commission for Women (MSCW):

According to Section 3 (1), of the Meghalaya State Commission for Women Act, 2005 the Meghalaya Government shall constitute the MSCW. Subsection 2 (a, b) of the same section states that the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson shall be nominated by the State Government and Members shall be appointed by the State Government.
Tripura Commission for Women (TCW):

Section 3 (1) of the Tripura Commission for Women Act, 1994 the State Government shall, by notification in the official gazette, constitute the TCW. According to the subsection 2 (a, b) the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and other Members are appointed by the State Government.

Term:

According to Article 4 (1) of ASCW Act, 1994; MSCW Act, 2005 and TCW Act, 1994 a person appointed as Chairperson, Vice Chairperson or Member of the State Commission for Women shall hold office for such period not exceeding three years as may be specified by the State Government.

Vacancy:

In the event of the occurrence of any vacancy in the office of the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson or any Member by reason of her/his death, resignation or otherwise the same shall be filled up by fresh nomination or appointment as the case may be [Section 4 (4) of the ASCW Act, 1994; MSCW Act, 2005 and TCW Act, 1994].

Removal:

According to sub-section 2 of section 4 of the ASCW Act 1994, the MSCW Act 2005 and the TCW Act 1994 the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson or any Members of State Commission for Women can resign from their office by writing addressed to the State Government at any time.

Sub-section 3 of the similar section of all these Acts further states that the State Government can remove the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson or any other Member if that person becomes an undischarged insolvent; or gets convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for an offence which according to the State Government involves moral turpitude; or becomes of unsound mind and stands so declared by a competent court; or refuses to act or becomes incapable of acting; or remain absent from three consecutive meetings of the Commission without obtaining
leave of absence from the Commission. The State Government can remove a person from the Commission if in its opinion the person has abused the position of the Chairperson or Member or continuance of that person in the Commission is detrimental to public interest. However, before removing that person she/he should be provided reasonable opportunity to defense.

So far no Chairperson, Vice chairperson or any Members of ASCW, MSCW and TCW have been removed from their office for any causes as mentioned above.

**Headquarters of the Commission:**

The headquarters of the Assam State Commission for Women is located in Guwahati, Capital of Assam. Meghalaya State Commission is situated in Shillong which is the capital of Meghalaya and Tripura Commission for Women is located at Agartala the capital city of Tripura.

**Officers and other staff of the State Commission for Women:**

**Assam State Commission for Women (ASCW):**

Section 3 (4) of the ASCW Act, 1994 states that there shall be a Member Secretary to be nominated by the State Government who shall be “an expert in the field of management, organisational structure of sociological movement or an officer who is a member of civil service of the State or holds a civil post under the State with appropriate experience”. Section 5(1) of the same Act states that the State Government shall provide the Commission with such officers and employees as may be necessary for the efficient performance of the functions of the Commission.

**Meghalaya State Commission for Women (MSCW):**

Under Section 3(3) of the MSCW Act, 2005 an officer of the Government of Meghalaya shall be appointed as Secretary of the Commission who has experience in the field of women’s welfare. Further section 5(2) of the same Act states that the MSCW shall appoint employees other than the Secretary to assist
the Commission in its day-to-day function, either through direct recruitment or on deputation with the prior approval of the State Government.

**Tripura Commission for Women (TCW):**

The State Government shall appoint an officer of the State Government who shall be the Member Secretary [Section 3(2(c)) of the TCW Act, 1994]. According to Section 5 (1) of the same Act the State Government shall provide the Commission such officers and other employees necessary for the efficient performance of the functions of the Commission.

**Member Secretary/Secretary:**

As a chief executive officer of the Commission, all the orders and decisions taken by the Commission are authenticated by the Member Secretary/Secretary as the case may be. All the staff of the Commission comes under the overall administrative control of the Member Secretary/Secretary who is directly responsible to the Commission. Being the chief coordinator of the Commission the Member Secretary/Secretary also keeps contact with various departments.

**Assam State Commission for Women (ASCW):**

In Assam State Commission for Women the Member Secretary is an Officer (A.C.S.) of Government of Assam and is deputed to ASCW. She is a full time Member Secretary of the ASCW.

