

There is a general misconception that the Committee for the Purpose of Control and Supervision of Experiments on Animals (CPCSEA) is a creation of Mrs. Maneka Gandhi, the erstwhile Minister of Animal Welfare. Few people actually know that the constitution of the CPCSEA was envisaged under Section 15 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act passed in 1960. The purpose of the Committee is to control and supervise experiments performed on animals.

The objectives of the CPCSEA as elaborated in Section 17(2) of the PCA, 1960 are to ensure that:

- All experiments are carried out by qualified individuals and with full responsibility of the person in charge of the institution.
- Experiments are performed with due care and humanity, and that as far as possible experiments involving operations are performed under the influence of some anaesthetic of sufficient power to prevent the animals feeling pain.
- Animals that are so injured in the course of experiments, or under the influence of anaesthetics, that their recovery would involve serious suffering, are ordinarily destroyed while still insensible.
- Experiments on animals are avoided wherever it is possible to do so as, for example, in medical schools, hospitals, colleges, if other teaching devices such as books, models, films and the like may equally suffice.
- Experiments on larger animals are avoided when it is possible to achieve the same results by experiments upon small laboratory animals like guinea pigs, rabbits, frogs and rats.
- As far as possible experiments are not performed merely for the purpose of acquiring manual skill.
- Animals intended for the performance of the experiments are

## Not a Maneka Creation

### History of the CPCSEA

○ S. Chinny Krishna

properly looked after, both before and after experiments.

→ Suitable records are maintained with respect to experiments performed on animals.

To achieve this purpose the CPCSEA may make such rules as it may think fit in relation to the conduct of such experiments and issue them through a notification in the Gazette of India.

The CPCSEA is a Committee nominated by the Central Government and consists of representatives of various government departments and scientific institutions as well as representatives of voluntary organisations. At present there are 27 members and all the significant scientific departments and institutions concerned with issues related to experimentation on animals are represented.

The CPCSEA was first constituted on September 21, 1964 with Kamal Nayan Bajaj, Member of Parliament as its first Chairman.

This Committee issued a pamphlet on Animal Experimentation in March 1966 and the Experiments on Animals (Control and Supervision) Rules, 1968 on July 13, 1968 which was to guide the use of animals in experimentation.

The CPCSEA was again constituted on February 8, 1991 under the chairmanship of Dr. A.S. Paintal, Director General, Indian Council of Medical Research. Upto 1996 there was no significant activity of the Committee and it remained almost defunct.

The next Committee was constituted on February 23, 1996 under the chairpersonship of Maneka

Gandhi, who was a Member of Parliament at the time. The Committee issued the following rules to regulate animal experimentation: Experiments on Animals (Control and Supervision) Amendment Rules, 1996; Experiments on Animals (Control and Supervision) Amendment Rules, 1998; Breeding of and Experiments on Animals (Control and Supervision) Amendment Rules, 1998.

The present Committee was constituted on February 17, 2000 under the chairpersonship of Maneka Gandhi for a period of four years.

The CPCSEA has formulated rules governing the procedures for experimentation which have been notified through the Breeding of and Experiments on Animals (Control and Supervision) Rules, 1998 and Experiments on Animals (Control and Supervision) (Amendment) Rules, 2001.

Till date the CPCSEA has registered over 600 institutions/laboratories in the country. The process of registration is a continuous one as more and more institutions are brought under the ambit of the CPCSEA and greater awareness is created about its mandate and rules.

Since the revitalisation of the CPCSEA, out of the 467 laboratories which have so far been inspected by various nominees, it has been found that more than 400 of such laboratories do not have even basic facilities for proper housing of animals which are under their charge. □

**Dr. S. Chinny Krishna is a Vice Chairman of the Animal Welfare Board and a CPCSEA nominee.**