



National Commission for Women



JOURNEY OF LAST 10 YEARS

(2014 - 2024)

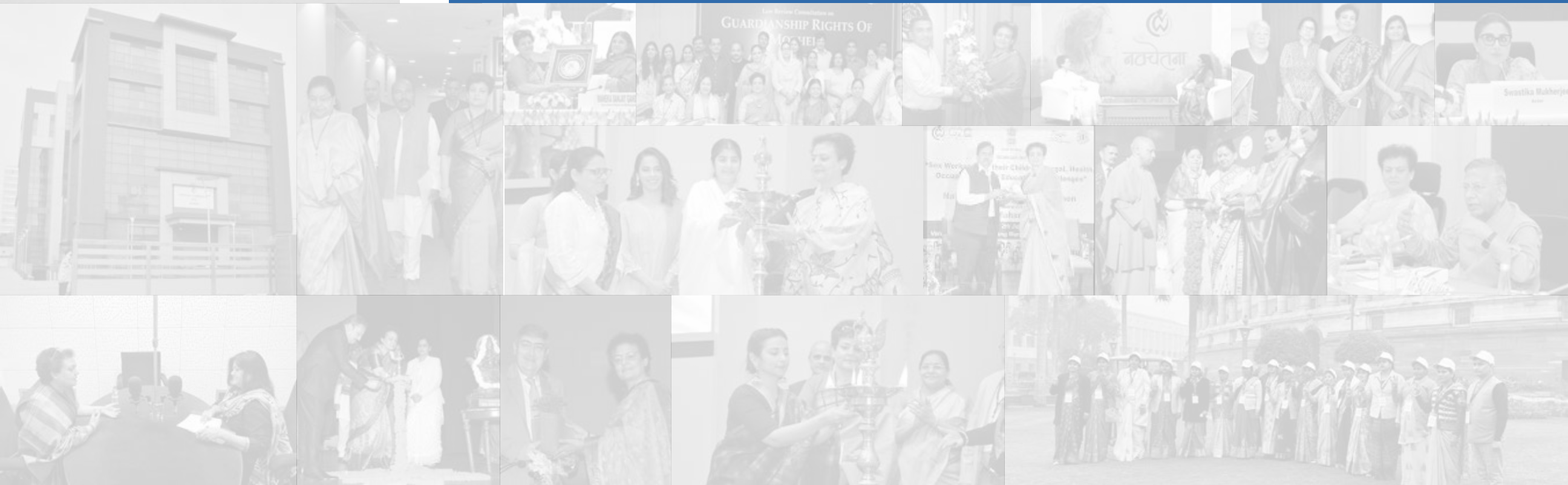


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राष्ट्रपति
भारत गणतंत्र
PRESIDENT
REPUBLIC OF INDIA

MESSAGE

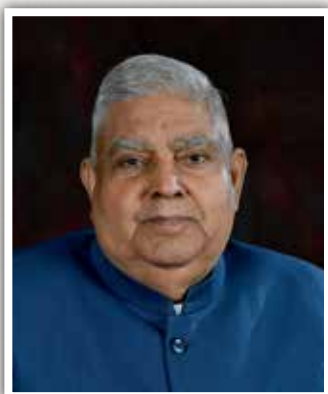
I am happy to know that the National Commission for Women is bringing out a publication titled "Decadal Book" commemorating its journey of the last decade.

The Commission is dedicated to the empowerment of women and has been working to address their concerns individually and collectively. The Commission has promoted gender equality and safeguarded the rights of women through its various initiatives. I am confident that the book will serve as valuable roadmap, guiding the Commission's future endeavors and continued efforts in advancing the rights of women.

On this occasion, I extend my warm greetings and felicitations to all those associated with the National Commission for Women and send my best wishes for the success of the publication.

(Droupadi Murmu)

New Delhi
June 11, 2024



सत्यमेव जयते

उपराष्ट्रपति

भारत गणराज्य

**VICE-PRESIDENT
REPUBLIC OF INDIA**

MESSAGE

Congratulations to the National Commission for Women (NCW) on the publication of its Decadal Book.

Since its inception in 1992, the NCW has been at the forefront of protecting and promoting the interests of women. By actively safeguarding their constitutional rights, the National Commission for Women has played pivotal role in ensuring justice, equality and dignity for women in India. The Decadal Book chronicling the achievements of the Commission since 2014, will also be a valuable guide for future endeavours.

By way of structured constitutional mechanism, adequate representation of women at panchayat and municipal level has been in place for over three decades. As a consequence of historic constitutional prescription now, there is in place reservation for women to the extent of one third in the Lok Sabha as also State Legislatures.

This impressive contingent of public representatives would result in generating an ecosystem where there is greater awareness of gender rights as also evolution of affirmative policies.

All entities working towards empowering women are called upon to act on highest objective standards, well-distanced from partisan stance and strive to achieve high degree of scrutiny and analysis.

The book will surely inspire and motivate all stakeholders to continue working towards a more gender-inclusive society. I am sure the National Commission of Women would continue enhancing its efforts to secure gender justice and equality by proactive stance.

Jagdeep Dhankhar

New Delhi
22 June, 2024



सत्यमेव जयते

प्रधान मंत्री
Prime Minister

MESSAGE

It is heartening to learn that the National Commission for Women – NCW is bringing out its Decadal Book to commemorate the last decade of its evolution. Heartiest greetings and best wishes to everyone associated with NCW during this journey.

NCW has been doing commendable work for women – be it through creating more awareness about new avenues of opportunities in diverse professions, appreciating the role and contribution of women from the days of freedom struggle down to the modern day, or enhancing their safety and security.

Our culture and civilisation have always considered women as inspiring symbols of resilience, courage and leadership. We remain firm in our belief that the most effective way to empower women is by adopting a women-led development approach.

Through collective efforts over the last 10 years, we have taken various initiatives to ensure that women lead the nation's development efforts. We have adopted a zero-tolerance policy on crimes against women - from formulating strict laws on crimes against women to making the law enforcement systems more sensitive to women's needs. We have also specifically focused on dealing with cybercrimes against women.

We have taken rapid strides in ensuring full participation of women in the nation's growth story. As a result, women are excelling in every field, from the conventional to the unconventional - science, education, industry, business, law, health, space, armed forces, or sports, to name a few.

It is in this context that institutions such as NCW assume a greater relevance. I am sure that the organisation will continue to make a positive contribution in furthering women-led development.

I am sure that the documentation of the impactful work done in the past will inspire everyone at NCW to work even harder in the years to come.

May the publication reflect the success stories of this 10-year journey and be widely read.

(Narendra Modi)

New Delhi

आषाढ 12, शक संवत् 1946

03rd July, 2024



Dr Justice D Y Chandrachud
Chief Justice of India

Message

From the very inception of the independent Indian state, our Constitution envisioned a society founded on the principle of equality, categorically opposing the treatment of women as lesser citizens of this republic. Among the various legislative interventions undertaken to improve the lives of women in India, the establishment of the National Commission for Women (NCW) in 1992 provided the country with a statutory and autonomous body committed to empowering women and addressing obstacles that hinder their ability to contribute equally in all walks of life.

Dedicated to creating an equal society for Indian women, the NCW, through its diverse and innovative initiatives, has consistently worked to create an environment where women can freely exercise their rights and choices. However, for women to fully enjoy the rights and choices they are entitled to, a singular, homogeneous approach to equality is insufficient for a diverse land like India. Building a gender-equal society first requires recognizing the differences within the lived experiences of women from different classes, castes, occupations, and socio-economic positions. In this regard, the multiple awareness drives organized by the NCW over the last decade—pertaining to acid attacks, bonded labor, and transfusion of HIV-infected blood to women, among others—reflect a nuanced and multifaceted commitment to empowering women based on their specific realities.

A defining characteristic of crimes against women is the everyday nature of the violence suffered, whether physical, emotional, or mental, and the normalization that defines it. The fear and anxiety



Dr Justice D Y Chandrachud
Chief Justice of India

that accompany the experience of being a woman in Indian society are marked by a sense of insecurity and unease. The NCW's efforts in launching a 24x7 helpline to address the grievances raised by women in distress strive to give a voice to and ultimately remedy this web of physical and emotional violence. Additionally, the unveiling of the pilot project 'Mahila Jan Sunwai' complements this by facilitating the effective and speedy disposal of complaints, prioritizing and fast-tracking redressal for women.

In this strive towards equality, the Decadal is a seminal compilation that highlights the significant milestones and initiatives undertaken by the NCW in the last decade. By bringing all of NCW's different resources and novel strategies under one umbrella, the Decadal serves as a ringing reminder for continued vigilance, innovation, and dedication to the cause of women's rights. The structural nature of discrimination faced by women in various fields will need the involvement of multiple stakeholders and members of society to identify and modify behaviours that inhibit women from occupying an equal seat at the table. The scale of the problem and its nuances will require continuous research, awareness, and innovative solutions to achieve equality from the grassroots to the highest ranks of society. The Decadal stands as both a testament to the progress made and a call to action for the ongoing and future efforts needed to achieve true gender equality in India.

Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud

[Dr Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud]

अन्नपूर्णा देवी
ANNPURNA DEVI



महिला एवं बाल विकास मंत्री
भारत सरकार
Minister of Women & Child Development
Government of India



संदेश

मुझे महिलाओं के अधिकारों एवं उनके द्वारा की गई पहल की उल्लेखनीय उपलब्धियों से संबंधित "डेकेडल बुक" (Decadal Book) के विमोचन पर हार्दिक शुभकामनाएँ प्रदान करते हुए अत्यन्त प्रसन्नता हो रही है। पिछले 10 वर्षों के दौरान आयोग के दृढ़ समर्पण एवं अथक प्रयासों के कारण हमारे देश में लैंगिक समानता तथा महिलाओं के सशक्तिकरण की दिशा में महत्वपूर्ण प्रगति हुई है।

यह पुस्तक हमारे समाज में महिलाओं के अधिकारों एवं उनके कल्याण को बढ़ावा देने की हमारी सामूहिक प्रतिबद्धता को दर्शाती है। चूंकि, हम पिछले दशक की सफलता का जश्न मना रहे हैं, इसलिए हमें उन भावी चुनौतियों की भी पहचान करनी है जिससे कि यह सुनिश्चित किया जा सके कि प्रत्येक महिला भेदभाव तथा हिंसा से मुक्त होकर अपने अधिकारों एवं क्षमता का पूर्ण उपयोग कर सके।

आइए, हम "डेकेडल बुक" (Decadal Book) का उपयोग परावर्तन, प्रेरणा एवं क्रियाओं के एक उपकरण के रूप में करें जिससे कि हम एक बेहतर एवं समान समाज के निर्माण की दिशा में अपने प्रयास जारी रख सकें। आदरणीय प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी जी द्वारा संकल्पित 'Women Led Development' को आगे बढ़ाते हुए विकसित भारत के सपने को पूरा करने में महिलाओं की महती भागीदारी सुनिश्चित करें।

(अन्नपूर्णा देवी)



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SAVITRI THAKUR



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भारत सरकार
Minister of State for
Women & Child Development
Government of India

संदेश



मुझे "डेकेडल बुक" के विमोचन पर हार्दिक शुभकामनाएँ प्रदान करते हुए अत्यन्त प्रसन्नता हो रही है जिसमें महिलाओं के अधिकारों एवं उनकी पहल की उल्लेखनीय उपलब्धियों से संबंधित एक दशक का वर्णन किया गया है। यह पुस्तक आयोग द्वारा महिलाओं को सशक्त बनाने तथा उनके लिए अवसरों को बढ़ावा देने और उनकी आवाज़ को मुखर बनाने एवं उनके समक्ष आने वाली चुनौतियों का सामना करने की दिशा में किए गए समर्पण और कड़े परिश्रम को परिलक्षित करती है।

चूंकि, हम इस पुस्तक में वर्णित उपलब्धियों का ज़रूर मना रहे हैं इसलिए आइए, हम शेष चुनौतियों का भी सामना करें। हमें एक ऐसे समाज के निर्माण के लिए अवश्य निरंतर प्रयासरत रहना चाहिए जिसमें प्रत्येक महिला, भेदभाव, हिंसा तथा असमानता से मुक्त हो। महिलाओं के अधिकारों को बढ़ावा देने के प्रति हमारी दृढ़ प्रतिबद्धता है और हमें यह सुनिश्चित करने के लिए दोहरे प्रयास करने होंगे जिससे कि जीवन के प्रत्येक क्षेत्र में यह अधिकार संरक्षित एवं बने रहें।

आइए हम, इस पुस्तक का प्रयोग प्रेरणा एवं क्रियाओं के एक स्रोत के मार्गदर्शन के रूप में करें। इसके अतिरिक्त, यह हमें अब तक की गई प्रगति को परिलक्षित करती रहे तथा सभी के लिए एक समान समाज के निर्माण की दिशा में हमें प्रयासरत रहने के लिए प्रेरित करती रहे।


(सावित्री ठाकुर)



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Rekha Sharma
Chairperson
Tel. : 011-26944808



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As we reflect back on the work of the National Commission for Women, a tapestry of many breakthroughs and achievements during the decade, 2014-2024, is clearly discernible. The Commission's functioning continues to be guided by the fact that enhancing women's participation in economic activities would not only be critical for gender equality but also a vital economic strategy for India to achieve sustained and inclusive growth. It has been the conviction of the Commission that when women are empowered, the country flourishes with diversity, equality, and prosperity and their disempowerment brings ignominy.

During the decade under reference, the National Commission for Women took decisive and important steps that paved the way for women's empowerment, for ensuring their dignity, furthering their security and ushering in gender inclusive development. Every new stride was planned and executed meticulously in close collaboration with multiple partners including the national and state governments so that it became a stepping stone for empowerment of women at all levels. Essentially, the Commission continues to work on three important aspects – social empowerment, economic empowerment and political empowerment. All our programs and activities continue to be weaved under these three themes.

Recognizing the importance of participation of women in the workforce and the need for their contribution towards nation building, the Commission continued to work for shifting the cultural norms and societal expectations, addressing safety concerns and advocating for better infrastructure and reliable transportation. The Commission has been working on all these aspects and the efforts have yielded positive results.

As part of its efforts, the Commission has continued to advocate for enactment of stronger laws and amendments to the existing laws to protect women's rights; make evidence-based recommendations to the government on policies after a robust research and extensive consultations with diverse stakeholders; and take steps to address their rights and needs adequately in the national and state legislations.

The Commission launched extensive awareness campaigns to educate all stakeholders including law enforcement agencies, State Police, CISF personnel deployed on airports & RPF, the State Women Commissions, Judiciary, etc. on all pertinent laws, women's rights and gender equality.

The Commission initiated an innovative program for women in collaboration with the best institutions in the country to enhance their employability and entrepreneurship skills. Improved healthcare services including reproductive health, maternal health, mental health services and hygiene have been the high focus areas for the Commission. Rendition of timely and effective support services for women in distress through help-lines, shelters and counseling centers especially during COVID-19 helped in reducing the stress of women and elderly persons. The work undertaken for expecting mothers during COVID-19 has received widespread appreciation.

The Commission has through its various initiatives including those in collaboration with NALSA, rendered free legal aid and counseling to women facing legal issues for ensuring access to justice. It made elaborate arrangements for dissemination of information on applicable laws, legal and constitutional rights and entitlements both through traditional modes and digital tools. The Commission also played



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a pivotal role in spearheading and coordinating anti-human trafficking activities. The Commission's Digital Shakti Program in four phases helped lakhs of women to successfully navigate the cyber space with practical and hands on knowledge. The Commission has also engaged with all concerned to align national policies with international standards on women's rights, such as those set by the United Nations and other global bodies. It has been working for achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Time has now come for realizing the potential of women in all fields in the larger interest of humanity at large. Our approach has to take into account the fact Women are no longer perceived to be merely the beneficiaries of the developmental process. The unique personal, contextual, and experiential perspectives and skills of women position them as the powerful agents of change and transformational development. Tapping into their inner wisdom and the unique ability to blend intuition and logic, women can play a vital role in paving the way for innovative, forward-thinking and impactful decision making. Women's empowerment and participation in all spheres of life could be the panacea for substantial poverty reduction, higher economic productivity and improved health outcomes. Increased women's participation could address poverty, inequality, and injustice and ensure sustainable and inclusive development, building equitable societies, fostering justice- social and economic along with sustainability.

Empowerment of women will also have many other economic and social spin offs. Women often prioritize social investments such as education, healthcare, and community welfare. Their involvement in leadership roles within communities can lead to more effective and inclusive decision-making processes. Educated women are more likely to invest in their children's education, creating a cycle of empowerment and improved socio-economic outcomes.

The Commission will continue to strive to influence policies to focus on empowering women through education, financial inclusion, and leadership opportunities and help unlock the transformative power of women, leading to more inclusive and sustainable development. Enforcement of policies and legal frameworks to support women's rights and participation in developmental activities and access to quality education and vocational training will enhance women's opportunities for personal and professional development. I strongly believe that more women should participate in policy making and be part of the political leadership. To hone the leadership skills of women, the NCW, in collaboration with different institutes of repute, organized capacity building programs for elected women representatives of every state at the grass-root level.

Having been in the Commission for around nine years now, I can say with certainty that a high degree of professionalism and commitment pervades all levels in the organization. All my colleagues including the Members, Member Secretaries, Joint Secretaries and other staff of the Commission, past and present have been instrumental in scaling milestones reached and conquering challenges together. I salute each thread of dedication, passion, hard work and the commitment to excellence, resilience in adversity, and unwavering teamwork.

Rekha Sharma

24x7 NCW Women Helpline - 7827-170-170



मीनाक्षी नेगी
MEENAKSHI NEGI
सदस्य सचिव
Member Secretary



सत्यमेव जयते

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मृत्युः सर्वहरश्चमुद्रवश्च भविष्यताम्।
कीर्तिः श्रीर्वाक्च नारीणां स्मृतिर्मैथा धृतिः क्षमा || B.G. 10.34 ||

If there is one book, which never fails to yield a quotable quote for any situation, it is the Bhagvad Gita. In the above shloka, Krishna while saying that he is the all-devouring death, and the origin of those things that are yet to be, claims that amongst his feminine qualities he is fame, prosperity, fine speech, memory, intelligence, courage, and forgiveness. Krishna who is a male, for all intents and purposes, does not mince words while staking claim to the feminine. If he is endowed with these feminine qualities then we all must too, irrespective of gender. There is nothing much left to say about man and woman being two sides of the same coin, after such a sublime statement from the greatest teacher of them all!

The National commission for Women, has over the past decade endeavoured to enable women and indeed men, to bring out this feminine side that each one of us possesses in ample measure but that has been subverted by centuries of socialisation, forcing men to forget their feminine side and women their masculine qualities. In this book we have tried to encapsulate the salient events that have paved our journey over the last ten years in an effort, to chip away, at the social construct that gender is.

The spectrum of activities taken up, covers a gamut of issues and as we progressed in our journey, the canvas got bigger with every passing year. Grievance redressal, gender sensitisation of the general public as well as the enforcement authorities, anti-human trafficking, reviews of partisan legislations, addressing research gaps from the woman's standpoint under a myriad of themes, assessing and addressing women's safety in Indian cities, promoting entrepreneurship among women in sectors long seen as male bastions, conducting awareness programs for women on their legal rights cutting across social strata from schools and colleges to panchayats and grassroots workers, lending voice to the concerns of sex workers and their children, mobilising women from across the country to stake claim to their agency, initiating especially curated programs for special areas like Jammu and Kashmir and Leh and Ladakh as well as the North East, creating digital literacy, enabling women to avoid and address instances of cyber assault, sensitising the authorities to the special needs of women in disasters and climate change mitigation measures which is the latest vertical in the process, all this and much more is presented in this book.

I must take this opportunity to acknowledge the able support provided by the entire NCW team under the guidance of Dr. Shivani Dey, Deputy Secretary who compiled the material in the first instance. I also thank Mr.K.L.Sharma, who took time out in putting it all together and shaping the final look of the book.

The attempt has been to make the articles speak for themselves by way of graphs, charts and photographs so that the book is not only easy on the eye but also contains important insights obtained from the various programs and activities undertaken during this time.

In that respect it is more than just a book to be kept on the coffee table!

मी नेगी

Meenakshi Negi

Tel.: 011-26944790 24x7 NCW Women Helpline - 7827-170-170




ए. अशोली चलाई
A. Asholi Chalai
संयुक्त सचिव
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Foreword

The National Commission for Women (NCW) marks the end of another decade in its transformative journey. Over the past thirty-two years, the Commission has become a powerful advocate for women's empowerment and gender equality across India's diverse socio-cultural landscape.

Rooted in the principles of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity envisioned by the Indian Constitution, NCW has led systemic changes in societal attitudes and institutional frameworks. Its Mission is to create an environment where every woman can achieve her full potential, free from discrimination, violence, and inequity.

The past decade has seen NCW's multifaceted initiatives from advocating for progressive legal reforms to implementing grassroots programs, the Commission's holistic approach addresses the multidimensional challenges faced by women across all social strata.

NCW's efforts have also focused on raising awareness about issues like gender stereotyping, workplace discrimination, and the rights of marginalized communities, including single women, and transgender individuals. The Commission's Participatory Action Oriented Training programs have sensitized stakeholders, including government officials, law enforcement agencies, and judiciary members, about the unique challenges faced by these vulnerable groups.

The Commission in collaboration with the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) has been conducting Legal Awareness Programs at the Block level to educate women about their legal rights and responsibilities, aiming to foster a deeper understanding of the legal system and promote access to justice for all. To that end, the Commission has also launched a Mobile App 'NCW- Her Legal Guide' which serves as a powerful tool for women in India, focusing on various rights and statutes relevant to them.

I must acknowledge the visionary leadership of our esteemed Chairperson, Smt. Rekha Sharma, whose profound insights, tireless efforts, and unwavering dedication have guided NCW's trajectory over the past decade.

NCW's relentless efforts over the past decade have laid a strong foundation for a more empowered and gender-equal future. As we move forward, the Commission remains dedicated to building on these achievements, fostering an environment where every woman can lead a life of dignity, respect, and self-actualization.

It is with great honor and pride, I present this Decadal Book, a testament to NCW's steadfast commitment to empowering women, promoting gender equality, and building a more just and inclusive society for all.


A. Asholi Chalai

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Leveraging Media for Women Empowerment



Introduction

Media is an incredibly powerful tool for dissemination of useful information and outreach across geographical and cultural boundaries. Recognizing its power, the National Commission for Women (NCW) has, over the period 2014-2024, attempted to leverage the power of media and digital platforms to launch innovative campaigns to empower women across India in furtherance of its mandate. The campaigns have gone a long way in raising awareness about various issues concerning empowerment of women, fostering dialogue, and encouraging a positive change across diverse aspects of their lives. The multifaceted approach adopted by the Commission through media has been impactful in creating a large audience base and paving the way for an inclusive and equitable future for women in India.

Video Series

During ten years from 2014 to 2024, the NCW produced several impactful video series focusing on critical issues such as prevention of sexual harassment at the workplace; promoting women in unconventional professions; and recognizing unsung women freedom fighters. These videos have turned out to be a pivotal source for educating the society in general and the employers, employees and women in particular about the pressing issues concerning women and contributing to a broader understanding of gender equality and inclusivity.

The video series prepared by NCW on preventing sexual harassment at the workplace have been found to be very educative about the rights and responsibilities by both the employers and employees. By showcasing real-life scenarios and providing practical solutions, the series has helped create safer work environments for women.