**Meghalaya State Commission for Women (MSCW):**

In case of Meghalaya State Commission for Women the executive head of the Commission is an officer equivalent to the rank of Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya. The Secretary of MSCW is the Secretary of Department of Social Welfare, Government of Meghalaya and her works as Secretary of Meghalaya State Commission for Women is her additional duty with her regular duties in Social Welfare Department.
Tripura Commission for Women (TCW):

In Tripura Commission for Women the Member Secretary is an Assistant Professor of a Government Degree College of Tripura. Subsequently she was appointed as a full time Member Secretary of the TCW and is in office till date.

Administration:

Assam State Commission for Women:

In ASCW there is one Member Secretary, one Upper Division Assistant cum Accountant, Two Lower Division Assistant cum Typist, four Grade IV, two Drivers and one Computer Operator. Although different types of responsibilities are entrusted among different levels of staff, but as there are not sufficient numbers of staff the spirit of mutual help exists without limiting oneself to the specific responsibilities. In ASCW all staff members are on deputation from other departments of Govt. of Assam (Chart-3.4).

Chart 3.4

Structure of Office of the Assam State Commission for Women

Source: Office of the Assam State Commission for Women
Meghalaya State Commission for Women:

The MSCW has one Secretary, two Lower Division Assistants, one Computer Operator, two Drivers, one Chowkidar, two Peons and one Cleaner. The strength of the Commission in terms staff members is not satisfactory; the existing staff lend a helping hand towards each other, like the ASCW, in discharging responsibilities.

Chart 3.5

Structure of Office of the Meghalaya State Commission for Women

Source: Office of the Meghalaya State Commission for Women

Tripura Commission for Women:

The TCW has one Member Secretary, one Personal Secretary to Member Secretary, one Personal Assistant to Chairperson, one Law Officer, two Legal Advisors, three Counselors, one Librarian, one Head Clerk, one Accountant, one Upper Division Clerk, two Lower Division Clerks, four Junior Social Education Organisers (Teacher of Baloari\(^{99}\) School), three Drivers, two Personal Guard to Chairperson (PG to CP), four Group-D, one Home Guard and one Sweeper. Law Officer and Legal Advisors are looking after the legal works of the Commission,

\(^{99}\) Pre primary school.
Counselors are for counseling the victims, and Head Clerk looks after the administrative part whereas the Accountant is responsible for financial works (Chart 3.6). There is clear division of work in TCW as they have more staff members than ASCW or MSCW.

It is to be noted that many of the staff members including the Member Secretary are on deputation from different departments of the Govt. of Tripura. Counselors, Law Officer, Librarian have been appointed in TCW as contractual staff.

**Chart 3.6**

*Structure of Office of the Tripura Commission for Women*

*Source: Office of the Tripura Commission for Women*
The Researcher at the Assam State Commission for Women, Beltola, Gauhati, Assam

The Researcher at the Meghalaya State Commission for Women, Lower Lachumiere, Shillong, Meghalaya

The Researcher at the Tripura Commission for Women, Melarmath, Agartala, Tripura
Registration of Cases:

The Commissions can register cases in two ways; (1) when they receive complaints from the victims directly or by anyone else on behalf of the victim, (2) on the basis of any reports i.e., they can register *suo-motu* cases. After receiving a complaint, a file is prepared by the office for each case and is referred to the Member Secretary then to the Chairperson. After that letter is issued to both petitioner and accused for summoning them before the Commission.

The office of the SCWs provides administrative supports to the Commission, such as issuing letters of summoning accused, organising meetings of the Commission, sitting of the Commission, issuing notice of the meetings of Commission etc.

In ASCW and TCW all administrative matters are under the direct control and supervision of the respective Member Secretaries as they are deputed to SCWs on a full time basis. However, in MSCW maximum works are undertaken by the Lower Division Assistant as the Secretary is in charge of the Commission in addition to her duty as Secretary of Social Welfare Department, Government of Meghalaya and comes to the MSCW as per necessity for signing of files etc.

