

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UN-STARRED QUESTION NO. 4912
TO BE ANSWERED ON 31.03.2023

WOMEN HELPLINE SCHEME

4912. SHRI SELVAM G.:

Will the Minister of Women and Child Development be pleased to state:

- (a) the current status of implementation of Women Helpline Scheme (WHS) in the country along with the challenges faced in its implementation;
- (b) whether the Government has achieved the aims and objectives for setting up the women helpline in the country, if so, the details thereof and if not, the corrective steps taken in this regard;
- (c) the number of women who have benefitted from WHS in the State of Tamil Nadu;
- (d) whether Government has launched any awareness programme about the implementation of the scheme and if so, the details and outcome thereof;
- (e) whether the Government has conducted any periodic assessment of the functioning of women helpline across the country and if so, the outcome thereof; and
- (f) the other steps taken by the Government to provide help to women affected by violence both in public and private spaces?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI)

(a) to (e): The Women Helpline aims to provide 24 hours emergency and non-emergency response through telephonic short-code 181 to women, both in public and private spaces by linking them with appropriate authorities such as Police, One Stop Centres, Hospitals, Legal Services Authorities etc. Women Help Lines (WHL) also support women in distress with counseling services in addition to providing information about women welfare schemes and programs across the country. Presently, WHL is functional in 34 States/ UTs.

Further, Government has decided to integrate Women Helpline (WHL-181) Emergency Response Support System (ERSS-112) and their linkage with One Stop Centres for providing smooth and seamless helpline services to women.

Ministry of Women and Child Development monitors implementation of its schemes, including Women Helpline, through official visits from time to time, regular meetings, video conferences, workshops etc. with concerned authorities and functionaries of the scheme. State Government of Tamilnadu has reported that a total of 326250 number of women has been assisted by Women Helpline till 31.12.2022 in the State.

A third party evaluation of the schemes of the Ministry, including analysis of implementation the WHL Scheme was conducted during the Financial Year 2020-21 by NITI Aayog. The study found the relevance, efficiency and sustainability of the scheme as satisfactory. Based on the findings of the said study, the scheme has been included as a component of sub-scheme 'Sambal' under Mission Shakti for implementation during 15th Finance Commission Cycle upto 2025-26.

(f): Several projects/ schemes are implemented by Central Government through other Ministries /Departments /Implementing Agencies under Nirbhaya Fund to ensure safety and security of women and girls, which include Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) which is a pan-India single number (112)/ mobile app based system for emergencies; a cyber-crime reporting portal to report obscene content; Safe City Projects in 8 cities (Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Lucknow and Mumbai) including infrastructure, technology adoption and capacity building in community through awareness programmes; training and skill development programs for Investigation Officers, Prosecution Officers and Medical Officers; distribution of Sexual Assault Evidence Collection (SAEC) Kits to States/ UTs; establishment of State of Art DNA Laboratory at CFSL, Chandigarh; assistance to 28 States/ UTs to strengthen Forensic Science Laboratories; setting up of 1023 Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) including exclusive POCSO (e-POCSO) Courts for speedy disposal of cases of rape and cases under POCSO Act; setting up/ strengthening of Anti Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs) in all districts of the country; setting up/ strengthening of Women Help Desks (WHDs) at Police Stations etc. The Government has also put in place Investigation Tracking System for Sexual Offences, an online analytic tool for tracking and monitoring of investigation. A National Database of Sexual Offenders (NDSO) has also been created.

Under Nirbhaya Fund, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) has also undertaken several initiatives, which, inter-alia include training and skill development programs for Investigation Officers, Prosecution Officers and Medical Officers, distribution of Sexual Assault Evidence Collection (SAEC) Kits to States/ UTs. BPR&D has also prepared Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) for 'Women Help Desk at Police Stations' to ensure smooth functioning of Women Help Desks by focusing on four critical components viz. infrastructure, training, human resource development and response mechanism. A book titled 'Women's Safety and Security- a Handbook for First Responders and Investigators in the Police' has also been prepared for the purpose of prevention and investigation of crime against women with specific reference to the crime of sexual assault, which includes investigation, victim compensation and rehabilitation. Emphasis has been laid upon appropriate behavioural and attitudinal skills of the police in course of prevention and detection of crime against women and children and interaction with victims of crime. Webinars on women safety with sensitivity, gender sensitization of police personnel etc. have also been organized by BPR&D.