Breaking down barriers and challenging stereotypes is the key to fostering gender equality and inclusivity. The Commission, keeping this in view, produced a wide range of videos promoting women in unconventional professions. These videos highlight the success stories of women excelling in fields such as engineering, technology, and entrepreneurship. Their stories inspire others to pursue their passions fearlessly.



First Podcast by NCW in June 2024



Capacity Building Program for Media Personal in 2022

Video Series on Unsung Women Freedom Fighters

Women have played a crucial role in India’s struggle for independence. The series on unsung women freedom fighters brought out by the Commission pays a rich tribute to those courageous women. Highlighting their contributions exposes the younger generation to the struggles those women freedom fighters and ensures that their legacies live on and continue to inspire future generations.

Securing Cyberspace for Women

Securing cyberspace for women is a massive challenge especially with ever increasing and ubiquitous use of digital technology. Videos produced by the Commission in this series offer guidance on safe online practices, empowering women to navigate the digital world confidently and securely. Launched in collaboration with Cyber Peace, NCW’s Digital Shakti Program enhanced the digital safety and literacy among women. This program impacted the lives of around seven lakh women across the country by empowering them in the digital realm. NCW’s roundtable conference on ‘Navigating The Deepfake Dilemma’ addressed the misuse of deepfake technology. By fostering collaborative strategies, NCW aims to create a safer cyberspace for all.

Access to Healthcare

Equitable access to healthcare and treatment are crucial for overall societal well-being. Unfortunately, aspects of women’s health have largely been neglected, both historically and in more contemporary times. Neglect of women’s health has significant negative impacts not only for her but also for the society at large. NCW’s videos promoting women’s health through mental wellness have been produced with the objective to address the concerns in this regard. These videos offer valuable tips for incorporating mindfulness and physical health into everyday life, contributing to holistic well-being.



Raveena Tandon @TandonR... · 15m
Navchetana, a captivating Talk Show by the National Commission for Women, is set to begin on FM Rainbow on October 17, 2023. This series will explore the vital concerns of women, covering legal rights, health, and gender sensitization. Listeners from around the world can easily... [Show more](#)

Navchetana
TALK SHOW
ON
102.6 FM RAINBOW

How can we empower women to tackle Cyber Crime

October 17, 2023
TUESDAY
04:00 PM - 04:30 PM


NCW 24x7 HELPLINE
7827170170







Capacity Building Program for Media Personal in 2022




NCW Mission Vision and Provisions on 28 December 2023




NCW @NCWIndia · 15/03/24
A triumphant tale unfolded when a distressed woman in Delhi, reached out to the National Commission for Women (NCW) helpline, seeking refuge from domestic violence inflicted upon her due to having a 6-month-old daughter. NCW swiftly sprang into action, liaising with the New [Show more](#)





NCW @NCWIndia · 23/02/24
NCW extends gratitude to [@Uber India](#) for amplifying NCW app - empowering women to assert their legal rights swiftly and securely. The NCW app "Her Legal Right" provides information on legal rights of women in India, one step towards women's safety and empowerment at their [Show more](#)



Social Media Presence of NCW

Entrepreneurship Development

In India, women continue to be under-represented in the workforce. Entrepreneurship is an effective way of helping women find employment and gain financial independence. However, a lack of access to education, training, finance, business support measures and mentors makes getting started a challenge. NCW has been working on empowering women through entrepreneurship programs that provide them with opportunities for economic growth. By sharing success stories through videos and offering practical guidance, these programs inspire women to take control of their financial futures and pursue their entrepreneurial ambitions.

Channelising Traditional Media

The traditional media still continues to be a powerful means of reaching out to a diverse audience across India. NCW has channelized radio and television for augmenting its outreach and providing information and guidance on various aspects of women’s lives. The “Navchetana” talk show on Akashvani covered a wide range of topics, including women’s health, corporate decision-making, and cyber security. The eight-episode series brought expert discussions and success stories directly to listeners, empowering them with knowledge and resources. NCW has also collaborated with Doordarshan for a nationwide telecast focused on gender sensitization and the efforts made by the Commission for furthering women’s cause. The program highlighted crucial issues and showcased NCW’s work, reaching viewers nationwide and fostering informed discussions.

Campaign against Domestic Violence all over India

NCW identified the critical issues of anti-human trafficking and domestic violence as pressing concerns. Through Akashvani, NCW ran targeted campaigns to raise awareness and provide resources to combat multiple concerns. These campaigns included informative discussions, expert interviews, and practical advice for women on how to recognize and address instances of trafficking and domestic violence. By partnering with local stakeholders and organizations, NCW ensured that the campaigns were culturally sensitive and relevant to the region’s context.

The NCW has implemented several impactful programs and initiatives to advance women’s rights and well-being in various spheres. NCW has live-streamed significant events such as the 32nd Foundation

Day and the “Panchayat se Parliament” program on Doordarshan and Sansad TV. These live telecasts have engaged large audiences and fostered greater awareness on women’s issues.

Newsletters and other Modes

The NCW continues to engage the public through newsletters, press conferences, and live streaming of major programs.

By embracing traditional and digital platforms, the NCW scaled new peaks in raising awareness about diverse issues concerning women and inspiring change. The efforts of the NCW ensured that women across India are well informed, empowered, and inspired to make positive changes in their lives. As the Commission continues its journey, its impact on women’s lives will undoubtedly grow, paving the way for a more equitable and inclusive future for all.

The unwavering and the renewed commitment of the NCW for empowering women through innovative media and outreach initiatives during the period 2014-2024 has yielded rich dividends.



She is a Changemaker - Women in Politics



Introduction

Democracy is an essential part of the ‘Basic structure of the Indian constitution’ and is, therefore inalienable. Democracy implies that various heterogeneous societal groups have the right to participate in democratic processes on an equal footing. Accordingly, these processes must include persons from all cultural, social, economic, and other backgrounds irrespective of their caste, creed, sex, sect, religion or region. By extension, underprivileged, disadvantaged, marginalized, or subaltern social groups have as much a right for inclusion in this process as the ones from more privileged groups.

In the above light, women’s participation in political sphere becomes a prerequisite for a genuine democracy. After all they constitute nearly 50% of world population. Conversely stated any polity that impedes the ability of women to participate safely, freely, and equally in political life and in society cannot be called a democracy. In fact, the defining feature of the democracy is inclusivity and non discrimination on any grounds including gender. The words of American Vice President Kamala Harris that “the status of women is the status of democracy” aptly capture the essence of what has been stated above.

Women in Politics: From Hesitation to Empowerment

Despite over seven and a half decades of India’s independence and the country having imbibed democracy, the participation of women in India in the democratic processes is still fragile; women are still reluctant to assume leadership roles in politics and often step into the political arena as proxies for their father, husband or other male relatives seeking to preserve the male-dominated status quo. This phenomenon is particularly evident in local and state elections. The pattern, however, is slowly undergoing change mainly at the level of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) especially after the 73rd constitutional amendment. There is evidence to suggest that, of late, a growing number of ‘brave’ women are breaking this mold, particularly at the level of PRIs. These women are not only stepping into leadership roles but are also making significant contributions to their communities. Their courage and determination serve as an inspiration, demonstrating that women can be powerful agents of change in Indian politics.

Unfortunately, women still continue to be marginalized from political and public life at the national level on account of structural, socio-economic, institutional and cultural barriers. This is despite the fact that development, peace and prosperity in societies cannot be achieved without half of the world’s population being an active participant in the process. Women desirous of entering the decision-making process through electoral route still face a number of challenges from the entrenched patriarchal mindsets within the society. While the enactment of the

106th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2023, mandates reservation of 1/3rd seats in the State Assemblies and Lok Sabha, the women will still need to prove themselves and work doubly hard to demonstrate their leadership and management skills in such challenging environments.

She is a Changemaker

For enhancing participation of women in the political processes at national and sub-national levels and to deepen democracy, there is a need for equipping them with the required skill sets. To improve leadership skills of women political leaders at the grassroots level, the National Commission for Women launched a pan-India capacity building program ‘She is a Changemaker’ for women representatives at all levels, from Gram Panchayats to Parliament and political workers including office bearers of the National/State political parties on 16th November 2021.

For realizing the full and equal participation of women in public life which is vital for fostering a robust and dynamic democracy, the capacity building program was rolled out through various State Training Institutes under the Departments of Rural Development/Panchayati Raj, nationwide. This program provides training to women in politics across various levels to enhance the leadership skills of elected women representatives and active women politicians at every tier. Organized under the theme of ‘Empowered Women Leadership, Vibrant Democracy’ this initiative underscores the importance of women’s empowerment in ensuring thriving democratic ethos.

Objectives of the Program

1. Sensitizing and supporting Elected Women Representatives to harness their strength, cultivating self-awareness and imparting essential negotiation and communication skills, pivotal for effective leadership.
2. Promoting women as agents of change and increasing their participation and involvement in the decision-making processes for effective governance.
3. Providing understanding of prevailing legislations, policies, and welfare programs aimed at empowering, safeguarding and nurturing women and children, implemented by both the State and Central governments.
4. Familiarizing Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) about their roles and equipping them to devise strategies for addressing pertinent issues within their jurisdictions.

Fostering a commitment among EWRs to adopt gender-transformative approaches in their work.

Workshops on Gender responsive governance



Visakhapatnam in Feb 2023

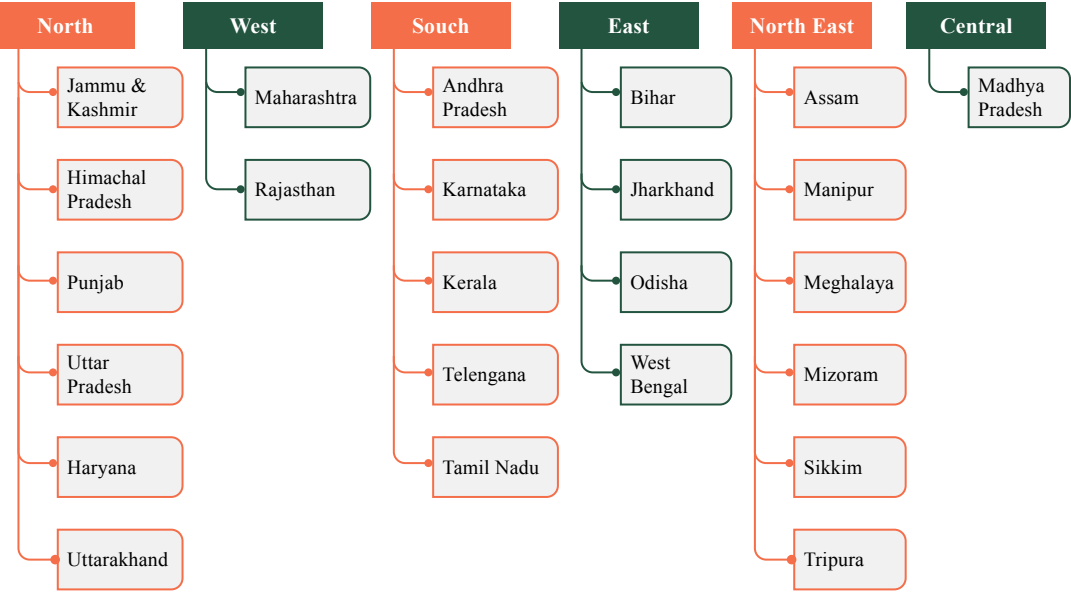


Dharamshala in June 2022



Udaipur in September 2022

The training programs have been conducted at various Institutes including State Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Institute of Urban Studies, Administrative Institutes, and other reputable institutions in different states. Region-wise details are as below:



In addition to the above, the National Commission for Women (NCW), in collaboration with Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), organized three residential workshops titled “Gender Responsive Governance for Elected Women Representatives” (MLAs) in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh; Udaipur, Rajasthan; and Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. Participants included women legislators from sixteen different states



‘Panchayat Se Parliament’ at Samvidhan Sadan on 5th January 2024

Thematic sessions under the programme

With a view to derive maximum benefit, the program was organized with the following themes:-

- 1 • Promoting Higher Participation of Women in Decision Making Roles
- 2 • Strengthening Leadership Qualities
- 3 • Effective Communication Skills using modern day technologies
- 4 • Women’s Welfare Scheme and other Social Welfare Initiatives
- 5 • Laws pertaining to Protection of Women’s Rights

The table below captures brief details of the program.

Total Training Sessions	-	169
No. of States/UTs Covered	-	24
Total No. of Women Representatives Trained	-	5560 (Including 80 Legislators)

The distinguished guests at these workshops included Smt. Anandiben Patel, Hon’ble Governor of Uttar Pradesh; Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan, Governor of Telangana and Lt. Governor of Puducherry; and Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu, Former Vice President of India. They shared their valuable experiences and real-life examples motivating participants. The Honorable guests commended the efforts of NCW for launching the program to empower women in the political sphere.

She is a Change Maker - Capacity Building Program for Women in Politics



Srikalahasti, Andhra Pradesh in October 2023



Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, January 2024



Ranchi, Jharkhand, November 2022



Ranchi Jharkhand, November 2022



Lucknow, August 2023



Bhubneswar, Odisha, September 2023



Bhubneswar, Odisha, September 2023



'Panchayat Se Parliament' at Samvidhan Sadan on 5th January 2024

Milestone Event: "Panchayat se Parliament"

Recognizing the reach and appreciation of the program since its inception and its popularity, it was felt that the women representatives needed to be provided further exposure to the working of our Democracy at higher levels. One of the most significant initiatives in this direction was the "Panchayat se Parliament" program, which was held at the Central Hall of the Parliament. The historic venue, where the Constitution of India was framed and the transfer of power from the British took place, provided a fitting backdrop for this ground breaking event.

This program brought together 500 elected women representatives from Urban Local Bodies and Panchayati Raj Institutions nationwide, with the majority being women Sarpanch (village heads) from villages across the country. The primary goal of the program was to showcase to the women the opportunities awaiting them if they choose to make a career in electoral politics. The occasion provided them with an opportunity to interact not only with distinguished speakers but also with fellow leaders from different states. It raised awareness about the roles and responsibilities of Panchayati Raj Institutions and promoted constitutional and democratic values among these women leaders. The program sought to instill a deeper understanding of governance, policy-making, and the functioning of India's democratic institutions.

Prominent Figures and Inspiring Messages

The event was graced by several notable figures. The Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha, Shri Om Birla, encouraged women representatives to excel in their political careers and develop their communities effectively. Drawing inspiration from successful women Members of Parliament, Shri Om Birla highlighted their notable achievements, serving as role models for the aspiring leaders.

NCW Chairperson, Ms. Rekha Sharma, motivated the participants to persist on the path of success, even if it means walking alone at times. She emphasized the importance of learning the law and mastering technology to excel in their roles. Her message resonated deeply with the attendees, many of whom face significant challenges in their political journeys.

The Minister of State (Panchayati Raj) Shri Kapil Moreshwar Patil, along with Members of Parliament Shri Manoj Tiwari and Shri Sanjay Bhatia, also attended the program. Their engaging sessions provided the women with valuable insights and encouragement, reinforcing the idea that their contributions could be vital to strengthening the nation's democratic fabric.

Networking, Collaboration, and Exposure to Democracy

One of the key aspects of the "Panchayat se Parliament" program was the opportunity it provided for networking and collaboration amongst women representatives. These interactions allowed the women to exchange ideas, discuss best practices, and seek solutions to common issues faced in their respective regions. Such collaborations foster a sense of solidarity and support and encourage these leaders to drive change and advocate for their community's needs.

In addition to the program at the Central Hall, the women representatives were taken on a tour of the New Parliament House, Samvidhan Sadan, and the Parliament Library. This offered them a first hand experience of witnessing Democracy in action at the Temple of the largest Democracy in the world. It is hoped, that NCW's initiative will pave the way for a more inclusive society and polity and catapult the women in large numbers to leadership positions.



'Panchayat Se Parliament' at Samvidhan Sadan on 5th January 2024



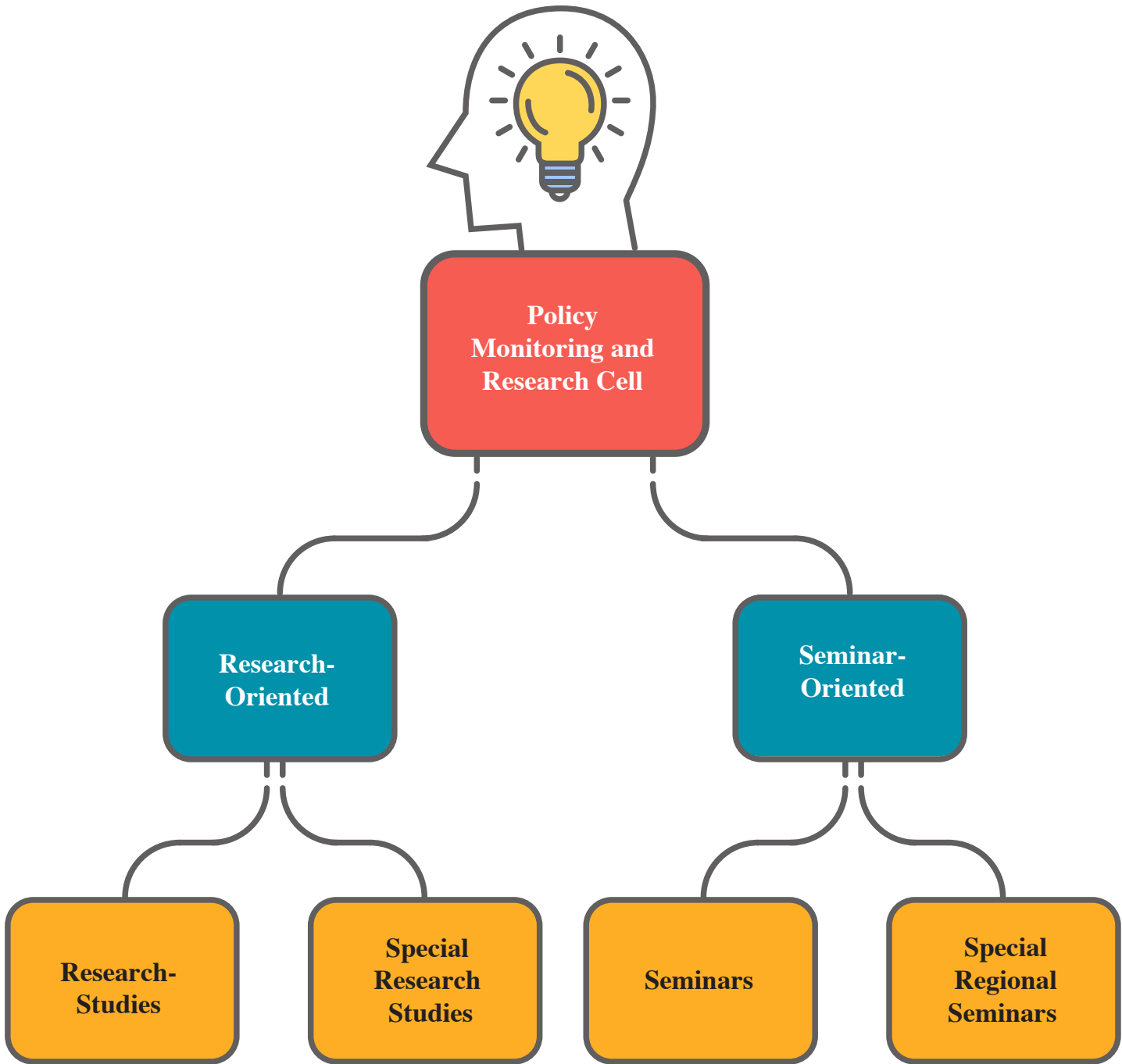
Research Initiatives



Introduction

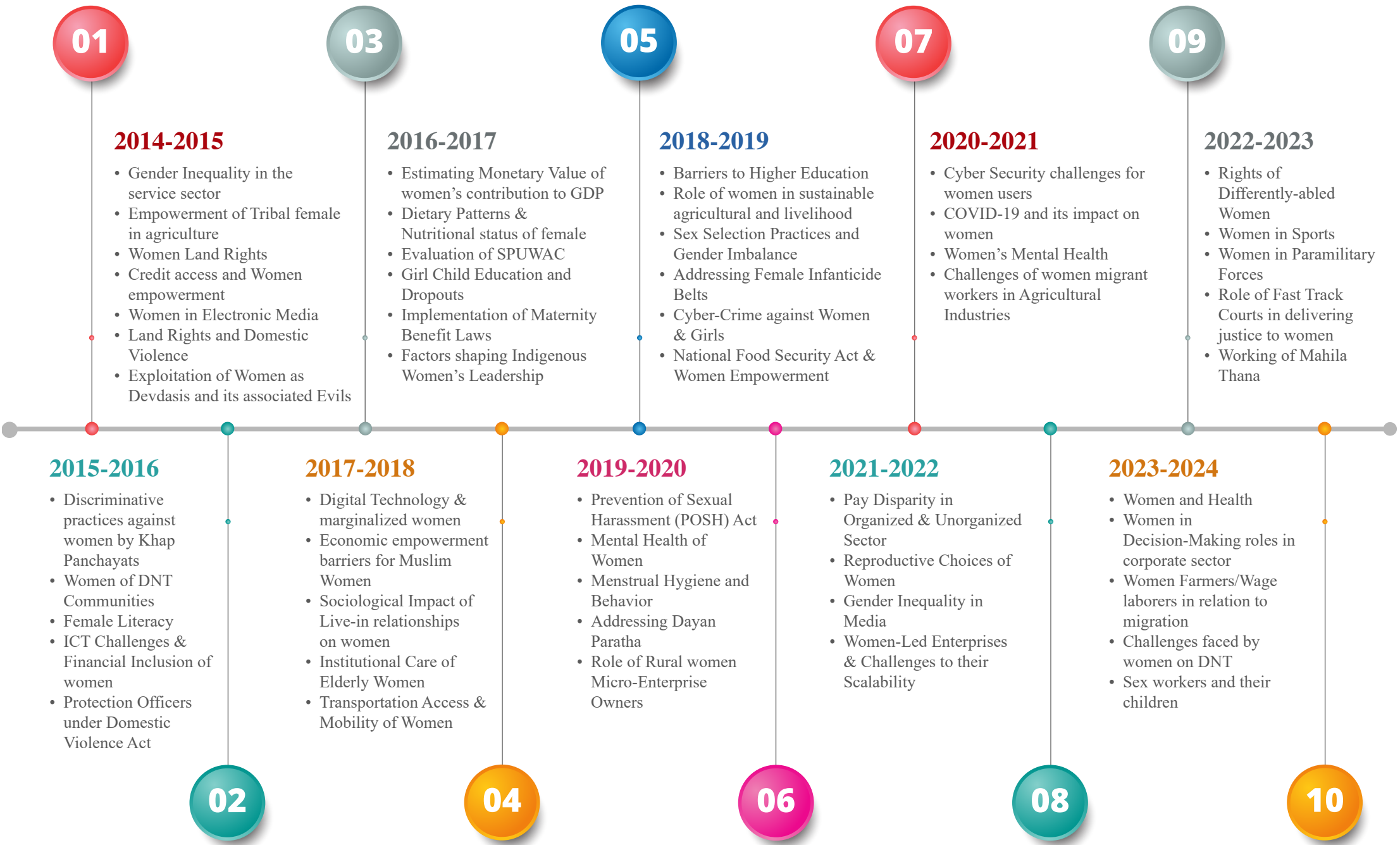
Policy making is a dynamic, ongoing and constantly evolving process and is dependent on the temporal and spatial contents. Evolving a new policy and refining existing ones needs inputs that are timely, relevant and based on ground realities.