Library:

ASCW, MSCW and TCW have books, journals, projects and reports related to women issues in their office rooms. They do not have any separate library exclusively for keeping and reading books and they keep these books, journals etc in separate almirah in their office rooms. However, students, researchers, with prior permission of the Member Secretary/Secretary or the Chairperson can access library books, journals etc. Lending facility is not available in any of these Commissions. There is one Librarian to look after the books, journals etc. in the TCW library.
Infrastructure:

Assam State Commission for Women:

Since its establishment in 1994 till the middle of 2012 the ASCW was located in ‘Bal Bhawan’ near river side, Uzanbazar, Guwahati, Assam. At that time there were three rooms on one side of the Bhawan for the use of the ASCW. During that time one room was used for Chairman and in that room meetings and counseling were conducted. One room was allotted to the Member Secretary and another used as office. However, in the middle of 2012 the ASCW got its permanent building in Beltola area of Guwahati, near Sankar Netralaya. The permanent building is quite spacious. One room is allotted to the Chairperson, one to the Vice Chairperson, one to the Member Secretary and one to members. Commission’s Office, Library and Computer are housed in two rooms. The ASCW has basic facilities like computers with internet connectivity, vehicles, telephone, fax machine, photocopying machine etc.

Meghalaya State Commission for Women:

There are few differences between the MSCW with ASCW and TCW so far as the infrastructure is concerned. The MSCW is located in lower Lachumiere of Shillong. The MSCW does not have any building of its own. MSCW is located in a portion of the ground floor of a building. There are small cubicles created for the use of the Chairperson, Secretary, and office. Counseling is generally conducted in the chamber of the Chairperson. Nonetheless, MSCW like other SCWs is equipped with basic facilities like telephone, vehicles etc.

Tripura Commission for Women:

TCW is located in Melarmath area of Agartala town. The office building is quite old and given by the State Government for its use. A new room has been constructed for counseling. The TCW has one chamber for Chairperson, one for Members, one for Member Secretary, one for PA to Chairperson, one for PS to Member Secretary, one big room is used for official works. Books, reports etc. are kept in this room only. Besides these the TCW also has one conference room and
one counseling room. TCW is equipped with computers with internet facility, fax, photocopier machines, vehicles, telephone etc. basic requirements.

In short all the SCWs have basic infrastructure facilities required to run the office.

**Status of State Commissions for Women:**

In spite of the existence of independent judiciary, human rights commissions in India, existence of State Commissions for Women in different States indicate their importance in protection and promotion of women’s rights. Not only the Acts and Statutes but also appointment of leading women of States as Chairperson and Members in their respective States increases the value and status of SCWs. The status of SCWs also derives from the fixity of tenure of Chairperson and other members.

**Functions of the State Commissions for Women:**

**Assam State Commission for Women:**

As per the article 10, subsection 1 of Chapter-III of the Assam State Commission for Women Act, 1994 the ASCW performs all or any of the following functions. These are to

(a) investigate and examine all matters relating to the safeguards provided for women under the Constitution and other laws;

(b) present to the State Government, annually and at such other times as the Commission may deem fit, reports upon the working of these safeguards;

(c) make in such reports recommendations for the effective implementation of those safeguards for improving the conditions of women by the State;

(d) review, from time to time, the existing provisions of the Constitution and other laws affecting women and recommend amendments thereto so as to suggest remedial legislative measure to meet any lacunae, inadequacies or shortcomings in such legislations;

(e) take up the cases of violation of the provisions of the Constitution and of other laws relating to women with the appropriate authorities;
(f) look into complaints and take *suo moto* notice of matters relating to-
  i. deprivation of women's rights,
  ii. non-implementation of laws enacted to provide protection to women and also to achieve the objective of equality and development;
  iii. non-compliance of policy decisions, guidelines or instructions, aimed at mitigating hardships and ensuring welfare and providing relief to women and taken up issues arising out of such matters with appropriate authorities;
(g) call for special studies or investigations into specified problems or situations arising out of discrimination and atrocities against women and identify the constrains so as to recommend strategies for their removal;
(h) undertake promotional and educational research so as to suggest ways of ensuring due representation of women in all spheres and identify factors responsible for impeding their advancement, such as lack of access to housing and basic service, inadequate support services and technologies for reducing drudgery and occupational health hazards and for increasing their productivity;
(i) participate and advice on the planning process of socio-economic development of women;
(j) evaluate the progress of the development of women under the State;
(k) inspect or cause to be inspected a jail, remand home, women’s institution or other place or custody where women are kept as prisoners or otherwise, take up with the concerned authorities for remedial action if found necessary;
(l) fund litigation involving issues affecting a large body of women;
(m) make periodical reports to the Government on any matter pertaining to women and in particular various difficulties under which women toil;
(n) any other matter which may be referred to it by State Government.
Meghalaya State Commission for Women:

As per Article 13, subsection 1 of Chapter-IV of the Meghalaya State Commission for Women Act, 2005 the MSCW perform all or any of the following functions. These are to

(a) inquire into unfair practice, take decision thereon and recommend to the Government the action to be taken in that matter.

