

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3003
TO BE ANSWERED ON 09.08.2024

“GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE”

3003. SHRI ESWARASAMY K:

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken any initiatives to strengthen the existing legal and institutional framework for addressing gender-based violence, such as expanding the network of 'One-Stop Centres' and 'Women's Helplines' in different parts of Tamil Nadu;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to improve the capacity and responsiveness of law enforcement agencies and the judiciary in Tamil Nadu to effectively deal with cases of violence against women and ensure timely justice for the victims;
- (d) whether the Union Government is working with the State Government to raise awareness and change social norms around gender-based violence in Tamil Nadu including the areas with high incidence of such crimes;
- (e) if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) the kind of rehabilitation, counselling and economic empowerment support being provided by the Government to women survivors of violence in Tamil Nadu to help them rebuild their lives and become self-reliant?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI ANNPURNA DEVI)

(a)to (f) ‘Police’ and ‘Public Order’ are State subjects under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India and the responsibility to maintain law and order, protection of life and property of the citizens including investigation and prosecution of crime against women rests primarily with the respective State Governments .They are competent to deal with such offences under the extant provisions of laws.

Constitution of India guarantees the right to equality and provides for positive interventions by the State to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and to ensure their holistic development and empowerment. Keeping in view the vision articulated in Constitutional provisions, there has been enactment of various legislations like Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, the

Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 and the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 which address the issue of gender inequality, discrimination and violence faced by women.

Further, Government of India implements various schemes and projects like One Stop Centres (OSCs) for providing support and integrated range of services under one roof to the women affected by violence and those in distress; Women Helpline (WHL) running on toll free telephonic short code 181, to provide emergency and non-emergency response to women affected by violence across the country; Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) to stop gender based sex selection and to spread awareness about education and issues relating to empowerment of girls, and Shakti Sadan for women facing difficult circumstances or destitution under umbrella scheme of Mission Shakti.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Government of India has taken a number of initiatives for the safety of women across the country, which are given below:-

- The Criminal Law (Amendment), Act 2013 was enacted for effective deterrence against sexual offences. Further, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018 was enacted to prescribe even more stringent penal provisions including death penalty for rape of girls below the age of 12 years. The Act also inter-alia mandates completion of investigation and filing of charge sheet in rape cases in 2 months and trials are to be completed in 2 months.
- With the introduction of three new Criminal Laws, for the first time the crime against women which had been scattered through the IPC have been rearranged and placed under one Chapter in Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita. A new offence for having sexual intercourse on false promise of marriage, employment, promotion or by concealing identity etc. has been incorporated. This provision acts as a deterrent and provides protection to women. Besides, punishment for gang rape of a woman below the age of 18 years will be life imprisonment till remainder of the convict's natural life or death.
- The Government has established the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) to provide a framework and eco-system for Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) to deal with cyber crimes in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.
- The Government has launched the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (www.cybercrime.gov.in) to enable the public to report all types of cyber crimes, with special focus on cyber crimes against women and children. Cyber crime incidents reported on this portal are routed automatically to the respective State/UT law enforcement agency (LEA) for further handling as per the provisions of law.
- MHA has launched an online analytic tool "Investigation Tracking System for Sexual Offences" for Police on 19th February 2019 to facilitate them to monitor and track time-bound investigation in sexual assault cases in accordance with Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2018.

In addition, several projects/schemes are implemented by Central Government through various Ministries /Departments /Implementing Agencies under Nirbhaya Fund 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; Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children (CCPWC) Scheme, to the States/UTs for their 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; Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) to provide a framework and eco-system for Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) to deal with cyber crimes in a comprehensive and coordinated manner, 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 30 States/ UTs to strengthen Forensic Science Laboratories; setting up of 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); 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 includes 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 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.

Further, the National Commission for Women (NCW), in addition to handling complaints through regular mode, also takes cognizance of the grievances relating to domestic violence reported in social media. The complaints received by NCW are acted upon by coordinating with victims, police and other authorities to provide immediate assistance.

In Tamil Nadu State, 48 OSCs are functioning each one in 38 districts and additional 10 OSCs in the larger districts having high crime rates as per State Crime Record Bureau (SCRB). Services of One Stop Centre has been extended to the distressed Women and Girl Children of **Gender Resource Centre** as well to extend the support to block and Panchayat level. Psycho-Social Counsellor from OSC provide counselling and awareness services for the

Women visiting Gender Resource Centres. Apart from above, the following steps have also been taken:

- Protection Officers of Domestic Violence Act have handled 9009 cases out of which Domestic Incident Report (DIR) filed for 4514 cases in Tamil Nadu.
- District Social Welfare Officers being the Dowry Prohibition Officers have handled 2311 out of which 815 have been reported to Police Station and 1218 cases counselling done and solved amicably.
- Women Helpline (181) is currently functioning in WCD control room along with Child Helpline (1098), with C-DAC as their Technology Solution provider. Both these helplines are also seamlessly integrated with 112, ERSS helpline.
- One Stop Centre and Women Helpline are now integrated in Tamil Nadu to provide more services to Women.
- All the Hubs for Empowerment of Women staffs of Tamil Nadu are instructed to extend their awareness services to resettlement tenements to acknowledge and support vulnerable women and children in the community.

District Legal Authorities and Police department are working in coordination with One Stop Centre in order to provide free legal services to distressed women. Protection officers of Domestic Violence Act, are given training on the Act for the effective functioning. District Social Welfare Officer who is Dowry Prohibition Officer, Child Marriage Prohibition Officer, nodal officer for OSC, HEW and District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) are attending the district level meeting for Crime against Women and Children which is conducted by the Police Department representing the issues of Women and Children. Under Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 – 1047 Nodal officers at Block/Taluk/Tehsil of Rural and Urban bodies have been appointed. Establishing dedicated units within police departments and setting up fast-track courts to expedite the handling of cases involving violence against women.

The state is implementing the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme, which aims to address issues related to gender discrimination and promote the importance of educating and empowering girls.

SANKALP: Hub for Empowerment of Women has been established in all the districts of Tamil Nadu and they are involved in creating awareness programme in convergence with line departments.

Child Marriage hotspots have been identified in the state.. In addition to OSCs, the Government has set up 33 Short Stay Homes for women in distress. These homes offer temporary accommodation and support services, including counseling, vocational training, and educational opportunities. The goal is to provide a safe environment for longer stay where survivors can receive care, rebuild their lives, and develop skills that enhance their economic independence. 1281 distressed Women were benefitted last year.