With a view to help in Policy making, NCW conducts research studies and organises seminars to gain insights and make recommendations for improving policies, programs, schemes, and projects related to women’s welfare and empowerment. Each year, the Commission selects topics to address various issues affecting women in India. The ‘Policy Monitoring and Research Cell’ works on (i) Research Studies and (ii) Organizes Seminars. Both elements function simultaneously yet independently. The broad areas covered are as below:



Studies during 2014-2024

During the period 2014-2024, a number of Studies have been undertaken and Seminars organized on contemporary areas of concern. Brief details of some of these are captured in the succeeding pages.



Partnering Institutes during 2014-2024

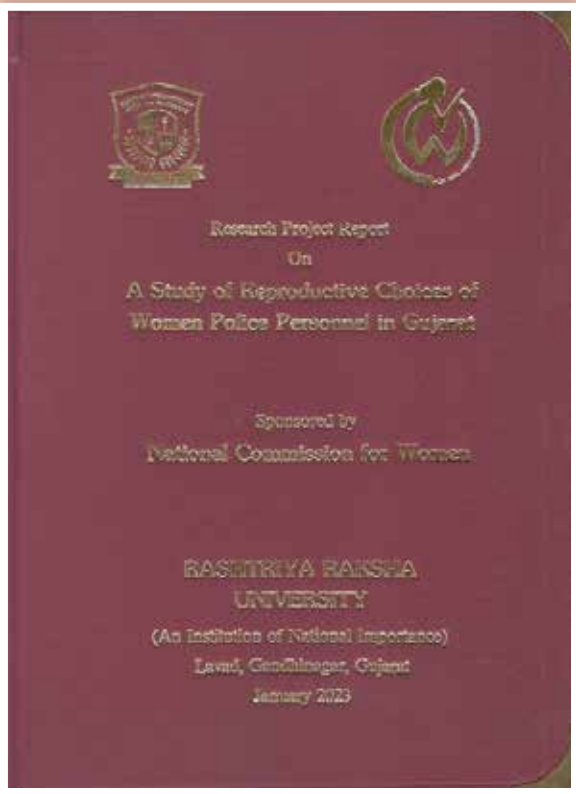
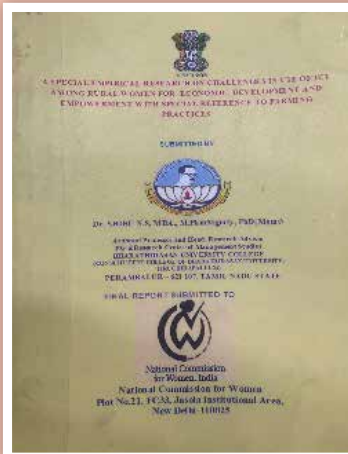
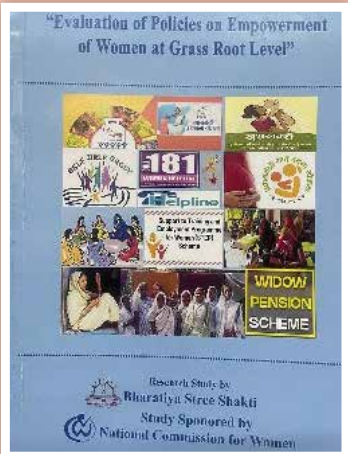
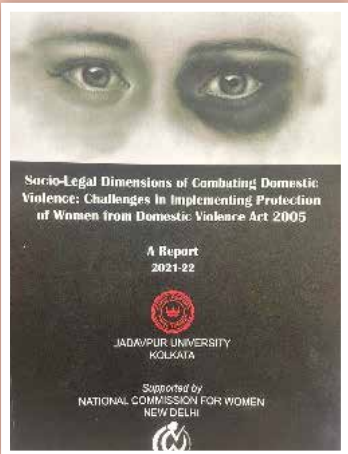
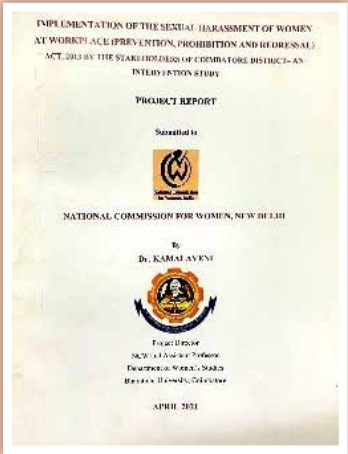
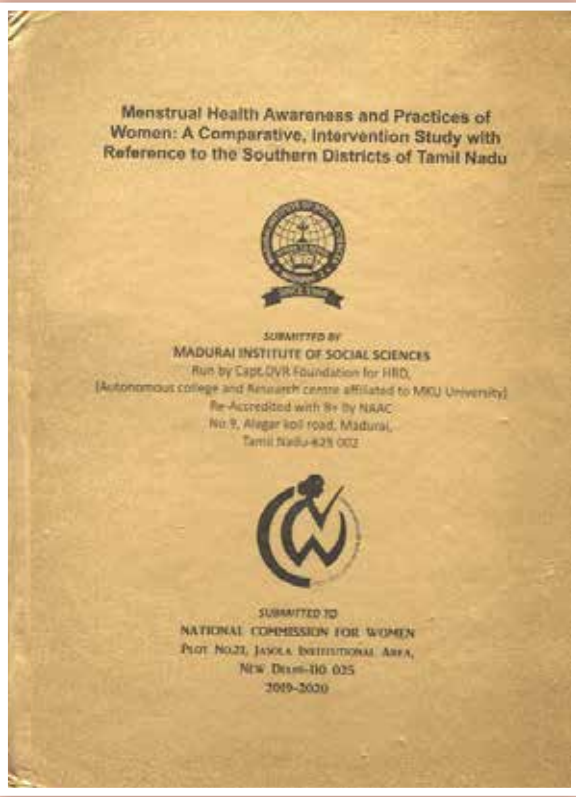
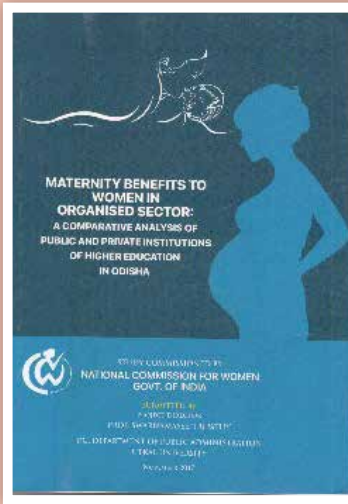
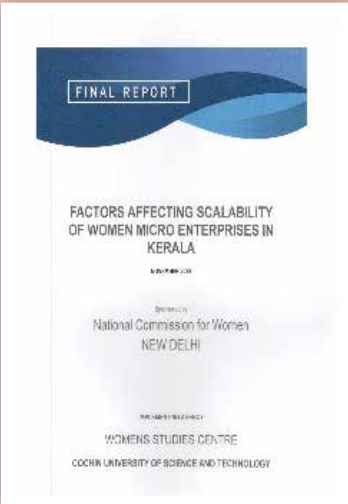
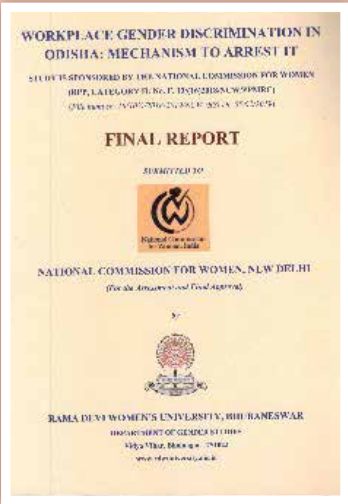
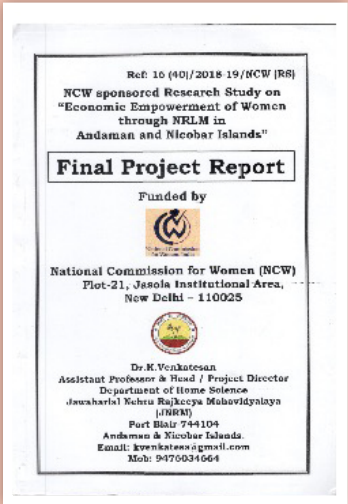
Northern Zone	Western Zone	Southern Zone	Eastern Zone	North-Eastern Zone
<i>Total No. of Research Studies conducted in Northern Zone: 62</i>	<i>Total No. of Research Studies conducted in Western Zone: 35</i>	<i>Total No. of Research Studies conducted in Southern Zone: 60</i>	<i>Total No. of Research Studies conducted in Eastern Zone: 16</i>	<i>Total No. of Research Studies conducted in North-Eastern Zone 21</i>
<i>Total number of Seminars conducted in Northern Zone: 158</i>	<i>Total Number of Seminars conducted in Western Zone: 119</i>	<i>Total Number of Seminars conducted in Southern Zone: 162</i>	<i>Total Number of Seminars conducted in Eastern Zone: 82</i>	<i>Total Number of Seminars conducted in North-Eastern Zone: 148</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indian Institute of Public Administration, Delhi Jamia Milia Islamia, New Delhi Maharshi Dayanand University, Haryana Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Delhi Amity Business School, UP Punjab University, Chandigarh University of Kashmir, Srinagar Central University of Punjab, Bathinda, Punjab University of Lucknow, UP National Law University, New Delhi Campus Law Center, University of Delhi Aligarh Muslim University, U.P Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, UP IIT Roorkee, Uttarakhand Sharda University, UP Indian Institute of Management, Uttarakhand Kurukshetra University, Haryana Guru Nanak Dev University, Punjab Action Aid Association Delhi Kumaun University, Nainital, Uttarakhand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Atal Bihari Vajpayee Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management, Gwalior, MP Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai Gujarat National Law University, Gandhinagar, Gujarat Central University of Rajasthan IIM, Ahmedabad Karve Institute of Social Service, Pune, Maharashtra National Law Institute University, Bhopal Bharatiya Stree Shakti, Mumbai, Maharashtra SNDT Women's University, Mumbai, Maharashtra The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Gujarat IIT Jodhpur, Rajasthan Maharashtra National Law University, Mumbai Rashtriya Raksha University, Gujarat Gujarat University, Ahmedabad, Gujarat SAMVEDNA, Madhya Pradesh B.J. Government Medical College, Maharashtra 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Madras, Chennai National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), Karnataka The National University of Advanced Legal Studies, Kochi, Kerala Bharathiar University, Coimbatore Tamil Nadu Madurai Kamaraj University, Tamil Nadu University of Mysore, Karnataka Periyar University, Salem, Tamil Nadu Alagappa University, Tamil Nadu Jawaharlal Nehru Rajkeeya Mahavidyalaya (JNRM Andaman And Nicobar Islands National Law School of India University, Karnataka Central University of Tamil Nadu Pondicherry University, Pondicherry National Institute of Technology Warangal, Telangana University of Hyderabad Christ University, Banagalore, Karnataka Vellore Institute of Technology, Chennai 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hidayatullah National Law University, Raipur, Chhattisgarh University of Calcutta, Kolkata All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Bhubneshwar, Odisha National Institute of Technology, Raipur, Chhattisgarh Indian Institute Of Technology, Kharagpur, West Bengal National University of Study and Research in Law, Ranchi, Jharkhand NIT Rourkela, Odisha Jadhavpur University, Kolkata University of Burdwan, West Bengal Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh National Law University, Odisha Rama Devi Women's University, Bhubneshwar IIT, Patna Chanakya National Law University Patna O.P. Jindal University, Chhattisgarh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tezpur University, Assam Mizoram University, Tanhril, Mizoram Assam University, Assam Chandraprabha Saikiani Centre for Women Studies, Tezpur University, Assam Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Manipur Centre for Women's Studies, Dibrugarh University, Assam Tetso College, Nagaland Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh North-Eastern Hill University, Meghalaya Women's Studies Centre, Nagaland University, Nagaland North Kamrup College, Assam Manipur University ICFAI University, Tripura Sikkim University NIT, Assam Tripura University

Selected Research Reports during 2014-2024

Approved topic, institute and year	Brief recapitulation of the study and recommendations
<p>Acid Attacks: A Study of Underlying Causes of Acid Attacks against Women and the Nature of State Response</p> <p><i>University of Delhi, 2014-15</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The study investigates the socio-economic causes and legal frameworks surrounding acid attacks on women. It identifies shortcomings in existing laws, explores root causes, and proposes measures for prevention, legal reform, and survivor rehabilitation. The recommendations include granting anonymity to victims, disregard for juvenile pleas, and providing job and education reservations for survivors. Additionally, it suggests enhancing law enforcement, medical care, financial support, and societal reintegration for survivors.
<p>Discriminative & Derogatory Practices Against Women by Khap Panchayats, Shalishi Adalats and Kangaroo Court in India: An Empirical Study in the States of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Rajasthan</p> <p><i>Jamia Millia Islamia, 2015-16</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The study reveals deep-rooted patriarchy, control over women's choices, and property as the root cause of discrimination. Despite laws, lack of education and political interests perpetuate such practices. Recommendations include defining authorities' roles, amending laws to categorize honour crimes, shifting proof burdens, and setting up fast-track courts. The study also emphasizes the need for mass education to combat institutionalized discrimination against women.
<p>Women Prisoners and their Children in Jails in Eastern U.P</p> <p><i>Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith, Varanasi (U.P), 2016-17</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The study recommends several measures like providing basic accommodation for expectant mothers and young children, conducting criminological, medical, and social assessments, employing counselors, allowing the detention of children under five in crèches, and improving living conditions. Additionally, it suggests enhancing higher education facilities, improving food quality, and providing appropriate clothing and medical facilities. The study also recommends working with neighborhood non-governmental organizations to support women offenders in hiring attorneys, encourage educational and career opportunities, and set up leisure activities for women prisoners and their kids.
<p>Menstrual Health Awareness and Practices of Women: A comparative, Intervention Study with Special Reference to Southern Districts of Tamil Nadu</p> <p><i>Madurai Institute of Social Sciences, Tamil Nadu, 2017-18</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The study found significant gaps in knowledge, existence of unhygienic practices, and persistent menstrual taboos. The recommendations included strengthening government programs, healthcare services, educational initiatives, counselling services and exploration of livelihood opportunities in menstrual product manufacturing.
<p>Effectiveness of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, Redressal) Act, 2013 and rules thereafter: A Study of Assam</p> <p><i>Tezpur University, Assam, 2018-19</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The study found gaps in the constitution of Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs), lack of qualified chairpersons and members, inadequate training programs, and limited gender sensitization initiatives. Key recommendations include setting up monitoring committees with gender experts, mandatory training for ICC members and employees, stringent penalties for non-compliance, involving local governments in enforcement, and ensuring gender studies qualifications for trainers. It further includes advocating for stringent legislation, prevention mechanisms such as CCTV installation and training programs, victim support mechanisms, institutional measures, supervision and monitoring systems, networking and dialogue platforms, emphasis on independent decision-making, single-window systems, and collaboration with legal institutes to combat sexual harassment effectively.

Approved topic, institute and year	Brief recapitulation of the study and recommendations
<p>The Study on the Mental Health & Quality of Life of Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in Metropolitan Cities of India</p> <p><i>St. Joseph's University, Bangalore, 2019-20</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study reveals that in most Indian metropolitan cities, it is the middle-aged & low-income women who experience Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) for several years, resulting in high levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. • Recommendations include increasing college-level awareness, promoting women's education and employability through self-help groups, training civil society to support survivors, providing psychological first-aid and trauma care, improving living standards through domestic violence schemes, and promoting awareness campaigns in rural/slum areas.
<p>Cyber Security- Challenges under Cyber Space specially for Women users: Cyber Security among the Indigenous Women of Arunachal Pradesh: Status, Impediments and Strategic Reforms</p> <p><i>Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh, 2020-21</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research delves into the pervasive threat of cyber-related crimes against indigenous women in Arunachal Pradesh, driven by the rapid expansion of digital technology. Findings reveal alarming instances of cyber bullying, stalking, and misuse of personal data, prompting urgent recommendations for comprehensive awareness campaigns, robust safeguards, and collaboration between state and non-state actors to combat cyber threats effectively and protect vulnerable populations. • The outcome promises to improve policy formulation, enhance law enforcement measures, and foster a safer digital environment for indigenous women in the state.
<p>A red dot and the cycle of birth: Reproductive choices of young adults</p> <p><i>University of Calcutta, 2021-22</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study suggests that ASHAs' visits to discuss contraception improve the use of modern contraceptives, but they often focus on immunization and maternity benefits. Marginalized women, such as trafficked women and commercial sex workers, often lack exposure to health workers. • The Menstrual Health Scheme has shown positive behavioural changes in young women, but more steps are needed to expand coverage and encourage bio-degradable alternatives. • The Ministry of Human Resource Development should focus on adult education programs to address preference for sons and awareness generation. • The Ministry of Women and Child Development can work on reducing son preference by involving women in the labour force and promoting equality in gender.
<p>Socio-Legal Dimensions of combating Domestic Violence: Challenges in Implementing Protection of women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005</p> <p><i>Jadavpur University, West Bengal, 2022-23</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study suggests incorporating awareness about domestic violence into education and healthcare syllabuses, involving NGOs, SHGs, Anganwadi workers, and Asha Karmi for door-to-door awareness, implementing training programs and legal awareness. • The study also advocates for compulsory gender sensitization training for the police. It emphasizes the need to strengthen infrastructure for better implementation of the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), allocate annual funds for service providers, provide emergency psychological care, and establish dedicated courts for domestic violence cases.
<p>Bottlenecks to Sustainable Development Goal # 4: Access and Quality Education- A Case Study of Vijayapura District Women Empowerment through Education</p> <p><i>Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women's University, 2023-24</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study suggests modifying course curriculum through constant interaction with industry, New Educational Policy, regional context consultation, and regular University-Industry Meets. • The study highlights the need for improved pedagogy, infrastructure enhancement, and a proactive role from faculty in the campus recruitment process. • The university's presence in a socio-economically underdeveloped region has contributed to women's enrolment in higher education. The findings also suggest enhancing the central and departmental libraries.

Selected Research Studies



Seminars Organized - Some Glipmpses



Empowerment of Women Farmers.





Lucknow at July 2023



Thane, Maharashtra at February 2024



Pantnagar, Uttarakhand September 2023

Introduction

Feminization of agriculture, a term we are familiar with, is increasingly becoming a reality in large parts of rural India, especially in the backdrop of outward male migration to urban areas. With the male members moving out, the burden of agriculture falls on the womenfolk who, willy-nilly, become heads of rural households. This puts an added responsibility on women and makes it more burdensome in the absence of an enabling institutional framework for women to access services such as bank loans, government schemes, etc. Rural women's contributions though not so well documented are vital to the well-being of families and communities and to local and national economies. Women now account for a larger proportion of the agricultural labor force. The engagement is more pronounced in cases of subsistence farming.

Need for recognizing women farmers' contribution

It, therefore, becomes critical to recognize women farmer's contributions and include them not only in decision-making processes at all levels of governments but also quantify and include their efforts in GDP calculations at the national level. Rural women are at a very disadvantageous position and encounter multiple challenges arising out of limited access to credit, health care and education. The global food and economic crises and the climate change further aggravate their position. The rights and concerns of women farmers remain insufficiently unaddressed in legal frameworks, national and local policies, budget allocation, as well as in investment strategies. The perpetuation of gender-based stereotypes and outdated customs and norms which deny them equitable access to opportunities, resources and services adds to their discomfort.

Seminars for women farmers' empowerment

Considering that economic empowerment of Women Farmers and Daily wage labourers is essential for development of the country, the National Commission for Women (NCW) conceptualized conduction of a series of seminars in different parts of the country on this issue, in collaboration with various state training institutes.

Four Regional Seminars were conducted in collaboration with State Institutes of Rural Development and other esteemed institutes as per details indicated below:

Objectives

1. Address barriers to equal rights and entitlements for women farmers and daily wage laborers
2. Discuss issues faced by women farmers and daily wage laborers from a broader interdisciplinary perspective
3. Create awareness about crop diversification, best farming practices, and organic farming
4. Strengthen and support women's agricultural institutions and agri-enterprises
5. Promote gender-disaggregated data on land ownership and women's land rights
6. Raise awareness about government initiatives and schemes related to women farmers and daily wage laborers

Training and Capacity Building of women in Dairy Farming:

The Commission conducted Training and Capacity Building of Women in Dairy Farming in collaboration with Agricultural Universities in the year 2021-22 and

Seminar Sessions:

The Seminars covered the following key topics

2022-23. In this training program, approximately 1100 beneficiaries have been trained so far. The objective of the Program was to train the women entrepreneurs, co-operatives run by women, dairy farmers and SHGs.



Diversification of agricultural and best practices for women farmers

Farming of medicinal and aromatic plants, and agri-businesses



Women farmer-friendly productive environments and agri-businesses

Gender-responsive budgeting and its implementation



Participants

The Seminars witnessed active participation from women farmers, Aajeevika Sakhis (rural Self-Help Group members), MGNREGA women laborers, women members of Self-Help Groups and women representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions (Local Self-Government bodies).

Feedback and Impact

- One of key features of the seminars was that participants shared their innovative farming practices, startups, expansions, difficulties, and challenges and the knowledge shared was found useful by other participants.
- Stalls showcasing agricultural products such as medicinal and herbal products set up by women agri-entrepreneurs helped in generating awareness about these products and opened new avenues for marketing such products. The quality of products was highly appreciated and all products were quickly sold off.
- Participants were of the opinion that the seminars enhanced their understanding of the subject, knowledge about crop diversification and best practices. They were highly appreciative of the knowledgeable trainers.

- Participants expressed gratitude for the opportunity and requested more such seminars in their respective states.
- The training institutions expressed the view that these training programs were well received by participants. The institutions also requested the Commission for sponsoring more Seminars on this subject in their respective states in future.

Conclusion

The women farmers are playing a vital role in agriculture sector and contributing to the national economy and food security. However, women farmers encounter a number of hurdles in the process, inter alia, due to deeply embedded patriarchal attitudes. The seminars helped in fostering empowerment, skill development and facilitated exchange of knowledge and best practices among women farmers and daily wage laborers. The Seminars organized by NCW were well received both by the partnering institutions and the participants and showcased that if empowered; women farmers can make a huge contribution to the national GDP and help realize the goal of Aatmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India).



Pantnagar, Uttarakhand September 2023



Lucknow at July 2023

Sex Workers and their Children



Introduction

Sex workers and their children in India face severe stigma, discrimination and lack access to education, healthcare, and social services. Amongst others, societal prejudices and legal ambiguity hinder their integration, perpetuating cycles of poverty and marginalization. For restoration of their dignity and enabling them to enjoy their rights, such concerns need to be addressed through inclusive policies, public awareness, and supportive community programs. With the changing societal attitudes some degree of openness on gender and related issues is now visible. However, the sex workers still remain largely out of the mainstream and are discriminated. Neglected and excluded from society, they remain one of the most ‘at-risk population’. The children of sex workers are prone to emotional vulnerability, social problems and face educational challenges, get inadequate healthcare facilities and lack access to opportunity due to marginalization and discrimination.

Need for Concrete Action

The extent of the problem makes it imperative to take concrete steps to address the serious concerns in the matter. This also underpins the need for a thorough examination of the problem in all its dimensions and evolves concrete solutions for addressing them.