(b) investigate and examine all matters relating to the safeguards provided for women under the Constitution of India (hereinafter referred to as the Constitution) and other laws and recommend steps to be taken by the State Government for effective implementation of such safeguards for improving the conditions of women in the State;

(c) present to the State Government, annually and at such other times as the Commission may deem fit it, reports upon the working of these safeguards;

(d) review, from time to time, the existing provisions of the Constitution and other laws affecting women and recommend amendments thereto so as to suggest remedial legislative measure to meet any lacunae, inadequacies or shortcomings in such legislations;

(e) take up the cases of violation of the provisions of the Constitution and of other laws relating to women with the appropriate authorities;

(f) look into complaints and take *suo moto* notice of matters relating to-
   
i. deprivation of women's rights,
   
ii. non-implementation of laws enacted to provide protection to women and also to achieve the objective of equality and development;
   
iii. non-compliance of policy decisions, guidelines or instructions, aimed at mitigating hardships and ensuring welfare and providing relief to women and taken up issues arising out of such matters with appropriate authorities;
(g) call for special studies or investigations into specified problems or situations arising out of discrimination and atrocities against women and identify the constraints so as to recommend strategies for their removal;

(h) inspect or cause to be inspected a jail, police station/lockup, observation home, children’s home, rescue home, shelter home, or other place of custody where women are kept as prisoners or otherwise and take up with the authorities concerned such matters for remedial action as may be necessary;

**Tripura Commission for Women:**

As per Article 11, subsection 1 of Chapter-III of the Tripura Commission for Women Act, 1993 the TCW perform all or any of the following functions. These are to

(a) investigate and examine all matters relating to the safeguards provided for women under the Constitution of India (hereinafter referred to as the Constitution) and other laws and recommend steps to be taken by the State Government for effective implementation of such safeguards;

(b) review the existing provisions of the Constitution and other laws affecting women and recommend amendments thereto so as to suggest remedial legislative measure to meet any lacunae inadequacies or shortcomings in such legislations;

(c) take up the cases of violation of the provisions of the Constitution and of other laws relating to women in the State with the appropriate authorities;

(d) look into complaints and take *suo moto* notice of matters relating to-

   i. deprivation of women's rights,

   ii. non-implementation of laws enacted to provide protection to women.

   iii. non-compliance of policy decisions, guidelines instructions aimed at mitigating hardships and ensuring welfare and providing relief to women and taken up issues arising out of such matters with appropriate authorities;
(e) call for special studies or investigations into specific problems or situations arising out of discrimination and atrocities against women and identify the constraints so as to recommend strategies for their removal;
(f) evaluate the progress of advancement of women in the State;
(g) visit a jail, destitute girls' home, women's institution or other place custody where women are kept as prisoners or otherwise and take up with the concerned authorities such matters for remedial action as may be necessary;
(h) any other matter which may be referred to it by the State Government.

Powers of State Commissions for Women:

State Commissions for Women are the apex governmental body in any State to protect and promote women’s rights. They have wide ranging powers to deal with issues relating to women.

Assam Commission for Women:

Under Section 10(3) while investigating the cases the Commission has all powers of civil courts trying a suit, specifically related to the following matters-

(a) summoning and enforcing the attendance of any person from any part of Assam and examining him on oath;
(b) requiring the discovery and production of any document;
(c) receiving evidence on affidavits;
(d) requisitioning any public record or copy thereof from any Court or office;
(e) issuing commissions for the examination of witnesses and documents; and
(f) any other matter which may be prescribed.