In this backdrop, the National Commission for Women organized regional seminars on **‘Sex Workers and Their Children: Legal, Educational, Health and Occupational challenges’** throughout the country during 2023-24.

The aim of the regional seminars was to provide a platform for stakeholders to share their experiences, address existing gaps, and discuss solutions for the concerns and barriers faced by sex workers and their children. The seminars focused on four interconnected aspects: Legal issues; Occupational barriers; Health concerns; and Main-streaming the children of sex workers.

“Children cannot be called illegitimate, even if they are born out of non-marital relationships”

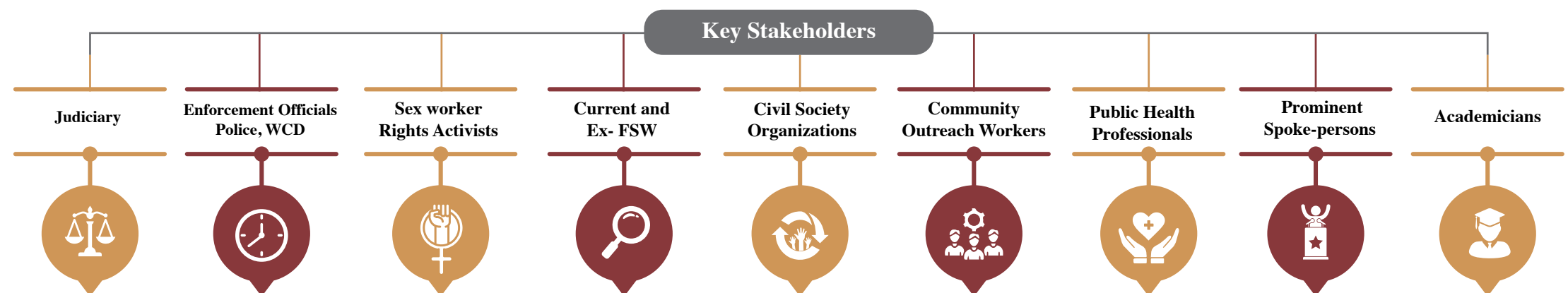
– Ms. Rekha Sharma, Chairperson, NCW



Objectives of the Seminar



In order to ensure a threadbare analysis of the problem, a spectrum of stakeholders were associated in these seminars as depicted below:



The hallmark of the seminars was the participation by sex workers and their children in large numbers and the insights they provided into the lesser known aspects of their lives, the struggles they face on a daily basis, their dreams and aspirations!

Solutions to their concerns are not far to seek as can be seen from the recommendations that flowed out of these deliberations. What is required is a will to implement them.

Way Forward: Recommendations and Suggestions

The recommendations and suggestions that came up in the Regional Seminars are summed up below:

Legal/ Enforcement Aspects

- **Defining Rights of Sex Workers:** Clarity needed for better legal implementation by deconstructing old laws
- **Enhancing Awareness and Accessibility of Rights:** Simplify legal language, establish user-friendly platforms
- **Police Sensitization:** Shift required towards Victim-Centric Approach
- **Legal Service Accessibility:** Sensitize lawyers and provide resources for sex worker support
- **Collaborative Anti-Trafficking Efforts:** Multi-sector coordination for effective campaigns

Occupational Barriers and Other Challenges

- **Streamlined Documentation:** Simplify processes for- Ration Card, Aadhaar, and Caste Certificate, etc.
- **Pension Services Review:** Assess and improve services for sex workers
- **Child Contact Rights:** Advocate for policies supporting communication rights
- **Financial Inclusivity for Female Sex workers:** Facilitate access to banking and loan services
- **Welfare Scheme Access:** Simplify processes and consider removing requirement for father's name
- **SC Certificate Simplification:** Streamline validation process, consider mother's validation for child's SC status
- **Cyber Law Enforcement:** Enhance & implement laws to combat cyber harassment against FSWs
- **CSR for Sex Worker Support:** Promote Corporate Social Responsibility funding and stakeholder collaboration

Health Concerns

- **Health Equity:** Ensure integrated services for various health concerns including HIV/STIs, Hepatitis, Reproductive Sexual Health, Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), and Mental Health
- **Maternal and Child Health:** Accomodate single mothers' inclusion/coverage in Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandhana Yojna
- **Access to Social Benefits and Welfare Services:** Special provisions to eliminate barriers related to marriage criteria, identification documents & spousal consent for services like antenatal care, safe abortion, & PMJAY
- **Post-COVID Contraceptive Distribution:** Ensure timely access to contraceptives to FSWs
- **Mental Health Support:** Provide counseling services for sex trafficking survivors and children
- **Standardized HIV Testing:** Advocate timely implementation of confirmatory tests
- **Preventive Measures and Awareness:** Empower FSWs through community interactions & education
- **Social Media for Health Education:** Use platforms like WhatsApp for short, visual health education

Some glimpses of the Regional Seminars on ‘Sex Workers and their Children: Legal, Health, Occupational and Educational Challenges’ in Mumbai and New Delhi.





Combating Human Trafficking - A Collective Effort

A word cloud graphic on a black background. The word "STOP" is repeated many times in white, in various sizes and orientations. The words "HUMAN TRAFFICKING" are repeated in red, also in various sizes and orientations. The overall effect is a dense, chaotic arrangement of text that emphasizes the urgency and prevalence of the issue.

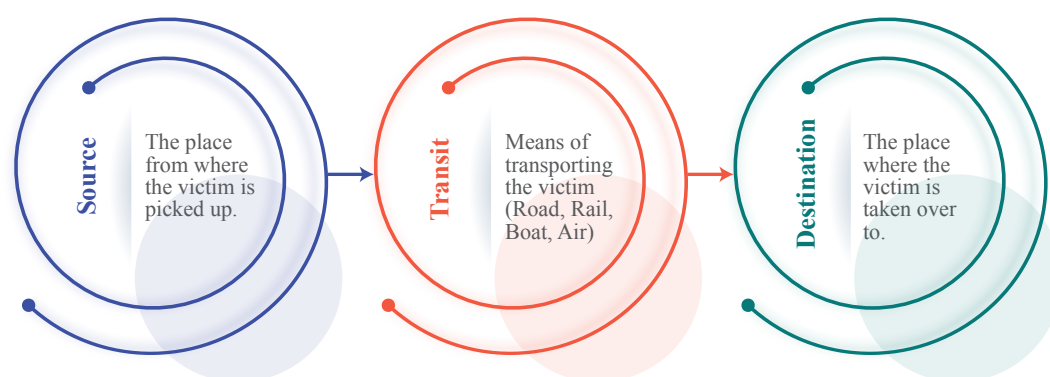
The magnitude of the problem

Human trafficking is an organized crime against humanity and transcends borders, cultures, and socio-economic divides. It has acquired the notoriety of a global menace and has the unique distinction of being the fastest growing organized criminal industry in the world. It involves illegal trade in humans for exploitation and specifically targets women and children. The trafficked persons are subjected to different forms of exploitation such as forcing them into sex and prostitution and subjecting them into forced labor, forced marriage, domestic servitude, illegal adoption, begging, organ transplant, surrogacy, drug peddling, etc. In gross violation of human rights, human trafficking severely undermines the dignity of individuals. As the world grapples with this dark reality, it becomes increasingly apparent that combating human trafficking is not just a moral imperative but is an ineluctable obligation for ensuring the safety and dignity of trafficked individuals

Complex Human Trafficking Networks

Human trafficking syndicates operate through a complex network that involves identification of the vulnerable people, their transportation and trading at the ultimate destination.

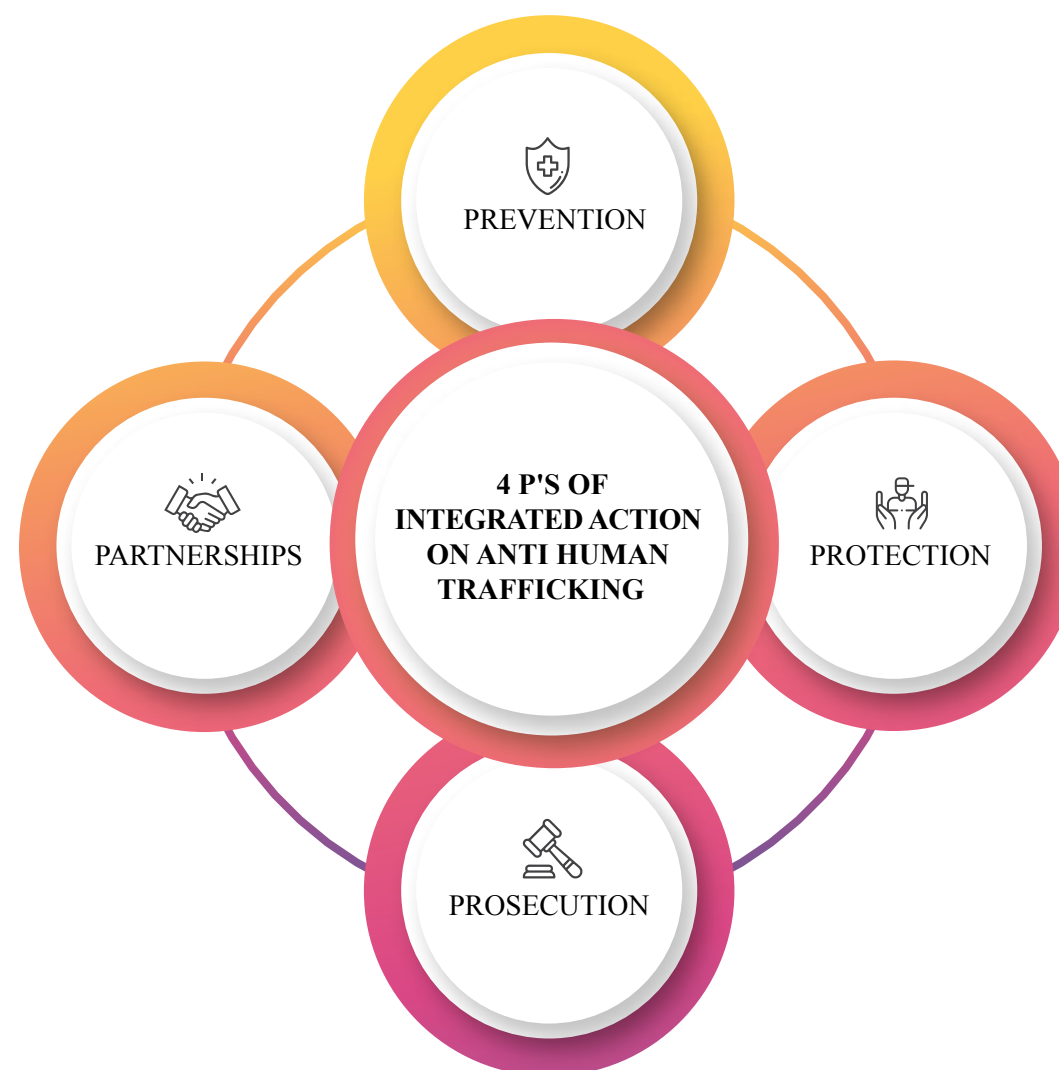
Diagrammatic representation of Human Trafficking Network



Changing patterns of human trafficking

Trafficking trends, patterns and strategies are not static but depending on a variety of factors including the responses of law enforcement agencies continue to evolve over time. The traffickers innovate and adapt to new circumstances faster than the law enforcement agencies could visualize. This poses a serious challenge for law enforcement responses. The gravity of the crime necessitates mounting a constant vigil and renewal of multi-pronged efforts to contain the menace. Combating and preventing human trafficking requires a holistic approach involving crucial stakeholders and an integrated action encompassing 4Ps- Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Partnerships.

The Four Ps





New Delhi



Shillong

Partnership and collaboration for combating the menace

Combating human trafficking requires developing partnerships between governments, communities, international development agencies, private sector and non-profit organizations as also convergence in their respective approaches. The four pronged approach against human trafficking comprises prevention, protection, prosecution and societal integration of victims.

National Commission for Women Initiatives

The National Commission for Women (NCW) has, after a detailed root cause analysis of the menace of trafficking of women and children, initiated a series of measures for generating awareness amongst stakeholders on all pertinent issues. The Commission believes that awareness of different facets of human trafficking is crucial for evolving an efficient mechanism for combating human trafficking. The NCW has been conducting Capacity Building and Awareness Generation programs for the Police officials of all States and Union Territories, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel deployed at airports throughout the country, functionaries of the State Women Commissions and Civil Society Organizations.

The programs have been conducted with the primary objective of generating awareness about different dimensions of human trafficking. These include disseminating information about the network of traffickers and their modus operandi to lure women/girls, factors impacting the vulnerability of the target population and the circumstances contributing to the exposure of victims. An important component of these programs focused on rescuing the trafficked persons; post rescue rehabilitation of survivors and the role of stakeholders in prevention, protection and prosecution.

From Sawai Madhopur to Srinagar, thirteen capacity building programs covering over 5000 stakeholders have been conducted primarily for persons in uniform between 2022 and 2024.



Awareness Seminars on Anti Human Trafficking



Sawai Madhopur



Srinagar



Moreh, Manipur



Kalimpong, West Bengal



CISF Officials at Kolkata Airport



Hyderabad



Bengaluru

The key learnings that emerged from these programs are summarized below :-

Source Areas

- The old adage that forewarned is forearmed aptly captures the essence of awareness generation programs. Prior knowledge of the possible dangers provides the tactical advantage and is critical for prevention of crime.
- Sharing information pertaining to legislations, schemes and policies related to trafficking empowers urban and rural local bodies.
- Need for establishment of Anti-Human Trafficking Clubs in colleges and targetted Awareness campaigns for adolescents.



Transit Areas

- Introduction of specialized training programs for the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel deployed at airports which are important transit routes for trafficking.
- Trained CISF personnel to function as an additional set of “eyes and ears” for providing vital information in case of suspected trafficking.
- Organizing sessions on “Analyzing Body Detection and Deception Detection” in which Psychologists trained CISF officials on how they can identify suspicious movements, behavior and body language.



Destination Areas

- Coordination and convergence between NCW and other stakeholders in States/UTs for strengthening anti-human trafficking mechanism and processes.
- Carve out a role for Corporate Houses in post-rescue and rehabilitation programs of victims as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
- Stress on ‘Behavioural Aspects’ of Law Enforcement Agencies in rescue, post rescue and rehabilitation



The Way Forward

“No one can do everything but everyone can do something”.

The fight against human trafficking requires coordinated and sustained efforts from all sections of society. By fostering a culture of vigilance and solidarity, societies can empower individuals to recognize the signs of trafficking and take action to report suspicious activities. All of us should strive to become “**Ambassadors of Anti-Human Trafficking**” and work to the best of our capacities to contribute to the movement for combating human trafficking.

Emerging action points

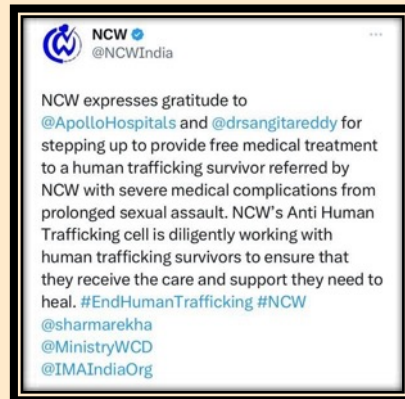
- Awareness generation programmes on different modes/methods of Trafficking for the vulnerable population, alongwith counseling on various educational & career opportunities.
- Awareness programmes on reintegration of the trafficked victims into the society and to avoid their stigmatization.

- MoU with the Railway Protection Force to undertake training and sensitization programme for RPF.
- Training and capacity building of other stakeholders such as BSF, SSB, ITBP, etc. deployed at international borders.

- Skill development and capacity building of trafficked survivors for meaningful employment or livelihood.
- Advertisement and publicity campaigns at source, transit and destination areas.

The capacity building programs for various stakeholders at Airports have produced salutary results. As a result, the Authorities have been successful in apprehending traffickers at airports, identifying suspected victims of trafficking and reporting it to the authorities concerned.

Success Stories



Fraudulent NRI Marriages- The Transnational Conundrum



The lure of NRI marriages

The Overseas Indians have achieved economic success and attained a better social and cultural status globally. The Overseas Indians include Indian citizens who opted to reside in foreign countries for higher studies or work and also those born to Indian parents settled abroad. Many overseas Indians continue to observe and, in fact, prefer to preserve their religion, traditions, culture, languages and food habits, etc. In this background, they make conscious effort to follow Indian culture and traditions including the system of traditional Indian marriages. A large number of Indians settled abroad prefer Indian brides for various reasons for their sons born and brought up abroad amongst others for ensuring continuation of culture and traditions. Parents of girls in India see the alliances with Overseas Indians as promises of a better future not only for the bride but also for her/his entire family.

Ambit of NRI Marriages

Broadly, the NRI marriages in the context of this topic include marriages between two persons falling in one of following categories:

- A Non-resident Indian man and an Indian woman;
- Both spouses are Indian and either one or both of them migrate to a foreign land either together or separately after marriage;
- Both are non-resident Indians but marry as per Indian marriage laws either in India or in a foreign country; and
- An Indian man or a woman marrying a person who is not an Indian or a NRI as per Indian marriage laws either in India or in a foreign country

Abandonment of brides

The NRI marriages are, however, not always successful and all that rosy. The brides in many such alliances experience a lot of problems including abandonment by their husbands. In a large number of cases, the abandonment occurs even before she is taken to the country of her husband’s residence or within a year of her reaching the foreign country. Instances of women either being sent back or forced to flee the country of their husband’s residence are not uncommon.

The reasons for desertion of Indian women by their overseas spouses are varied and complex. The issue of abandonment of Indian brides by NRI husbands in very large numbers is also very sensitive from the Indian perspective where divorce related aspects continue to be viewed negatively. There are also a very large number of

instances of the women in such marriages being subjected to cruelty on account of dowry or other demands by the in-laws or the spouse. It has been observed that many matrimonial alliances are based on fraudulent information shared with the bride or her parents with regard to the spouse’s job, immigration status, earning capacity, property, marital status, etc. The complexity increases multifold as such alliances fall within the purview of private international law which is much more liberal in granting divorce and the courts in most countries abroad are not able to appreciate Indian ethos, culture and traditions.

Addressing concerns relating to NRI marriages

Over a period of time, the problems relating to NRI marriages surmounted to such a high level that the Government of India had to come out with a multipronged approach. These included schemes to render assistance to Indian women trapped in such matrimonial alliances and concerted efforts for generation of awareness amongst prospective brides and their families regarding their rights and responsibilities and the safeguards that can be adopted while entering into matrimonial alliances with grooms residing overseas. One of critical steps taken for this was entrusting the nodal responsibility in this matter to the National Commission for Women (NCW).

Table -1
Number of Complaints registered by NRI Cell, NCW:-
(State-wise data for the last 5 years)

State	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Andhra Pradesh	42	44	31	36	26	24	203
Delhi	85	64	52	55	58	72	386
Gujarat	41	45	21	20	24	26	177
Haryana	66	44	40	39	22	31	242
Karnataka	40	40	31	23	32	30	196
Kerala	19	21	21	16	14	18	109
Maharashtra	53	55	41	46	46	60	301
Punjab	95	71	60	63	38	58	385
Tamil Nadu	56	57	34	38	44	33	262
Telangana	57	49	56	28	62	42	294
Uttar Pradesh	82	71	50	45	61	63	372
*Others	114	97	69	71	73	97	521
Total	750	658	506	480	500	554	3448

NCW as the Nodal Agency for NRI marriage related concerns

The Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women (14th Lok Sabha) on the subject “Plight of Indian Woman deserted by NRI husbands” which was discussed and deliberated upon by the Inter-Ministerial Committee in its meeting held on 7th July, 2008, recommended that the NCW will act as the Coordinating Agency at the National level for dealing with issues pertaining to NRI Marriages. This was given effect to vide Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (now part of Ministry of External Affairs) Order dated 28th April 2008. In furtherance of this, the Non Resident Indian (NRI) Cell was formally inaugurated on 24th of September, 2009 at NCW. Since then, the NRI Cell has received a total of 6989 complaints from aggrieved Indian citizens across the globe.

Nature of Complaints received and their redressal

With the increase in Indian Diaspora and consequently Non-Resident Indian (NRI) marriages, the number of matrimonial and related disputes in such marriages has risen proportionately, and in some instances more than proportionately. NRI Cell receives complaints from women on issues related to NRI marriages from across the country and also from those residing abroad. These complaints pertain to issues such as domestic violence, cruelty by husband or his relatives, bigamous marriages, criminal neglect in not providing maintenance to the spouse and children, desertion, dowry demand, apprehension of respondent/s leaving the country, confiscation of passports by husband or in-laws, child custody issues, Financial & Legal Aid under the Scheme of the Ministry of External Affairs, maintenance, service of documents abroad, whereabouts of husband not known and wife’s inability to join her spouse abroad, etc.

NCW adopts a convergent approach among various Ministries such as the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Home Affairs to address NRI matrimonial issues. The process of legal recourse initiated by the aggrieved women is expedited by coordinating with different authorities i.e., concerned Police, District Legal Service Authority, Indian Embassies and Missions abroad and the Regional Passport Offices under the Ministry of External Affairs.

The Ministry of External Affairs had also formed an Expert Committee to identify legal and regulatory issues and recommend measures, including amendments in the existing Acts and legislation to address various issues faced by distressed women married to NRIs. In a meeting held on 6th November 2017, it was decided to form a body called the Integrated Nodal Agency (INA) with members from concerned Ministries and the NCW to implement a coordinated and integrated approach to deal with the issue and to function as a body to provide a single window solution to Indian citizens married to overseas Indian spouses in a time-bound manner.

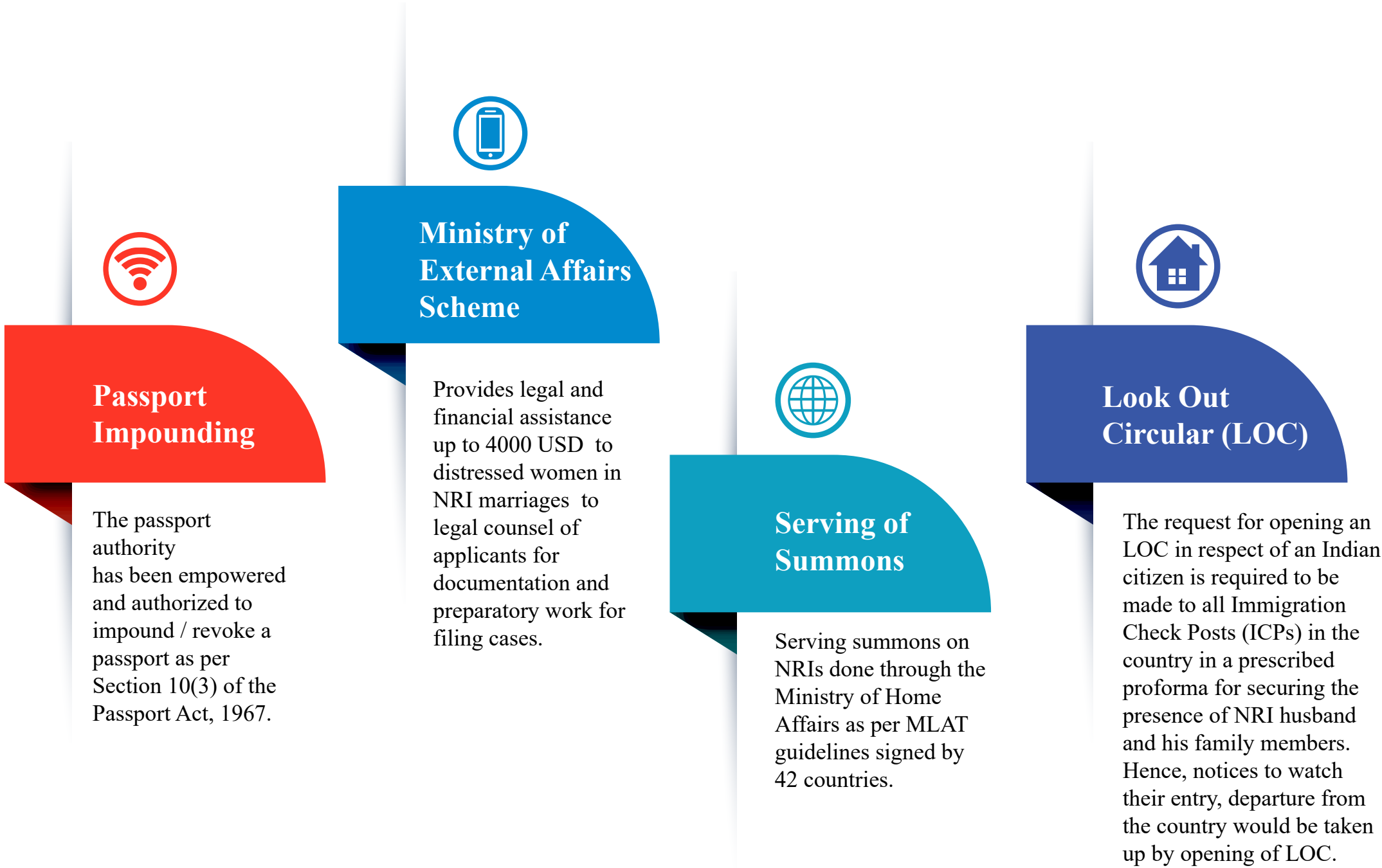
Typologies of Problems in NRI Marriages

The common issues / problems relating to Overseas Indian / NRI Marriages may include:

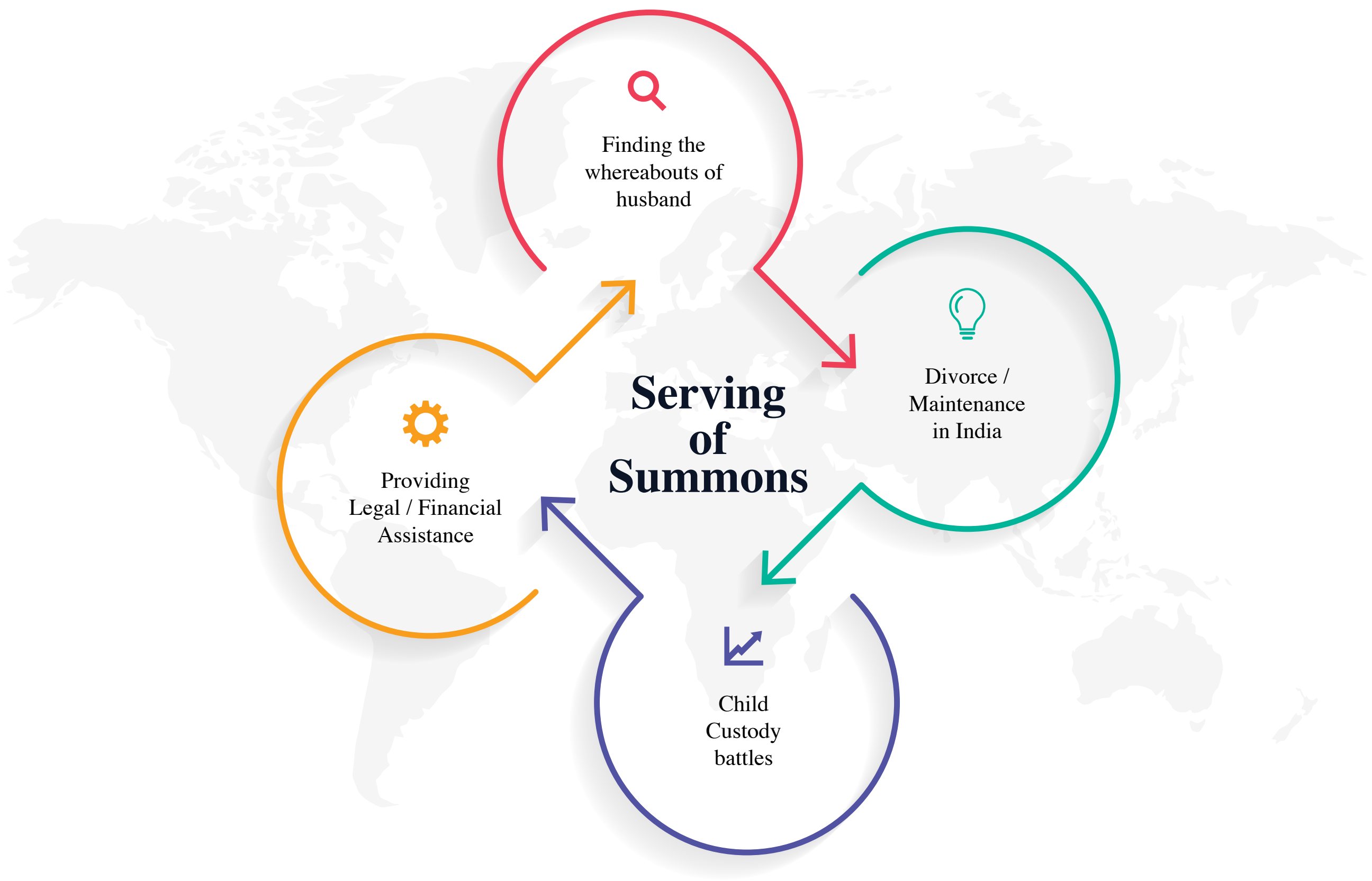
- 01 Abandonment of the spouse
- 02 Domestic violence
- 03 NRI husband already being married
- 04 Illicit extra-marital relationships
- 05 Denial of maintenance in the foreign country
- 06 Continued dowry demands (pre and post marriage)
- 07 Delays in the system for acquiring visa / immigration
- 08 Ex-parte divorces due to lenient legal system abroad
- 09 Experiencing denial of child custody
- 10 Pre-Marital Breach of Trust due to false information

Institutionalised Redressal Mechanism and Remedies for NRI marriages related complaints

Details of institutionalised mechanism adopted and remedies available to assist the affected women are captured below:



Challenges involved in NRI Marriages





Precautions – Dos and Don'ts

Based on experience, the NCW has outlined the following Do's and Don'ts for prospective brides and their parents in NRI marriages:-

Dos	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check and verify the NRI groom's personal information such as marital status, employment details, financial status, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women and their family members should not make any decision regarding marriage in haste and under pressure.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register the marriage in addition to its being solemnized as per religious requirements in India with adequate proof. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matrimony should not be considered as a passage to go abroad and avoid falling prey to any lucrative schemes to migrate to another country or promises of getting green card through marriage.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women should open a bank account in their exclusive name near their residence for use in case of any emergency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marriage should not be finalized without meeting the family or over long distance on phone or through e-mails.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep a list of contact details of neighbors, friends, relatives, husband's employer, police, ambulance and the concerned Indian embassy or High Commission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family members should not negotiate their daughter's marriage via a bureau, an agent or a middleman and trust them blindly.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leave photocopies / soft copies of all important documents including passport, visa, bank and property documents, marriage certificate, etc. and phone numbers with parents or other trustworthy people in India or aboard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matters should not be finalized in secrecy; the proposal should be published amongst the near and dear ones.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women and their family members should have regular and meaningful communication with the groom and his family over a longer period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women and their family members should not feel coerced into acceding to dowry or any other unreasonable demands made by or on behalf of their husbands in order to end their desertion. The concerned authorities should be informed immediately if they are being forced to do so.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equip the woman with professional / vocational qualifications and skills to be independent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Papers or legal documents for going abroad should not be forged / fabricated and women should not become a party to illegal acts under pressure, allurements or instigation from anyone.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equip the woman with the knowledge of the laws of the foreign country and the legal rights she has there, especially against any form of abuse or neglect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In case of any problem in the marriage, concerned authorities should be approached by women and their family members.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women and their family members should insist on a registered pre-nuptial agreement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women should not remain quiet, if faced with desertion or any other cruelty by husband and/or in-laws whether in India or abroad. They may approach authorities such as the Police, NRI Cell of the National Commission for Women, Embassies/Consulates and NGOs empanelled by our Missions abroad.

NRI Matrimonial Disputes: Some Successful Interventions of NCW

The Commission has, after being designated as the nodal agency in 2009, succeeded in providing support to a large number of aggrieved women in matters relating to NRI marriages. An illustrative list of some successful interventions is summed up below:-

In 2018, a complainant alleged that her husband had deserted her and their children and left for Kuwait, denying her the rights of a legally wedded wife. She mentioned that the respondent was declared a 'Proclaimed offender' by the High Court of Punjab and Haryana vide order dated 18.11.2017. The National Commission for Women wrote a letter on 13.02.2018 to the Ministry of External Affairs requesting impounding his passport. The passport was revoked on 14.12.2018. The Commission also took up the matter with the Indian Embassy in Kuwait informing them about the ongoing cases in Indian Courts. Later, on successful intervention of NCW, the respondent was detained at Mumbai CSMI Airport on 14.02.2019 and arrested by Jagraon Police.

In 2019, a complainant alleged that during her short stay in the USA, her husband had taken away her two years old daughter without informing her. Therefore, she sought the assistance of the Commission for obtaining the custody of her child. The Commission took up the matter with various authorities such as the Commissioner of Police, Surat City; Ministry of External Affairs and the Consulate General of India, Atlanta. With efforts of the Commission and after continuous coordination with different authorities, the complainant reached India with her daughter in 2020 safely.

In a case in 2019, the complainant was being forced by the respondent to a child custody consent agreement. The Commission took up the matter with the Embassy of India, Washington DC. The empanelled NGO ASHA for Women worked on it and on 25th September, 2019, a cheque of 3000 USD was forwarded to the complainant from the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF).

In 2022, a complainant was subjected to extreme domestic violence by her husband who later abandoned her in India and left for Saudi Arabia with no support. The Commission took up the matter with the Embassy of India, Saudi Arabia and the Senior Superintendent of Police, Muzaffarpur, Bihar. An FIR was lodged and a NBW was issued against the Respondent. The Respondent tried to make a secret trip to Mumbai in March, 2024. An instant telephonic communication with the Police Authorities led to the arrest of the Respondent.

Awareness-raising Initiatives by NCW

As the adage goes information is power, NCW has organized a number of programmes to disseminate information on the subject. Some of the photographs depicting the efforts of NCW for generating awareness on the issue are reproduced below:

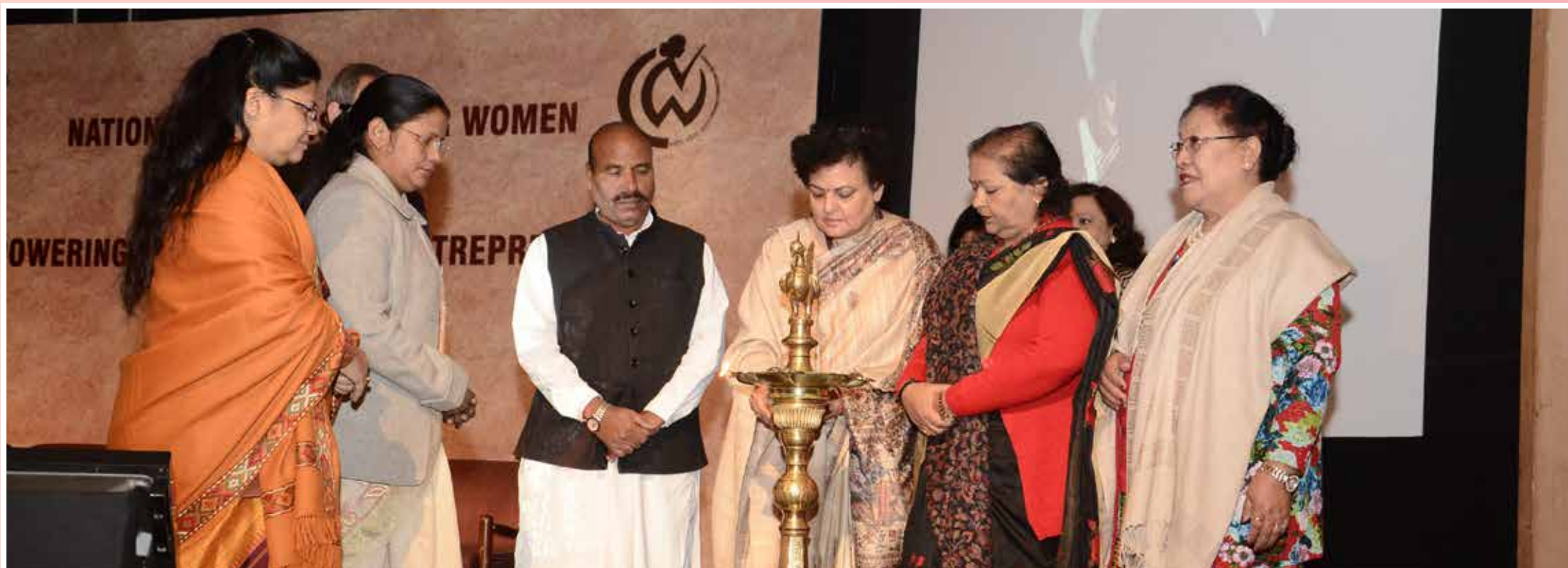




Foundation Day NCW 2018



2019 : Empowering Women through Entrepreneurship



2020: Equality: Realizing Women's Rights for an Equal Future



2021: Felicitation of Women COVID Warriors





2022: She is a change maker



2023: Sashakt Nari Sashakt Bharat







2024: Sankalp Se Siddhi







Gender Equality: NCW's Efforts for Legislative Reform



Introduction

Undertaking a systematic review of the existing laws and synthesization of evidence to improve their effectiveness for promoting gender equality keeping in view the evolving context is one of the important aspects of good governance.

Review of the existing laws governing women is one of the core functions of the

National Commission for Women (NCW) under Section 10(1)(d) of the National Commission for Women Act, 1990. Accordingly, every year, the Commission undertakes review of the existing legal and constitutional provisions for women and recommends suitable amendments to bridge any lacunas or shortcomings in various legislations. The Commission has been undertaking such reviews since 1992. Brief details of some of the remarkable work undertaken by the Commission over the past decade to ensure equality for women through legislative reforms are recapitulated below:-

Laws Reviewed by NCW


S.No.	Laws reviewed by National Commission for Women	Gist of recommendations
1	Amendments to the Indian Succession Act, 1925 (2014-15)	1) Extension of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 to the States of Goa and Puducherry to empower widows. 2) To consider Christian women as full owners of property.
2	Amendments to Muslim Law (Shariat) (2014-15)	1) Codification of Muslim Law to give equal share of property to widows and daughters. 2) The application of Muslim Personal Law to be extended to agricultural land.
3	Laws governing Child Care Leave (2015-16)	1) Uniform application of law to private formal /informal sectors / organized/ unorganized sectors. 2) Making Crèche facilities available at workplace.
4	The Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (2016-17)	1) Extend the scope of "sexual harassment" to include sexual cyber crimes based on gender connotations, committed on female employees in workplaces. 2) The number of members in the Internal Committee may be kept in odd number to facilitate a majority view/ decision. 3) The Act should provide for retention of at least 1/3rd of the members of the previous Internal Committee every time a new committee is notified to preserve working knowledge and continuity.
5	Women's Property Rights (2018-19)	1) Sub-section (2) of Section 14 of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 be amended to provide women's absolute ownership. 2) Section 15 and 16 of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, that allows the property of Hindu married women to be devolved on heirs of her husband instead of her heirs be amended.
6	Guardianship Rights for Mothers (2019-20)	1) Mothers to be brought at par with fathers as 'Natural Guardians'. Section 6 of the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956 be amended by adding 'and/or' to state that the father and/or the mother are the natural guardians of a Hindu minor. 2) The definition of 'Natural Guardian' be expanded. 3) Use of the word 'illegitimate' in reference to a child born outside the wedlock be omitted under Section 6, Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956 and any other provision / law.

S.No.	Laws reviewed by National Commission for Women	Gist of recommendations
7	Laws relating Women Migrant Worker (2020-21)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Women workers be included within the scope of Migrant Workers' to entitle them for social security schemes. 2) Better co-ordination between states may be ensured for inter-state movement of women migrant workers. 3) Registration procedure for migrant workers be streamlined. 4) Create a National Database of Migrant Workers. 5) Domestic workers be included as 'workers' under the legislation.
8	Female Labour Force Participation Rate (2020-21)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Promote secondary education and beyond for women. 2) Promote vocational training for increasing occupational choices of women. 3) Promote entrepreneurship development and Right to assets be granted to women. 4) Support and protect migrant workers with better access to social security. 5) Capture non-paid work of women and provision of State sponsored care facilities.
9	"Cyber Crime against Women- Do Indecent Representation of Women's Act, IT Act and other prevailing laws suffice?" (2020-21)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Amend Section 354D, IPC. 2) Insert a new provision on Chapter XVI of the Indian Penal Code as S.354E on Image-based Sexual Abuse (or revenge porn). 3) Insert a new clause (d) in sub-section (1) of Section 505, IPC to punish misogynistic hate speech. 4) Insert a new explanation after section 509, IPC – Word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman. 5) Insert a new provision in relation to 'preservation letter' as Rule 3(2)(ba) of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.
10	"Review of Criminal Law – Improvement in Status of Women" (2021-22)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Retain exception II under Section 375 IPC. The decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Independent Thought v. Union of India regarding increasing the age of consent for married women to 18 years from 15 years be codified in the Indian Penal Code. 2) The standard of consent under S. 375, IPC should include that consent must be unequivocal, voluntary, directly communicated, without threat or fear of injury or consequences, and given by a woman not below 18 years of age, not intoxicated, without intellectual / psychosocial disability.
11	The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 and the 2017 Amendment (2021-22)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) In case of adoption, the upper age limit of the child be increased to 10 years to avail maternity leave, which is currently not allowed. 2) Make maternity leave period for adoptive and biological mothers the same i.e., 26 weeks. 3) The limitation period under section 12(2)(b) of the Act for filing an appeal by a woman deprived of maternity benefit be extended to at least 120 days from the current period of 60 days.
12	Review of "The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005" (2021-22)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Protection Officers (POs) be appointed with relevant experience, be given rigorous training, assigned no other duties, and provided proper infrastructure and support staff. 2) A list of certified professional counsellors be drawn up by POs and made available to the Court when required. 3) Instead of filing an execution case for recovery each time payment is not made, an application for recovery be allowed in the existing petition.

S.No.	Laws reviewed by National Commission for Women	Gist of recommendations
13	The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 and the 2017 Amendment (2022-23)	A centralized system of reporting and monitoring complaints regarding denial of maternity benefits be developed to facilitate fast-track redressal or grievances.
14	The Family Courts Act, 1984 (2022-23)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The tenure of the counsellor be fixed to ensure that aggrieved woman / person does not have to retell the entire story to each newly appointed counsellor every time. 2) Pre-Litigation Mediation be included as a mandatory step before approaching Family Courts. 3) A Family Court Manual be developed to prescribe a uniform structure and provide flexibility for making changes.
15	"Rights of Muslim Women: Reviewing Muslim Personal Law" (2023-24)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Muslim personal law be codified subsuming the existing Acts of Muslim Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937, Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act, 1939 and Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986 and bring it under the ambit of Article 13 of the Constitution of India. 2) A standard Nikahnama fixing rights and liabilities for both the husband and wife be made part of the draft law. 3) Remove ambiguity in application of secular laws to Muslim women where they are beneficial to them, particularly, Prohibition of Child Marriages Act, 2006 and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012.
16.	Rights of women under Property Law	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Amend Section 15 of Hindu Succession Act to devolve the property of women to her parents and relatives instead of her husband's relatives. 2) The Term "Streedhan" be defined under the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961. 3) Uniform Civil Code may be adopted.







Spreading Legal Awareness – ‘Vidhan Se Samadhan’



Introduction

The Latin maxim “Ignorantia Facti Excusat” and “Ignorantia Juris Non Excusat” which means that ignorance of fact could be a valid ground but ignorance of law is no excuse is an integral part of the Indian legal jurisprudence both in terms of the provisions of the extent of criminal laws as well as the law laid down by the apex court in a plethora of judgments. Accordingly, the law places a responsibility on the individual to know and follow the law. The above referred legal principle underlines the responsibility of every individual to be aware of the law, her legal rights and obligations. The lack of such awareness cannot come to their rescue.

Crime against women

Crimes against women, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, trafficking, cruelty by family members, abductions, assaults, and rapes, etc. continue to hog the Indian media headlines almost every day. NCRB Report, 2022 has recorded a substantial escalation in crimes against women. As per this Report, the number of such crimes increased from 3,71,503 in 2020 to 4,45,256 in 2022.

Imperatives of Legal Knowledge

Knowledge of law enables women to assert their rights, seek help when required and contributes to societal efforts to combat gender-based violence effectively. Understanding available legal protections and constitutional and legal rights is crucial for prevention of injustice. Such knowledge also leads to empowerment of women which in turn also ensures gender equality and promotes social justice. Lack of legal knowledge, on the other hand, prevents individuals, especially women from effectively accessing the legal system and justice.