Meghalaya State Commission for Women:

Chapter-III of the Meghalaya State Commission for Women Act, 2005 deals with the powers of the MSCW. Sub Section 1 of the Section 12 of the Act states that the Commission for the purpose of any inquiry under the MSCW Act, 2005 have
the same powers as are vested in a Civil Court while trying a suit under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (Central Act 5 of 1908), in respect of the following matters-

(a) summoning and enforcing the attendance of any witness and examining him/her;

(b) requiring the discovery and production of any document;

(c) requisitioning any public record or copy thereof from any public office;

(d) issuing commissions for the examination of witnesses.

Sub section 2 of the same section of the Act states that any proceedings before the Commission shall be deemed to be a judicial proceedings within the meaning of sections 193 and 228 of the Indian Penal Code (Central Act 45 of 1860) and the Commission shall be deemed to be a court for the purpose of section 195 of the Code of Criminal Procedure 1973 (Central Act 2 of 1974).

**Tripura Commission for Women:**

Section 11, subsection 3 of the Tripura Commission for Women Act states that while investigating any matter referred to in clauses (a) and (d) of sub-section 1 of Section 11 of the TCW Act, 1993, has all the powers of a civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 while trying a suit, and specifically in respect of the following matters –

(a) summoning and enforcing the attendance of any person from any part of India examining him on oath;

(b) requiring the discovery and production of any document;

(c) receiving evidence on affidavits;

(d) any other matter which may be prescribed.
Summing up:

The above discussion may be summed up as follows:

- Recommendations of the CSW led to the enactment of the National Commission for Women Act, 1992 and subsequently the establishment of NCW. The recommendations resulted in the enactment of different Acts for the establishment of SCWS by different States. All the States in Northeast India have established SCWs.

- In Assam the ASCW was established in the year 1994 under the ASCW Act, 1994; the MSCW was established in the year 2004 under the MSCW Act, 2005 and the TCW was established in the year 1994 under the TCW Act, 1993.

- Section 3, Chapter II of the ASCW Act, 1994; MSCW Act, 2005 and TCW Act, 1993 deals with the composition of ASCW, MSCW and TCW respectively.

- In Assam the ASCW started functioning with a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson and seven other Members as per provision of the ASCW Act, 1994; the MSCW with a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson and four other Members and in case of Tripura the TCW started functioning with a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson and five other Members.

- In all the three Commissions under study there is no Member Secretary/Secretary appointed exclusively for the Commission. Since its establishment in both ASCW and TCW Member Secretary has been deputed from other Departments of Govt. of Assam and Govt. of Tripura respectively on a full time basis. But, in case of Meghalaya the Secretary looks after the MSCW as her additional charge along with her regular duties as Secretary of the Social Welfare Department, Govt. of Meghalaya.

- In terms of numbers of staff the TCW is in better position than the ASCW and the MSCW. All these Commissions have staff members who are deputed
to the SCWs from other Departments of their respective States. It is seen from this study that the ASCW and the TCW cannot appoint any staff for its offices; for this they have to depend on their respective state governments whereas the MSCW can do so as the MSCW Act, 2005 itself enables the Commission. However, it is noteworthy that the MSCW has not implemented/utilised this provision of the Act till date.

- Section 10, subsection 1 of the ASCW Act, 1994 lays down 14 functions for ASCW which includes among others to inquire into suo-moto or petition presented by victims to ASCW on violation of women’s rights, visits of jails, homes where women are kept. ASCW has to undertake researches on issues related to women etc.

- The MSCW Act, 2005 also lays down eight functions for MSCW. These include suo-moto inquiry or enquire on the basis of petitions submitted to MSCW by the victims in cases of violation of their rights. The MSCW has also to visit jails, custodial homes etc. where women are kept.

- Section 11, subsection 1 of the TCW Act, 1993 lays down eight functions for TCW which include to inquire into suo-moto or petition submitted by victims to TCW on violation of women’s rights, visits to jails, destitute homes for women. TCW has the responsibility of reviewing Constitutional and other legal safeguards available for women from time to time besides encouraging researches on the issues related to women.

The above discussion provides us an understanding of the formation, structure and functions of the State Commissions for Women in Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura. The SCWs in these three States have been empowered with a vast range of powers in the field of protection of the rights of women. As quasi-judicial institutions these Commissions have been vested with the responsibility to ensure justice to the victims. In the light of the powers and functions that the Commissions have been entrusted with, we shall now focus on the role of the SCWs in these three States in case of protection, advancement and endorsement of women’s rights in their respective States. This will be done in the next chapter.