Launch Program Vidhan Se Samadhan at Vigyan Bhanvan, New Delhi

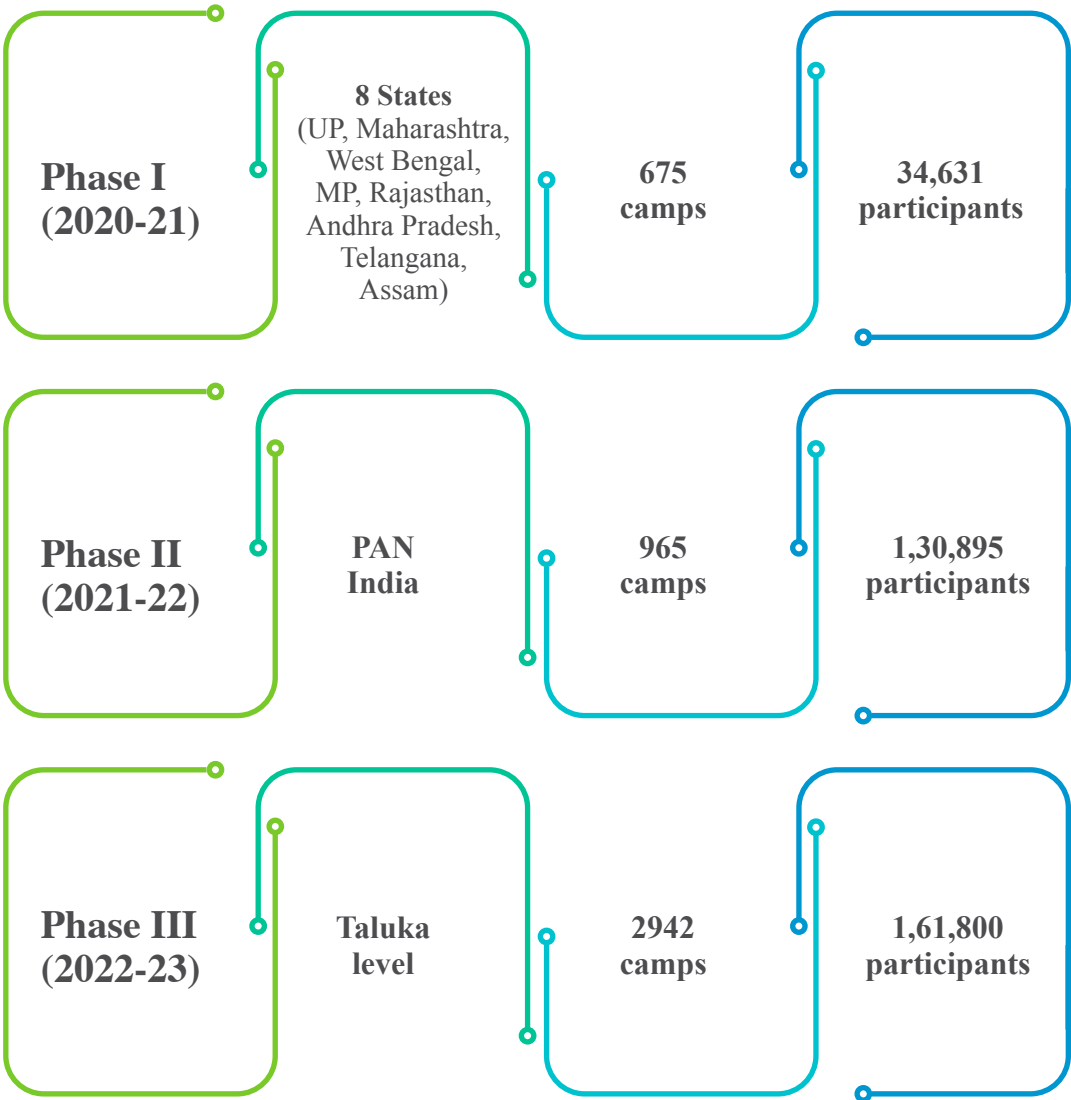
In India, a fairly large section of the society especially the women are not conversant with the pertinent law, their rights and entitlements. This underpins the need for imparting knowledge specifically tailored to address the legal needs and challenges faced by women through educational initiatives, community outreach programs, legal aid services, and awareness campaigns, etc.

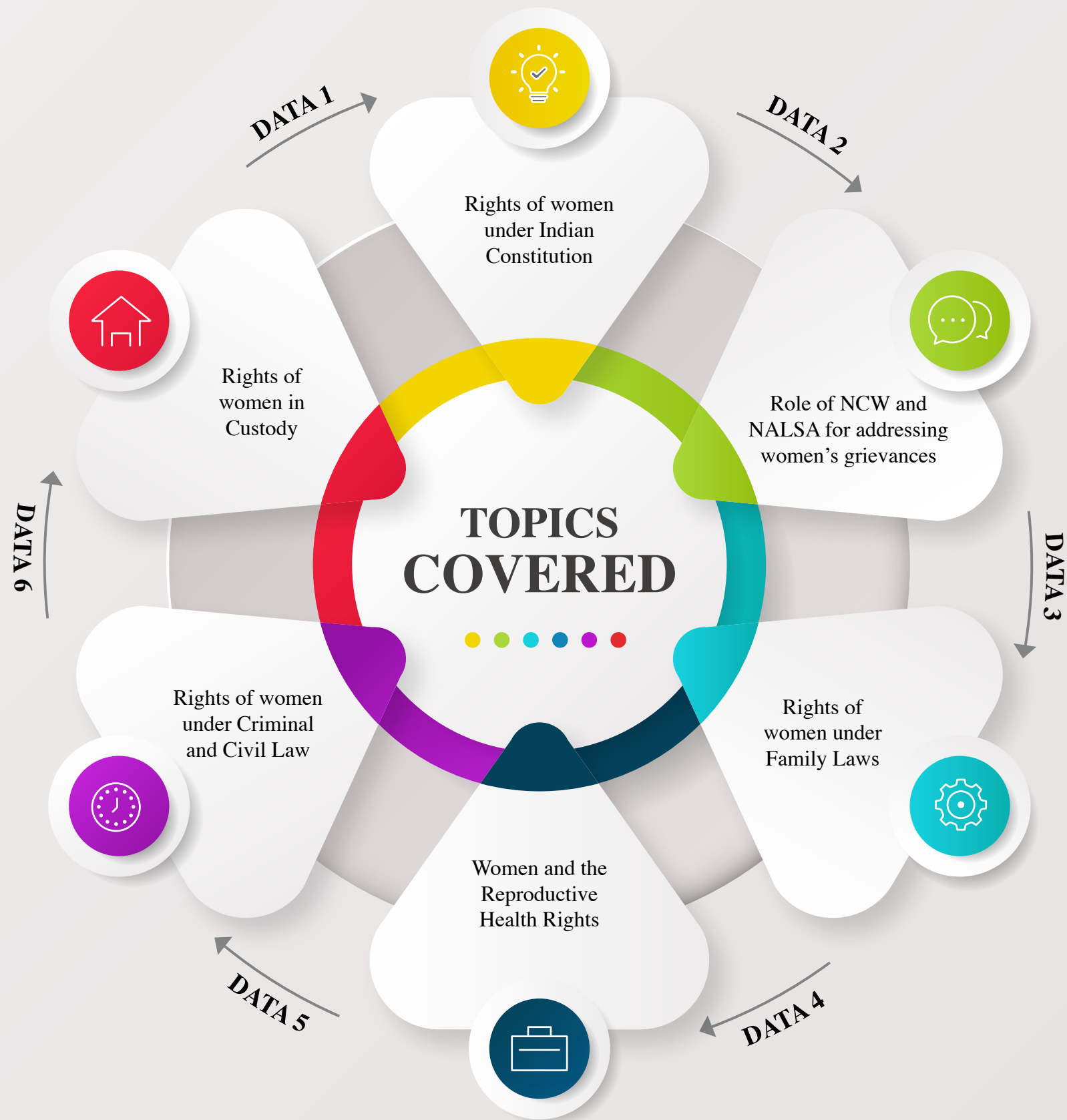
Collaboration with NALSA

For addressing the gap, the National Commission for Women collaborated with the National Legal Services Authority to spread legal awareness amongst women at grassroots level across the country. The details of some of these initiatives, their objectives and targets are summed up below.



Legal Awareness Programmes From 2020- 2023





Participation in Program



Vidhaan Se Samadhan

To take the initiative of increased awareness forward, the National Commission for Women and the National Legal Services Authority launched “Vidhaan se Samadhaan,” a legal awareness program targeting women at the block level, on 9th November 2023 in the august presence of Hon’ble Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, Chief Justice of India

The program covering 1495 blocks aims to empower women legally and identify 2-3 women per block who can be further trained and emerge as the local champions for the program.

New Mobile Application - Her Legal Guide

During the same program, the National Commission for Women also launched a Mobile Application for women named “Her Legal Guide”. The App is a compilation of all women related regulations, legislations and helplines that would now be readily available to users.



| Hon. CJI addressing the gathering

Gender Sensitization – An Inclusive Approach



Introduction

The terms "sex" and "gender" are often used interchangeably but these are two different concepts. While sex is a biological term, gender is a social construct based on expected and sanctioned behaviors set by society. Gender is more than a binary of man and woman and comprises a spectrum of gender identities commonly referred to as 'gender diversity.' Inculcating the acceptance and appreciation of this diversity amongst the general population, is what constitutes 'gender sensitization.' The specific focus is on the process of making someone more empathetic towards people of other genders and involves working to alter attitudes and behaviors towards gender. It encourages contemplation of one's own world view and the validity of one's assumptions about the world.

Gender Equality in the Indian Constitution

The Constitution of India unequivocally mandates gender equality. Articles 14, 15, 16 and 39 of the Indian Constitution are some of the important articles that pertain to equality among all regardless of gender.

- **Article 14** ensures that every Indian citizen is given equal treatment before the law and that equality is not denied on the basis of race, caste, class, religion, gender, etc.

- **Article 15** ensures no discrimination between people on the basis of caste, class, religion, gender, etc.
- **Article 16** guarantees equal opportunities to all the citizens of India in matters relating to appointment of public sector jobs and stipulates that there should be no discrimination for such employment on the basis of religion, gender, caste, etc.
- **Article 39** of the Directive Principles directly addresses gender equality. In particular, in terms of **Article 39(a)**, all citizens, male and female, are entitled to the same minimum standard of living and **Article 39(d)** stipulates equal pay for equal work to both men and women.
- **Article 42** mandates that the State shall make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief.

Gender equality is crucial not because the Constitution mandates it but the reverse is true, the Constitution mandates it because it is crucial.

Awareness on gender related issues

The National Commission for Women has been engaged in spreading awareness on gender issues through various programs. These include sensitization of children of classes 9th to 12th in Kendriya Vidyalayas, Police personnel and the judiciary.



Rationale for Gender Sensitization

Police Officers

The first gate of the criminal justice system which an affected person faces and the offender runs away from is the ordinary Thana or Police Station. Therefore, the most important step to improve our system is to work on this first gate. We have to ensure that Police welcome those who approach it without fear, apathy, snide comments or favor towards the perpetrators. Having to face apathy is a double jeopardy for affected women, first at the hands of the perpetrators and again at the hands of the authorities who are mandated to protect their interests. Just like

any other segment of the population, the mindsets of Police too are influenced by gender stereotypes prevailing in a patriarchal society. The stereotypes lead to certain standard patterns of Police response such as:

- *Rape is victim-precipitated through provocative dress, going out after dark, visiting lonely places, etc.*
- *Trivialization, De-criminalization and legitimization of domestic violence complaints*
- *Initial complaint is disbelieved and action is contemplated only after a value judgment*
- *Discouraging complainants from pursuing complaints.*



Judiciary

The Indian Judiciary plays a pivotal role in interpreting and applying the laws related to the gender equality. In a country where gender disparity is common as a result of the patriarchal mindset, the judiciary plays an important role in filling the gender gap and shaping a future where every woman enjoys the full spectrum of rights, unfettered by societal constraints. There are many landmark judgments delivered by the Supreme Court that have profoundly influenced and elevated the rights of women in India. Gist of some of these judgments is recapitulated below:-

1. CB Muthamma v. Union of India and Others (1979) [Justices VR Krishna Iyer and PN Shingal]

The Indian Foreign Service (Conduct and Discipline) Rules, 1961 was in violation of constitutional rights which restricted women officers in certain foreign posts and disentitled them to promotion on marriage.

2. Air India v. Nergesh Mirza (1981) [Justices Syed Murtaza Fazlali, A Varadarajan, AP Sen]

The policy of forcing air hostesses to resign upon marriage was arbitrary and unreasonable.

3. State of Maharashtra and Another v. Madhukar Narayan Mardikar (1991) [Justices K Jagannatha Shetty and AM Ahmadi]

Even a woman of easy virtue is entitled to privacy and no one can invade her privacy and her evidence cannot be thrown overboard.

4. Neera Mathur v. Life Insurance Corporation of India and Another (1991) [Justices K Jagannath Shetty and Yogeshwar Dayal]

The declaration from female candidate regarding the last date of menstruation and the existence of her pregnancy at the time of joining service is a violation of the employee's modesty/ self-respect to evade maternity benefits.

5. Vishaka and Others v. State of Rajasthan and Others (1997) [Chief Justice JS Verma, Justices Sujata V Manohar and BN Kirpal]

The sexual harassment of women at workplace violated the fundamental rights of working women. The judgment emphasized the need for legal safeguards against workplace harassment. These guidelines led to the enactment of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act (POSH Act), 2013.

6. Githa Hariharan and Another v. Reserve Bank of India and Another (1999) [Chief Justice AS Anand, Justices M Srinivasan and UC Banerjee]

The mother, like the father, should be considered a natural guardian, and her rights in this regard should not be subordinated solely based on gender.

7. Mohd Ahmed Khan v. Shah Bano Begum & Ors (1985) [Chief Justice YV Chandrachud and Justices Ranganath Misra, DA Desai, O Chinnappa and ES Venkataramaiah]

The Judgement upheld the right to alimony for Muslim women and ruled that the husband's liability does not end with the expiration of iddat

8. Suchita Srivastava and Another v. Chandigarh Administration (2009) [Chief Justice KG Balakrishnan and Justices BS Chauhan and P Sathasivam]

It upheld the fundamental right of women to make decisions about their reproductive health, including the choice to terminate a pregnancy.

9. Joseph Shine v. Union of India (2018) [Chief Justice Dipak Misra and Justices Rohinton Nariman, AM Khanwilkar, DY Chandrachud and Indu Malhotra]

Section 497 IPC (Adultery) violated a woman's right to dignity and denuded the woman from making choices.

10. Lata Singh v. State of Uttar Pradesh and Another (2006) [Justices Ashok Bhan and MarkandeyKatju]

Everyone has the right to marry and a definite right to choose their life partner under the ambit of Article 21 of the Constitution.

11. Secretary, Ministry of Defence v. Babita Puniya and Others (2020) [Justices DY Chandrachud and Ajay Rastogi]

Permanent Commission granted to women in Army and absolute exclusion of women from command assignments is against Article 14 of the Constitution and unjustified.

12. Hotel Priya, A Proprietorship v. State of Maharashtra and Others (2022) [Justices KM Joseph and S Ravindra Bhat]

The condition imposing a gender cap on the number of women or men who can perform in orchestras and bands in licensed bars, is unconstitutional.

13. Prabha Tyagi v. Kamlesh Tyagi (2022) [Justices MR Shah and BV Nagarathna]

Every woman in a domestic relationship has a right to reside in the shared household of her husband even after his death.

14. Arunachala Gounder (Dead) by LRs v. Ponnusamy and Others (2022) [Justices S Abdul Nazeer and Krishna Murari]

The daughter would be entitled to inherit self-acquired property or property obtained in the partition of a coparcenary or a family property in preference to other collaterals.



Tiruvanthpuram July 2024

15. State of Jharkhand v. Shailendra Kumar Rai and Others (2022) [Justices DY Chandrachud and Hima Kohli]

Performing two-finger test on a victim of rape or penetrative sexual assault will amount to misconduct. The Court ordered a review of the curriculum in medical schools with a view to ensuring that the two-finger test was not prescribed as one of the procedures to be adopted while examining survivors of sexual assault and rape.



Punjab Police Academy at Phillaur in June 2017



BSF Training Campus at Chhawla camp at Delhi in March 2024



16. Deepika Singh v. Central Administrative Tribunal (2022) [Justices DY Chandrachud and AS Bopanna]

Woman's statutory right to avail maternity leave cannot be taken away for the reason that she had availed child care leave earlier for her non-biological kids.

17. Akella Lalitha vs Konda Rao and Others (2022) [Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and Krishna Murari]

Mother being the only natural guardian of the child has the right to decide the surname of the child, as also give the child up for adoption.

18. Principal Secretary Health and Family Welfare Department, Delhi NCT Government and Another (2022) [Justices DY Chandrachud, AS Bopanna, and JB Pardiwala]

Termination of pregnancy beyond 20 weeks and upto 24 weeks cannot be denied to a woman merely because she is unmarried.

19. Aureliano Fernandes v. State of Goa and Others (2023) [Justices AS Bopanna and Hima Kohli]

The state functionaries, public authorities, private undertakings, organizations and institutions are duty bound to implement the POSH Act in letter and spirit. It was brought to the notice of the Court that as per a survey conducted by a national newspaper, out of 30 national sports federations in the country, 16 did not have an Internal Committee (IC) till then.

20. Handbook “Combating Gender Stereotypes”

Supreme Court in August 2023 has issued a Handbook “Combating Gender Stereotypes” that lists misogynistic language to be avoided in court rulings and draws attention to the impact of gender stereotypes on verdicts.

The National Commission for Women and Gender Sensitization of Police

Being frontline functionaries, the police are expected to respond in an empathetic and sensitive manner. There is a need to develop skillsets and attitudes for dealing with cases of violence against women more effectively.

NCW has also been instrumental in organizing a number of Workshops/ Seminars/ Trainings on gender sensitization regularly for the police, judiciary and all those

directly or indirectly responsible for administration of justice. Gender Sensitization Programs for law enforcement machinery aims to build capacities on legislations, policies concerning women as well as bringing about attitudinal and behavioral changes while dealing with women complainants and matters related to crimes against women.

The workshops organized by NCW dealt with emerging issues such as handling cyber crime cases, Forensic Training, etc.

NCW in collaboration with BPR&D is also running 5-day intensive gender sensitization programs for police officers across the country. 34 such programs have been organized at pan India level in association with Police Academies / CDTIs and approximately 1031 police officials have been trained till date. This project has been extended further till 2025 and Forensic Training Program for Police Personnel has been included in the scope in addition to gender sensitization to enhance their capabilities to deal with crimes against women more effectively.

Gender Sensitization Training for BSF Troops deployed for UN Mission to Congo

NCW has specifically designed and conducted training programs for 16th and 17th battalions of BSF who are deployed for UN Mission to the Republic of Congo. So far around 500 personnel have been trained.

Other Initiatives by NCW

- In order to create gender sensitivity, it is imperative to reach out to young minds through the formal education system i.e. the academic, the curriculum, the legal frame work and the human resources. NCW initiative ‘Catch them Young- Gender Sensitization and Legal Awareness Programme’ is being run in collaboration with Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan at pan India level for students of class IX to XII. The project is being replicated for Army Public Schools for conducting Training of Trainers program.
- A module on Gender Sensitization has been developed which presents a compilation of information on gender awareness, bringing forward the distinction between sex and gender whilst defining other gender related terminology.

It is hoped that NCW’s efforts for gender sensitisation will bear fruits and we shall be able to develop an inclusive society.

Digital Shakti: Women in the Cyber Space



Digital revolution and its perilous dimensions

The inception of the internet has been a turning point in the history of mankind. The journey from the nascent technology of 1983 when the internet was invented to the unfolding of digital revolution during last one decade has been mesmerizing. It has virtually taken over every aspect of our daily life, be it the workplace, the music, travel, or communication. It provides unprecedented access to information, opportunities for connection, and avenues for innovation. Today, the innovative technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning and data analytics have become the lynchpin of operational efficiency. These have helped in streamlining processes, reduced costs and also helped in arriving at optimal decisions based on data analysis. Newer technologies such as block chain have enhanced both the transparency and security fostering trust in the process.

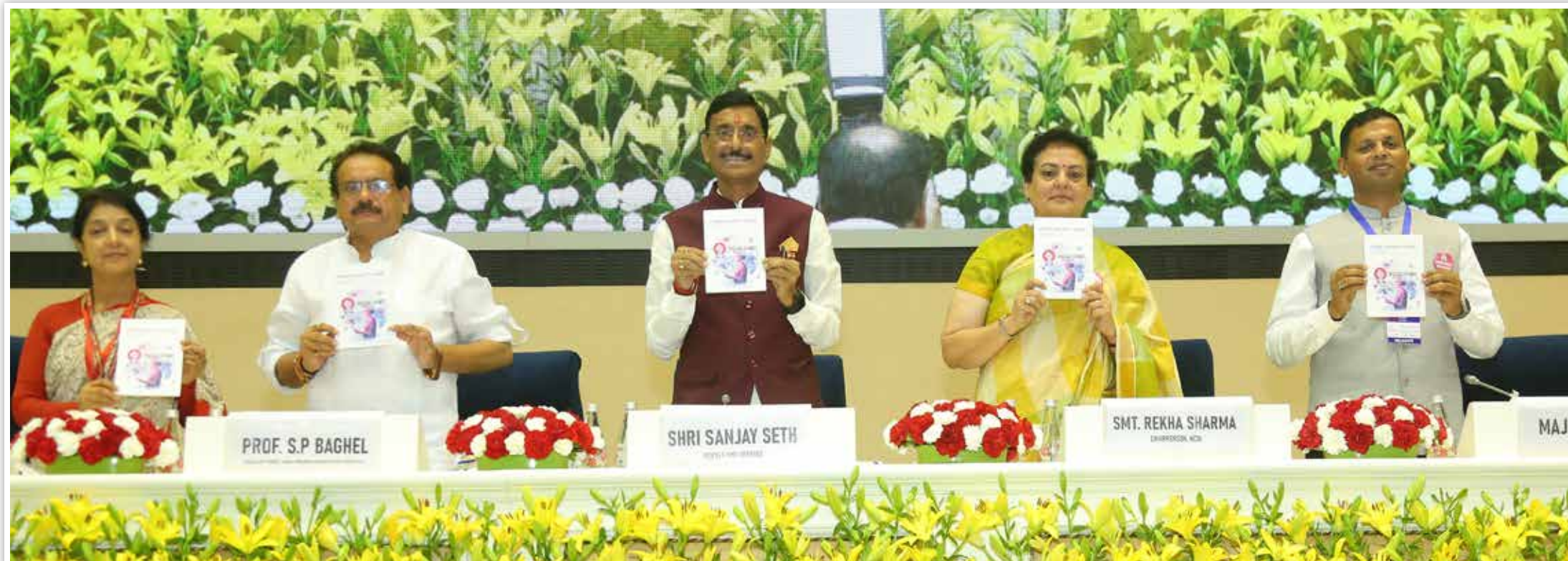
Perilous effects of Digital Revolution

Navigating the digital landscape, however, has its own perils as it leaves behind digital footprints that expose the users to various risks. These, inter alia, pertain to data security, privacy, content manipulation, addiction, fake accounts and

anonymity. For women, these risks are often amplified, making them particularly vulnerable to cybercrimes. The anonymity offered by the internet has emboldened malicious elements to exploit, harass, and target women online and even offline. From cyber-stalking and trolling to more severe forms of online violence, the digital world can sometimes become a perilous place. This highlights the urgent need for comprehensive digital literacy and safety programs specifically tailored for women ensuring that they can navigate the internet confidently and securely.

Genesis of Digital Shakti

Recognizing the pressing need for an initiative for protecting and empowering women in cyberspace, the National Commission for Women (NCW) launched the Digital Shakti campaign in June 2018. This nationwide project sought to raise awareness among women about cyber safety, equipping them with the tools and knowledge to protect them online. The campaign focuses on educating women about reporting and redressal mechanisms; data privacy and equips them to use technology for their benefit. Over 4,50,000 women across India have learned vital cyber safety tips and strategies through Digital Shakti. By building resilience and awareness, Digital Shakti has continued to empower women to stand up against cyber crimes and reclaim their digital spaces. The second and third phases of the program were launched on and, respectively.



Launch of Digital Shakti Phase 5.0

Digital Shakti 4.0: A New Phase of Empowerment

The fourth phase of Digital Shakti, launched recently, marks a significant milestone in this ongoing journey. This phase aims to further enhance women's digital skills and awareness, equipping them to combat any illegal or inappropriate activity online. Launched in collaboration with the Cyber Peace Foundation and Meta, Digital Shakti 4.0 is set to impact one million women and girls across India through hybrid workshops.

At the launch event of Digital Shakti 4.0, Smt Rekha Sharma, Chairperson of NCW, recapitulated details of the Commission's continuous efforts to empower women. She noted, "This new phase will prove to be a milestone in ensuring safe cyber spaces for women. Digital Shakti has been accelerating digital participation of women and girls by training them to use technology to their advantage and to keep themselves safe online."

Making Internet a Safer Space

The launch event featured an interactive panel discussion on "Safe Spaces Online: Combatting Cyber-enabled Human Trafficking & Other Forms of Online Violence." Experts from various fields shared insights on tackling online safety issues and highlighted the importance of a multi-faceted approach to protect women online. Participants included Padma Shri Sunitha Krishnan, Advocate Pavan Duggal, and senior officials from the NCW and law enforcement agencies.

Digital Shakti's comprehensive approach involves not only generating awareness and education but also providing practical support through a resource center developed during the third phase. This center provides crucial information on reporting mechanisms and supports women in navigating cybercrime incidents.

Real-life Stories of the Impact of Digital Shakti

The impact of Digital Shakti is best understood through the stories of the women it has touched. One participant, Rina, a college student from a small town, shared how the program transformed her approach to the internet. "Through Digital Shakti 4.0, we gained insights into staying safe online. We got a better understanding of how the internet works and how we can maintain our security and privacy while using it. It was a great learning experience for all of us, and I believe this knowledge will be really helpful as we navigate the online world," she said.

This and other stories reflect the essence of Digital Shakti - empowering women to become proud, resilient, and thriving netizens. The initiative has not only educated women about online safety but also inspired them to leverage digital tools for their growth and empowerment.



Seminar of Cyber Safety & Digital Empowerment



Consultation on challenges posed by Artificial Intelligence and Deepfakes



Seminar on Cyber Awareness in Leh

Looking Ahead

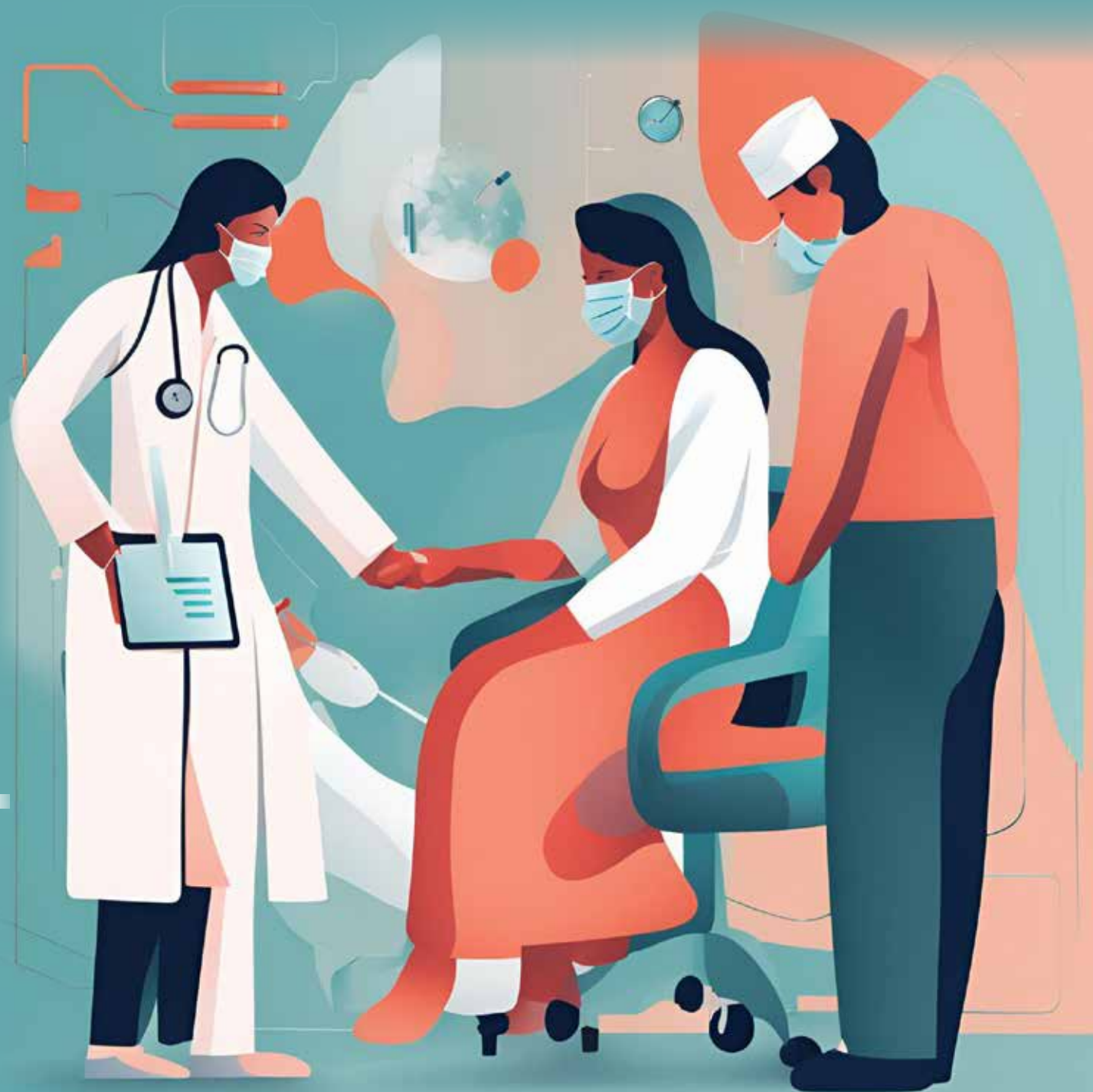
As Digital Shakti continues to evolve, its mission remains clear to create a gender-just internet where women and girls can participate freely and safely. With the support of organizations such as the Cyber Peace Foundation and Meta, and the unwavering commitment of the NCW, Digital Shakti is paving the way for a safer, more inclusive digital future for women in India.

In a world where the digital realm is increasingly intertwined with our daily lives, initiatives such as Digital Shakti are not just beneficial, they are essential for ensuring the safety of women operating in digital spaces. By equipping women with the knowledge and tools to navigate the internet safely, NCW is building a stronger, more resilient community ready to face the challenges of the digital age.



Launch of Digital Shakti Program in 2018

COVID-19 – Overcoming Challenges



Introduction

The outbreak of the devastating COVID-19 pandemic affected the humanity across the globe in multifarious ways. The unprecedented challenges that the humanity encountered during COVID-19 period made it a horrifying time, marked by widespread fear, loss and disruption. Both the individuals and governments were forced to make difficult choices between life and livelihood. India was no exception to it. Initially, without any approved protocols for tackling COVID-19, preventive and mitigating measures appeared to be the only option. The unprecedented challenges also placed a lot of pressure on the vulnerable populations.

The Government of India initiated several steps to contain the spread of this deadly virus early. Non-pharmaceutical interventions such as lock downs and social distancing were the only known measures to control the spread of the virus and mitigate human suffering. When these measures did not suffice the government had to impose lock down, which while containing the virus to some extent, gave rise to completely new problems such as managing large scale movement of migrant workers to their native places, addressing the needs of vulnerable women in violent domestic relationships and the needs of senior citizens who were unable to access basic necessities of life, etc.

The National Commission for Women, the apex Statutory Body working for women empowerment in the country stepped in with several interventions to safeguard the dignity and fundamental rights of all migrants especially the women and girls. Ensuring women's safety, availability of food, shelter and healthcare became a matter of serious concern as the women were the most adversely affected, as in any crises.

Advisory to Ministries and State Governments

To begin with, the Commission issued an Advisory on 10.4.2020 to ten key Ministries and Chief Secretaries of all States and Union Territories to address the needs of women migrants in India during the lock down particularly with regard to their health, food, shelter/accommodation, safety and security including protection from gender-based violence, etc.

WhatsApp Help-line and Email Id for Emergency Response

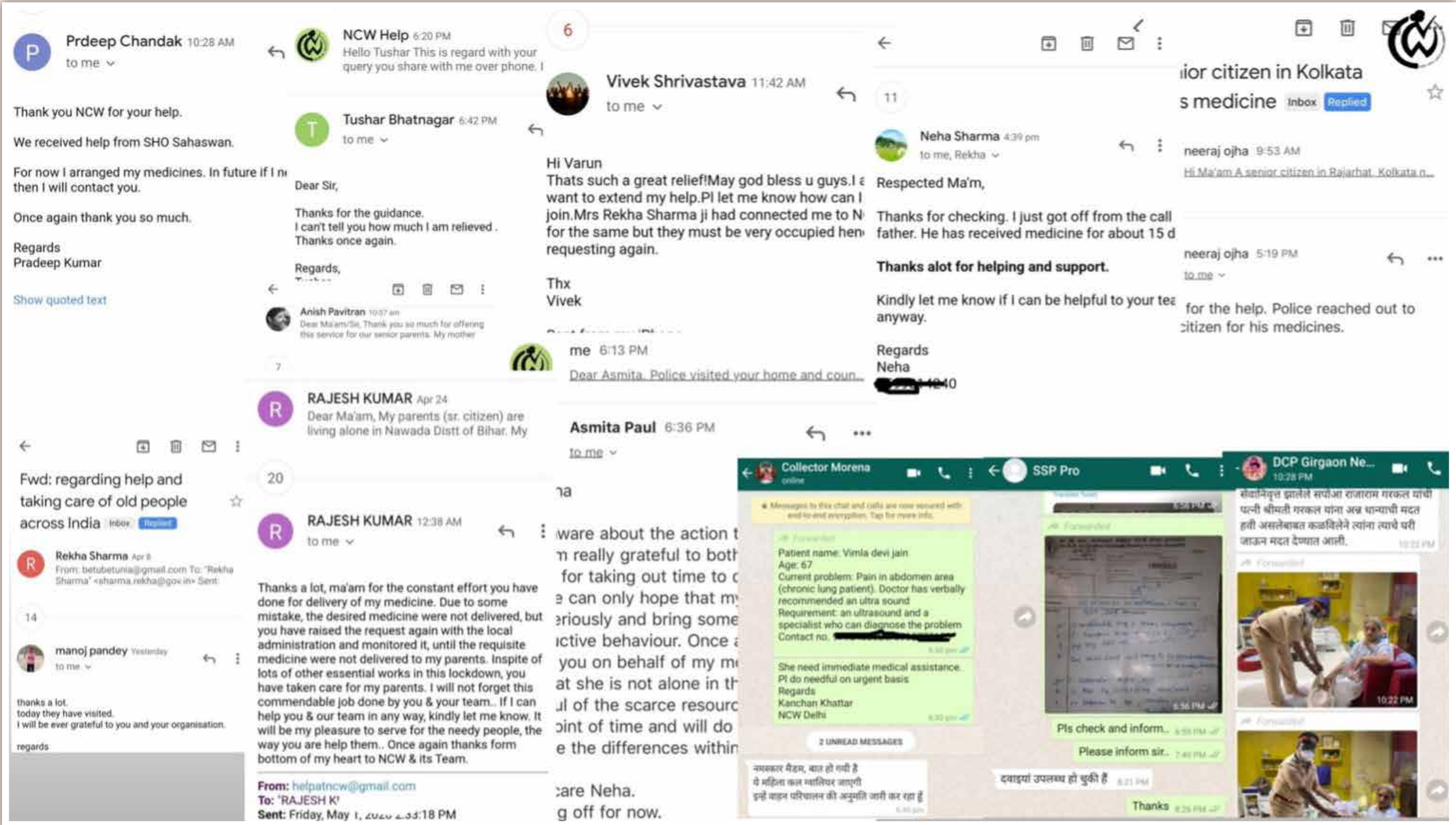
In the aftermath of the COVID-19 tragedy, the instances of domestic violence against women showed a marked increase during the lock down. This was mainly due to the fact that women got trapped inside their homes and had no recourse to redressal of any kind when subjected to domestic violence. Considering that such women

were confined at home along with their abusers and had difficulty in registering complaints, a WhatsApp helpline number 7217735372 was started on April 10, 2020 as an emergency response measure to deal with the situation. Complaints were immediately escalated to the concerned authorities including State Police and other administrative wings of the government via emails and WhatsApp. In matters requiring urgent intervention, the State Police authorities were also contacted telephonically or through email for providing immediate assistance.



Assistance to Senior Citizens

NCW took special care to provide assistance to senior citizens during the duration of COVID-19. Some of the testimonials for this are reproduced below:



The snapshots of the conversations reproduced above testify the personal interest taken by the staff of NCW in resolving issues, often leveraging their own contacts within the administration to provide relief to citizens. The Commission had also constituted a Special Task Force on April 4, 2020 to help senior citizens living alone or away from their families for addressing their medical and ration related concerns. A dedicated email ID was also created for the purpose and the Commission's teams coordinated with the Police and other authorities across the country to ensure that the requests were acted upon. The initiative continued till June 8, 2020.

Mitigating COVID-19 impact on Women in Prisons

The concerns of women inmates in prisons were discussed with the State Police heads through video conferencing. Letters were also sent to Director General and Inspector General of Prisons of all States on April 22, 2020 advising them to take immediate action on various observations and recommendations to improve the living conditions in women wards/barracks in the prisons to mitigate the concerns of

hygiene, cleanliness and safety. As a follow up of the Advisory sent earlier, a Virtual Meeting with DGs/IGs of States was also arranged on May 11, 2020. It is a matter of great satisfaction that as a result of the proactive steps taken by the Commission a total of 1039 women were released on interim bail and parole.

Help-line for Pregnant Women

बड़ी पहल : राष्ट्रीय महिला आयोग ने गर्भवती महिलाओं के लिए जारी किया हेल्पलाइन नंबर

कोरोना महामारी के बीच गर्भवती महिलाओं को तुर्त मिलेगी मदद, इस WhatsApp नंबर पर करना होगा मेसेज

Mary Kam QJ @sharmarekha
Any expectant mother from across the country who is facing difficulty in accessing medical aid can write to @ncwindia at helpatncw@gmail.com or WhatsApp them at 9354954224 for assistance. Reach out, NCW is there to help you #HappyToHelp

Ajay Deshpande @ajaydeshpande
The #HappyToHelp task-force for senior citizens is a great initiative by National Commission for Women(NCW), Ministry of Women and Child Development. Reach out to them at helpatncw@gmail.com @NCWindia

National Commission for Women (NCW) LAUNCHES 24x7 helpline number for women facing sexual violence, harassment - check all details here

कोविड काल में गर्भवती महिलाओं की मदद करेगा हेल्पलाइन नंबर

राष्ट्रीय महिला आयोग ने इस कोरोना महामारी में गर्भवती महिलाओं को सहाय्य पहुंचाने के लिए हेल्पलाइन नंबर जारी किया है।

कोरोना महामारी के बीच गर्भवती महिलाओं को तुर्त मिलेगी मदद, इस WhatsApp नंबर पर करना होगा मेसेज

Updated | Thu, 29 Apr 2021 07:28 PM (+IST)

NCW writes to Chief Secretaries of All States urging them to take measures to close gender gap in vaccination

Taking cognizance of a media report which highlights low uptake of COVID-19 jab among women, the National Commission for Women has written Chief Secretaries of all States and Union territories urging them to take measures to close the gender gap in vaccination. The letter also mentions that there is need to ensure quality health services so that more women are vaccinated safely.

In the letter, National Commission for Women said that many women's health needs is not considered seriously as compared to men. They do not visit outside the home except for emergency for vaccination. The Commission asked that women during the pregnancy care given as much help to get effective and safe service of any sick member of the family. A copy of the letter has also been sent to Health Secretaries of all states.

राष्ट्रीय महिला आयोग ने गर्भवती महिलाओं की मदद के लिए जारी किया चॉटसपेप हेल्पलाइन नंबर

राष्ट्रीय महिला आयोग ने गर्भवती महिलाओं को अलग-अलग प्रकार की मदद के लिए एक सहायक हेल्पलाइन नंबर शुरू किया है।

Priyanka Choudhary Raine @PriyankaCRaina
Any expectant mother from across the country who is facing difficulty in accessing medical aid can write to @NCWindia at helpatncw@gmail.com or WhatsApp them at 9354954224 for assistance. Reach out, NCW is there to help you #HappyToHelp @sharmarekha

Monika Bera @monikabera.TT
Any expectant mother from across the country who is facing difficulty in accessing medical aid can write to @NCWindia at helpatncw@gmail.com or WhatsApp them at 9354954224 for assistance. Reach out, NCW is there to help you #HappyToHelp

@ncwindia
Any expectant mother from across the country who is facing difficulty in accessing medical aid can write to @NCWindia at helpatncw@gmail.com or WhatsApp them at 9354954224 for assistance. Reach out, NCW is there to help you #HappyToHelp

सीधे हुई महिलाओं के लिए 24 घंटे काम करने वाली नेशनल हेल्पलाइन, ज़रूर इसके बारे में सबकुछ जानें

राष्ट्रीय महिला आयोग ने इस कोरोना महामारी में गर्भवती महिलाओं को सहाय्य पहुंचाने के लिए हेल्पलाइन नंबर जारी किया है।

राष्ट्रीय महिला आयोग ने गर्भवती महिलाओं को अलग-अलग प्रकार की मदद के लिए एक सहायक हेल्पलाइन नंबर शुरू किया है।

Any expectant mother from across the country who is facing difficulty in accessing medical aid can write to @NCWindia at helpatncw@gmail.com or WhatsApp them at 9354954224 for assistance. Reach out, NCW is there to help you #HappyToHelp

Generating Awareness – Special Media Campaigns

The Commission, in accordance with a carefully crafted media plan, launched a special campaign to generate awareness about the legal provisions for protection of women and also disseminated information about the process to be followed for seeking intervention of the government authorities through various help lines and obtaining any other institutional support. On March 25, 2020, the Commission released advertisements on the themes of Domestic Violence against Women and Sexual Harassment at Workplace. These were broadcast across the government owned and private TV channels in several regional languages including All India Radio and private FM radio channels.

NCW's Helpline Service for Medical Services

Recognizing that during the second wave of the pandemic in India pregnant women faced difficulties in accessing medical facilities, the Commission launched a 24x7 message-only helpline service in addition to the email service that was already operational, along with a WhatsApp helpline number for providing

medical assistance to expectant mothers from across the country. Expectant mothers from all parts of India also reached out to the Commission through its helpline number 9354954224 which remained functional 24 hours, seven days a week. A dedicated Team worked round the clock to assist in providing emergency medical help such as securing hospital beds, ICU beds, oxygen cylinders, medicine and food, to expectant mothers. The Commission enlisted the support of volunteer doctors who provided online consultation to expectant mothers as and when requests were received.

Help-line for Women in Distress

A Helpline 7827-170-170 was also launched to provide 24x7 online support to women in distress through referral, by linking them with appropriate authorities such as police, hospitals, District Legal Services Authority and psychological counselors, etc.

The response of the NCW and the efficient handling of matters during COVID-19 crises is a tribute to its staff and leadership who had to be on their feet and think laterally to come up with just in time solutions for the unforeseen problems faced by vulnerable women and senior citizens during the lock down.



Virtual meeting with senior police officers



Crisis to Confidence: Navigating Support with NCW Helpline



Introduction

In times of crisis, the National Commission for Women's 24x7 Helpline 7827170170 has become a pillar of support for women across India. Launched to address the immediate and urgent needs of women facing violence and discrimination, the helpline stands as a testament to India's commitment to women's rights and empowerment.

A dependable 24 x 7 Service

Since its inception on 27th of July 2021, the helpline has provided a viable alternative to women who find themselves in difficult circumstances but are unable to speak out for fear of societal judgment. The helpline offers a compassionate and understanding ear, ensuring that every call is met with warmth and empathy.

The helpline is manned 24X7 by trained personnel including psychological counselors capable of providing comprehensive guidance on legal rights and psychological support, helping women navigate the complex journey from crisis to confidence.

The helpline handles thousands of grievances and inquiries on a daily basis and has demonstrated, over time, that it can be counted upon by women in distress by offering a confidential and supportive environment, enabling women to voice their experiences and seek the assistance they need without fear of judgment.

Shaping the narrative of women's rights

In addition to being an immediate emergency response system in crisis situations, it actively shapes the narrative of women's rights in India, responding to cases of domestic violence, mental stress, cybercrimes, and more. Its comprehensive approach includes partnerships with local NGOs, legal aid organizations, and government agencies, ensuring women receive holistic support tailored to their specific needs. By facilitating access to shelters, counseling services, legal aid, and medical assistance, the NCW Helpline bridges the gap between women in need and critical support services.

This initiative embodies NCW's and India's dedication to ensuring the rights and dignity of women. By providing a safe, supportive space for women to seek help, and equipping them with the necessary knowledge and resources, the helpline plays a crucial role in advancing gender equality and justice.

The Genesis of the NCW Helpline

The helpline was initially a response to women trapped in difficult situations during the COVID-19 crises which forced women to stay behind closed doors with the perpetrators of violence against them. The urgency of the situation highlighted the critical role of digital platforms in reaching and assisting women in distress.

What began as a basic call center module, needed capacity enhancement as time passed and more and more women began accessing the service. Recognizing the need for enhanced capabilities, the advanced modules were added to the helpline in 2022, introducing comprehensive support, information dissemination, and referral services.

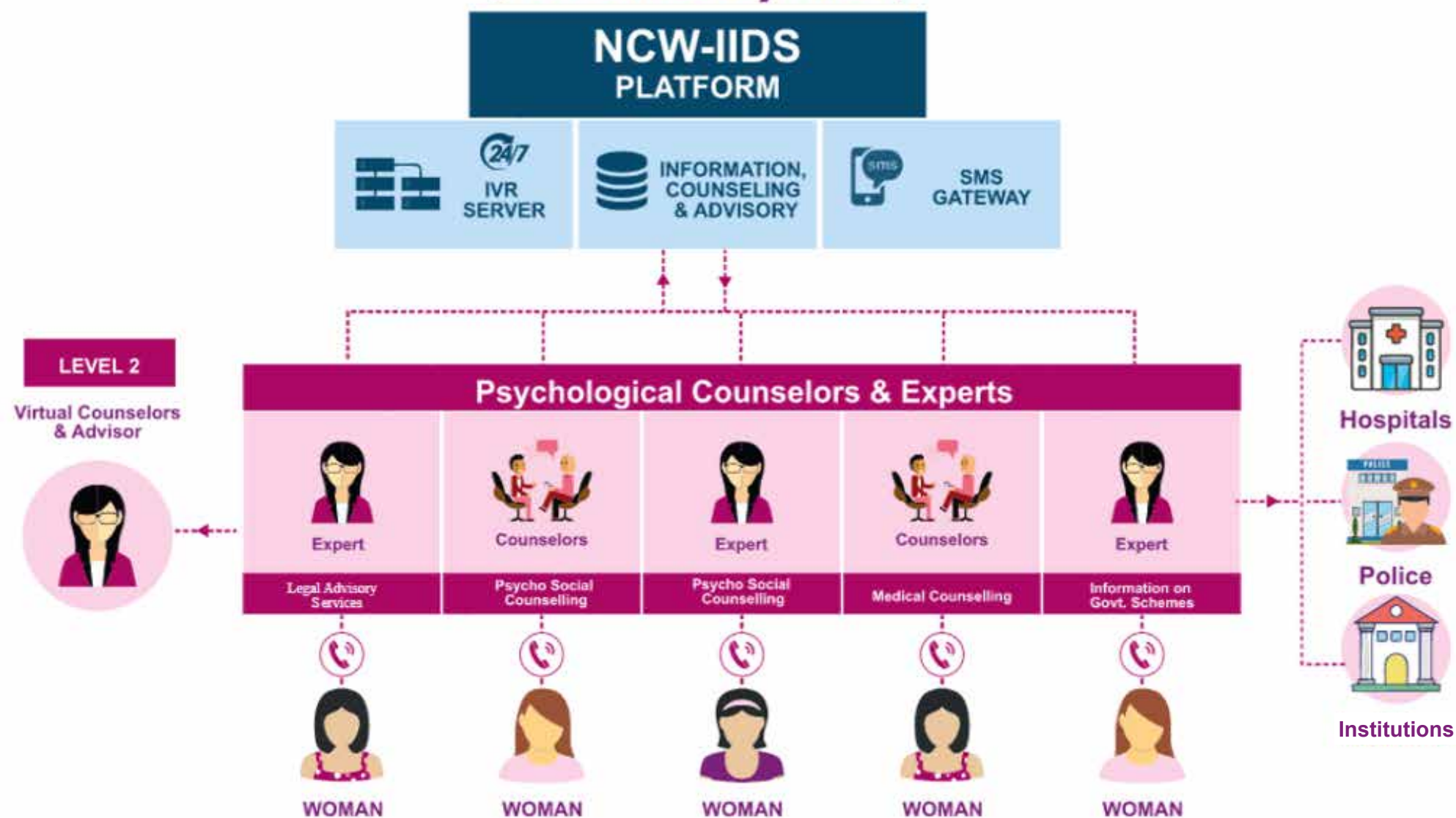
Objectives and Key Features

The NCW Helpline aims to safeguard and promote women's rights in India. It provides immediate assistance, support, and redressal through its digital platform. Key features include:

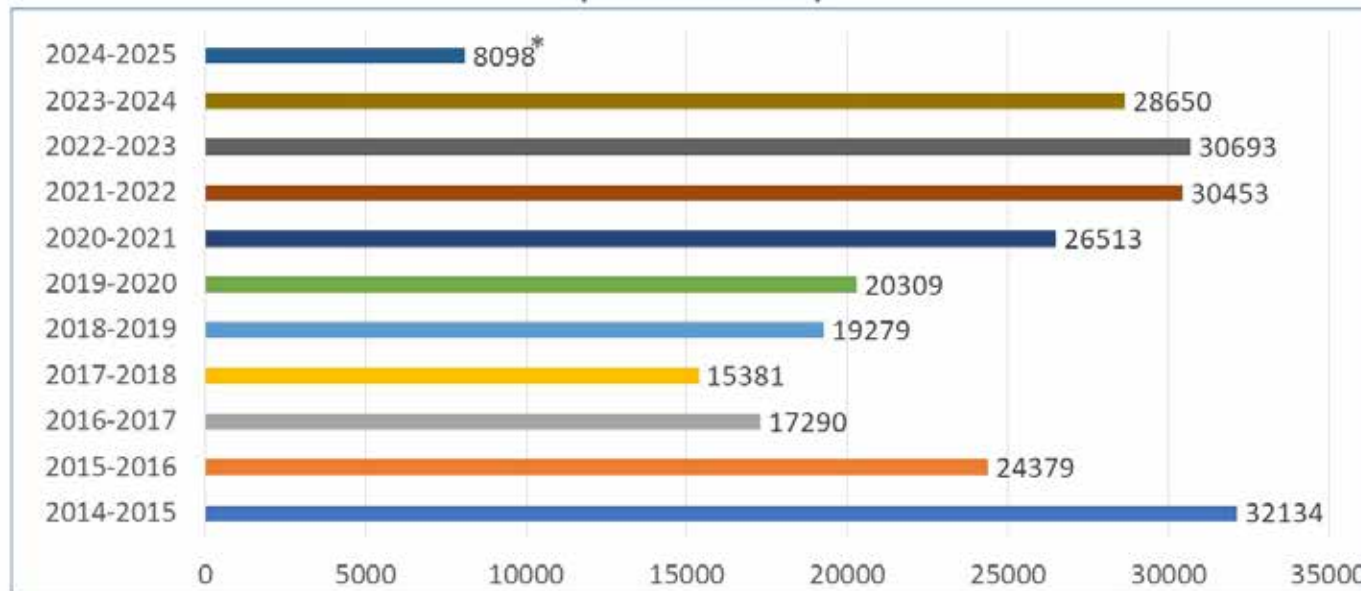
- Digital Platform for Women Affected by Violence:** Ensuring accessibility and assistance through a dedicated digital presence.
- Immediate Assistance:** Offering prompt help to women in distress, addressing complaints related to discrimination, violence, or harassment.
- Crisis Intervention:** Intervening in critical situations, ensuring necessary action is taken.
- Immediate Psychological Counseling:** Providing a space for women to share concerns and receive timely emotional support.
- Referral Services:** Linking with appropriate authorities to facilitate seamless referrals.
- Information Hub:** Offering details about support services, legal provisions, and resources available to women.
- Comprehensive Assistance:** Providing a range of services from immediate crisis intervention to long-term support.
- Legal Support:** Offering information on legal rights and facilitating legal aid.
- 24/7 Availability:** Trained staff is available round the clock, equipped to handle a wide spectrum of issues.
- Support Services and Government Agencies:** Disseminating information about support services and government initiatives.

NCW WOMEN HELP LINE

(Powered by IIDS)



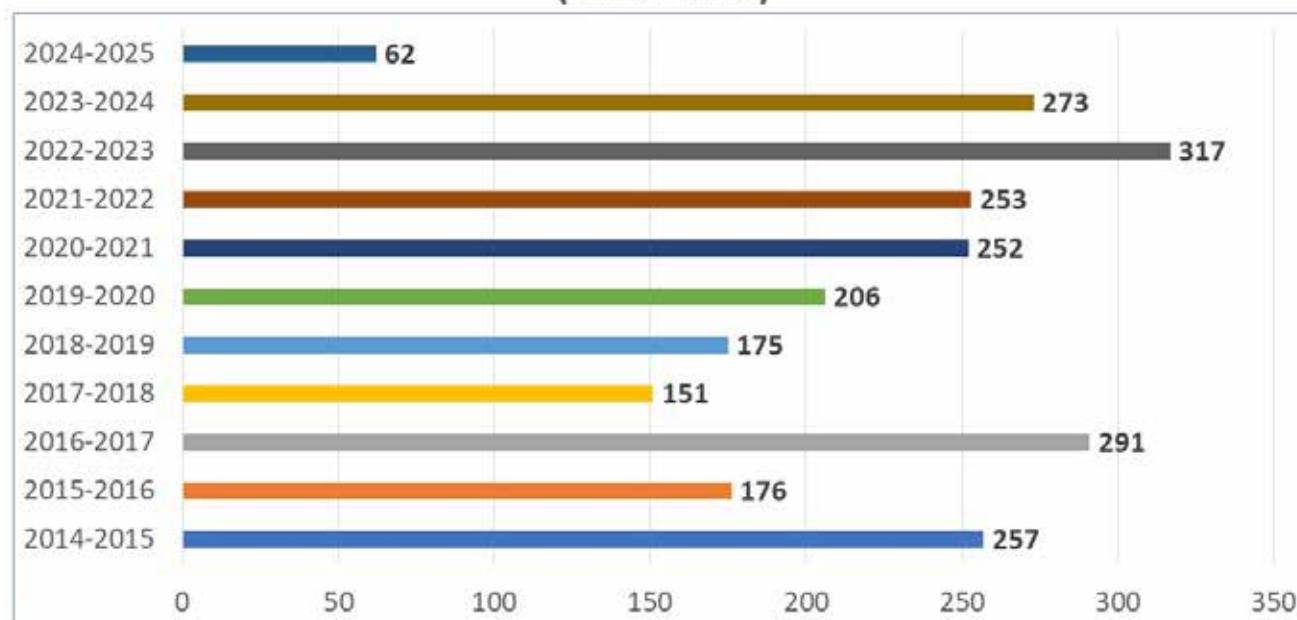
Complaints Handled during last 10 years (Total 253179)



Number of Mahila Jan Sunwai conducted during last 8 years : 132

* as on 14th July, 2024

Suo-Motu case taken during last 10 years (Total 2413)



Inquiry Committees constituted during last 10 years : 107

Confidentiality and anonymity are key strengths of the NCW helpline which have encouraged women from across the country to seek assistance without fear of judgment or retaliation.

Addressing a Myriad of Issues

The helpline addresses numerous issues affecting women across India, including:

- Rape/attempted rape
- Acid attacks
- Sexual assault
- Molestation
- Cyber crimes
- Dowry demands
- Harassment and violence
- Indecent representation
- Stalking/voyeurism
- Trafficking/prostitution
- Workplace harassment
- Domestic violence
- Police apathy
- Honor crimes
- Custody and divorce issues
- Sex-selective abortions
- Traditional practices derogatory to women (e.g., Sati, Devdasi, Witch Hunting)
- Psychological distress
- Free legal aid

Achievements of the NCW Helpline

Women and Entrepreneurship





Future Road Map

Target groups such as women in the dairy sector, women looking for a second innings in their careers after a hiatus of child bearing and rearing, women farmers in the backdrop of male migration and women's natural resource based livelihoods, which have already been addressed in the first round will be taken to the next level by addressing gaps in knowledge, skill, finance and market access. The Commission will leverage its reach with other departments to not only address these gaps but also develop SoPs to establish role models for women who would like to give wings to their dreams and aspirations!

Introduction

The word livelihood has been variously defined in literature but one of the most widely accepted definition is 'the means of securing the basic necessities (food, water, shelter and clothing) of life. However, we particularly like the now obsolete meaning given in the Cambridge Dictionary, 'the quality or state of being lively.' Both need to be taken together in order to understand that livelihood should not only be limited to procuring one's daily needs but also be a source of joy to the person employing these means. Fortunate indeed are people whose passion is also their profession. They not only earn their livelihoods but also remain lively while doing so!

Keeping this in mind, the National Commission for Women set out on its journey to empower women through building entrepreneurial capacities of target groups of women drawn from different walks of life. The initiative was rolled out in collaboration with reputed institutions such as the IIMs, EDII, State Training Institutes and Academia. What started tentatively during COVID as on-line entrepreneurship building through the IIMs found widespread appreciation and, therefore, it was decided to not only continue with the program but also increase its scope by roping in other organizations such as the EDII, with physical workshops for groups of women. These collaborations helped in dovetailing similar initiatives of other Ministries and departments of the Government including the MSME, Skill Development, Panchayati Raj, etc.

Milestones so far:

Program	Reach	Number of women trained
Promoting Entrepreneurship for Women at grassroots level	Pan India	5000
Digitally training aspiring women entrepreneurs	IIM Bangalore	2159
	IIM Jammu	250
	IIM Shillong	154
	IIM Kozhikode	119
Women Farmers		
Grand Total		7,682









SAHARA - Scheme for Ensuring Violence Free Homes



“Domestic violence breeds in the silence of fear, our solidarity can give it a voice.”

- Ms Rekha Sharma

Introduction

Domestic violence, a pattern of abusive behavior within relationships, is a grave societal issue with multiple adverse consequences for victims, particularly women. It encompasses different forms of abuse, including physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, and financial. This violence occurs irrespective of the gender, age, socio-economic status, or sexual orientation and can have devastating, long-lasting effects on victims' physical and mental well-being, as well as the children residing in domestic violence afflicted areas. In India, domestic violence against women is particularly pervasive due to entrenched socio-cultural factors such as patriarchy and the expectation of dowry, which is illegal and, therefore, demanded in the garb of wedding expenditure and gifts!

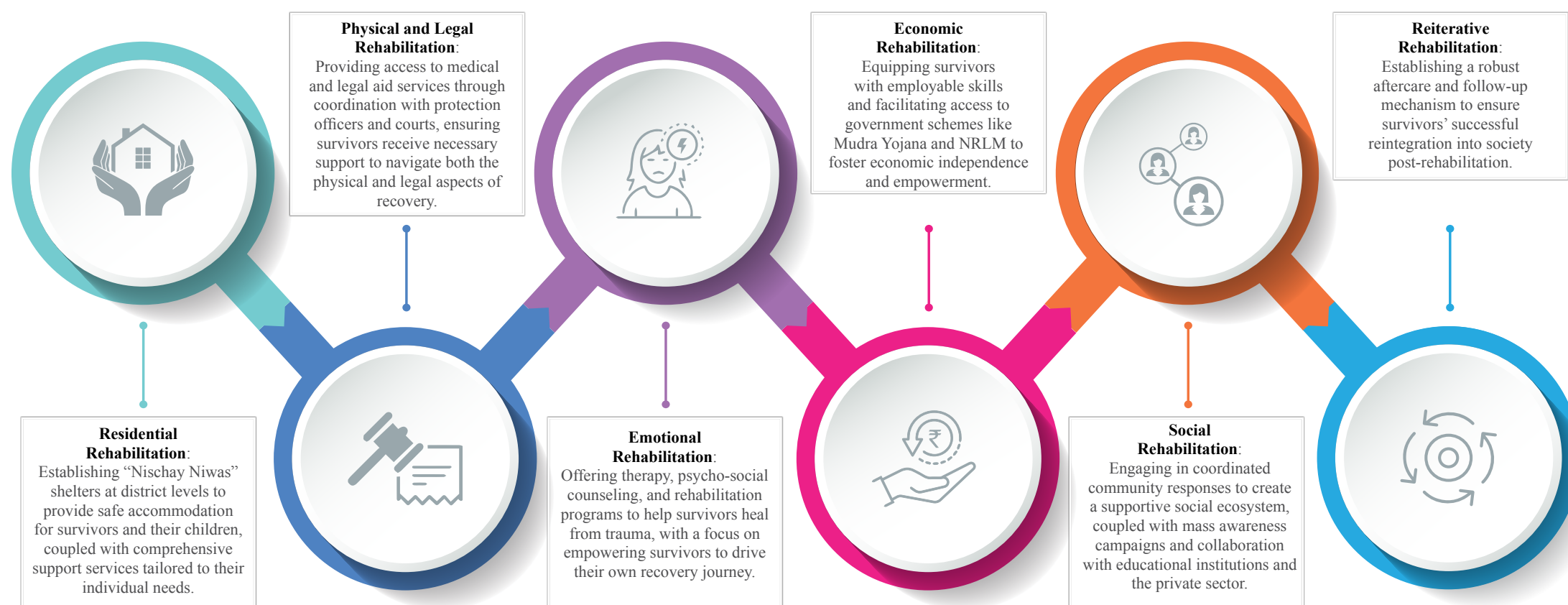
Domestic violence across different Strata

It is a myth that this scourge is prevalent mainly amongst the social and economically deprived sections of society. On the contrary, domestic violence is an outcome of deep seated patriarchy and the available data shows that women are subjected to it irrespective of the social strata they belong to. Despite legal frameworks such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, challenges persist in effectively implementing laws and providing support services to the affected women.

NCW's role in addressing the menace

Addressing domestic violence is one of the important functions of the National Commission for Women (NCW). The NCW continues to accord highest priority to address the menace for the following reasons:-

- Domestic violence often stems from unequal power dynamics between men and women. By combating violence against women, we want to take one step towards gender equality and challenge harmful gender norms and stereotypes. It inflicts severe physical, emotional, and psychological trauma on women who have to endure it but are unable to speak against it because of social norms



and taboos. Therefore, it becomes important for independent bodies such as the National Commission for Women to come forward and pull the victims out of their silence. Silent suffering impacts both physical and mental health and well-being of women.

- It not only disrupts women's education, employment, and economic independence but also acts as a hindrance in their full participation in the society and the economy. Addressing domestic violence at all levels is vital for building resilient communities and ensuring equal opportunities for women and their children. Children exposed to domestic violence face a myriad of negative outcomes, including behavioral issues and future perpetration or victimization. Protecting women from domestic violence safeguards the well-being and future prospects of these children. By intervening and supporting survivors, NCW breaks the cycle of violence, preventing its perpetuation within families and communities across generations.

Concerted action for addressing domestic violence

The global prevalence and impact of domestic violence against women underscore the urgent need for concerted action at local, national, and international levels. Efforts must focus on prevention, intervention, and support services to create a world where women can live free from violence and abuse.

Investing in rehabilitation efforts is essential for breaking the cycle of abuse, empowering survivors, and creating a safer, more equitable society for all. By prioritizing the prevention of domestic violence and supporting survivors, we can work towards a world where women can live free from the threat of violence and abuse. The prevalence of domestic violence in India, as reflected in the National Family Health Survey 5 (NFHS 5, 2019-2021), is a stark reminder of the urgent need for comprehensive interventions to support survivors.

SAHARA

To address this pressing issue, the National Commission for Women (NCW) is proposing a new SAHARA scheme" (SAHARA- **S**-Shelter, **A**-Advocacy, **H**-Healing, **A**-Access, **R**-Rehabilitation, **A**-Awareness)". The proposed scheme is the culmination of an exhaustive study of existing support structures for survivors of domestic violence across 83 districts in India. Aimed at ensuring holistic rehabilitation, the scheme targets not only the survivors but also their immediate family members and the broader community. The scheme's components encompass a spectrum of interventions designed to address the multifaceted needs of survivors that include:—

Residential Rehabilitation

Establishing "Nischay Niwas" shelters at district levels to provide safe accommodation for survivors and their children, coupled with comprehensive support services tailored to meet their individual needs.

Physical and Legal Rehabilitation

Providing access to medical and legal aid services through coordination with protection officers and courts, ensuring that survivors receive necessary support to navigate both the physical and legal aspects of recovery.

Emotional Rehabilitation

Offering therapy, psycho-social counseling, and rehabilitation programs to help survivors heal from trauma, with a focus on empowering survivors to drive their own recovery journey.

Economic Rehabilitation

Equipping survivors with employable skills and facilitating access to government schemes such as Mudra Yojana and NRLM to foster economic independence and empowerment.

Social Rehabilitation

Engaging in coordinated community responses to create a supportive social ecosystem, coupled with mass awareness campaigns and collaboration with educational institutions and the private sector.

Reiterative Rehabilitation

Establishing a robust aftercare and follow-up mechanism to ensure survivors' successful reintegration into the society post-rehabilitation.

The salient features of SAHARA scheme will include individualized rehabilitation tailored to survivors' unique needs; creation of a dedicated cadre of Rehabilitation Facilitators trained to support survivors at Nischay Niwas; and a network of Training Service Providers tasked with community-level awareness and capacity-building initiatives.

By prioritizing rehabilitation of survivors of domestic violence, the proposed scheme represents a significant step towards addressing this pervasive societal issue. With its comprehensive approach and focus on empowerment and community engagement, the scheme holds the promise of creating a safer and more supportive environment for survivors to National Commission for Women 125 resilience.

Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat



Young Girls visit institutes of eminence

The Commission hosted the visits of young girls (18 year and above) from various parts of the country to provide them exposure to the working of Government Institutions/ National Commissions as well as places of public interest and historical importance in India. These programs aim to provide an opportunity to these young girls to visit Institutions of eminence and importance to develop a better understanding of the socio-economic aspects, cultural ethos, language and diverse lifestyle of people from that region. This exchange program was in furtherance of our Hon’ble Prime Minister’s vision of “**Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat**”.



Details of visit organized

The Commission conducted visits of young girls from Northern Region, Western Region, Eastern Region, Southern Region and North Eastern Region under this Scheme in collaboration with State Commissions for Women during the Financial Year 2023-2024 as per details given below:

S.No	Destination	Students from States	Date
1	Shillong, Meghalaya North Eastern Region	Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand (10 Students) Northern Region	10th July-15th July, 2023
2	Chennai, Tamil Nadu Southern Region	Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Dadar & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu (10 Students) Western Region	18th- 22nd September, 2023
3	Mumbai, Maharashtra Western Region	Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, Sikkim (5 representatives from each State) Eastern Region	20th – 24th November, 2023
4	Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh Northern Region	Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala Puducherry, Lakshadweep (10 Students) Southern Region	5th – 9th February, 2024
5	New Delhi, Northern Region	Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura (6 Students) North Eastern Region	26th February – 1st March, 2024



Rise and Lead





Rise and Lead Workshops

The National Commission for Women successfully completed 25 Capacity Building Workshops pan India on “Rise and Lead: Young Women Pioneering Technology, Business, and Public Life.” Held in the capital cities of 25 states and union territories, these seminars targeted college-going girls, sparking interest and fostering leadership capabilities in technology, public life, and corporate decision-making.

Through insightful sessions on emerging technology trends such as AI and drone tech, and the intricacies of public and corporate leadership, the Commission empowered more

than 5700 young women to envision and embrace their future roles. Renowned experts shared valuable knowledge, igniting minds and enhancing decision-making skills.

Key Outcomes:

- 1. Increased awareness and interest in technology, public life, and corporate opportunities.
- 2. Enhanced leadership skills and decision-making capabilities.
- 3. Empowered and motivated participants ready to pursue leadership roles.







Cities and Women Safety - An Assessment



Introduction

Ensuring a safe environment for women and girls both in private and public spaces is a pre-requisite for overall social and economic development of any country. Factors such as gender, class, race, age, disability, sexual orientation, and religion have a definitive bearing on women's safety. Safety concerns manifest across a wide range of settings, including homes, markets, roads, transportation, workplaces, educational institutions. Many more concerns are imagined in the patriarchal norms and values that shape the behavior and attitude of both men and women.

Gender equality and fundamental human rights must cut across social, cultural and economic boundaries to ensure safety of women. However, despite constitutional provisions and gender-specific laws in place, there has been a significant rise in violence and crimes resulting in gender based discrimination and violence across various sections of society more specifically, in urban areas women often face violence and sexual harassment in public places due to many factors such as poor urban design and planning, inadequate public facilities including transport, policing and also regressive social attitudes. All forms of harassment including absence of public utilities, affects a woman's choice to work and her mobility.

Women Safety Audit

Women Safety Audit is a survey based study to evaluate the safety levels experienced by women in both public spaces and workplaces within the city, utilizing a combination of sample surveys and focused group discussions (FGDs). This research not only aims to identify factors contributing to inadequate safety but also to prepare a road map for creating safe inclusive urban spaces.

Safety concerns in public spaces significantly impede women's mobility, impacting their daily lives. Essentially, as women transition from lives primarily centered around the domestic sphere, their movement in public areas might be perceived as an act of defiance and non-conformity. Such a survey is helpful for the following reasons:-

- **Data-Driven Decision Making**

One of the most significant advantages of conducting a Women's Safety Audit is the compilation of reliable empirical data. By collecting data on incidents, locations, and risk factors, policymakers will be able to make informed decisions regarding resource allocation and intervention strategies.

- **Enhanced Policing and Surveillance**

The audit can help identify specific locations that require enhanced policing and surveillance. By concentrating resources in these high-risk areas, law enforcement agencies can combat offences against women more effectively.

- **Empowerment through Awareness**

It can enable them to take preventative measures and demand community change. The safety of women becomes a shared responsibility, resulting in group action.

- **Policy Formulation**

The audit's findings can be used as the basis for evidence-based policy formulation.

How was the survey conducted?

Women Safety Audit (WSA) had been taken up as an exploratory research using mixed method approach to assess the safety and security of women in both public spaces and workplaces, taking into account the perspectives of the public, as well as insights from government officials and departments.

The tools and methods used for the audit included Public Place survey, Observational Checklists for Public Places, Work Space Survey, Observational Checklists for Work Space, Key Informant Interview, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), Field Observation, and Literature Review. The survey was conducted with the help of Academic/Research Institutions who collected data from respondents on the Women Stay Safe App developed by Digital India Corporation for this purpose. The data was collected during 2023-2024.

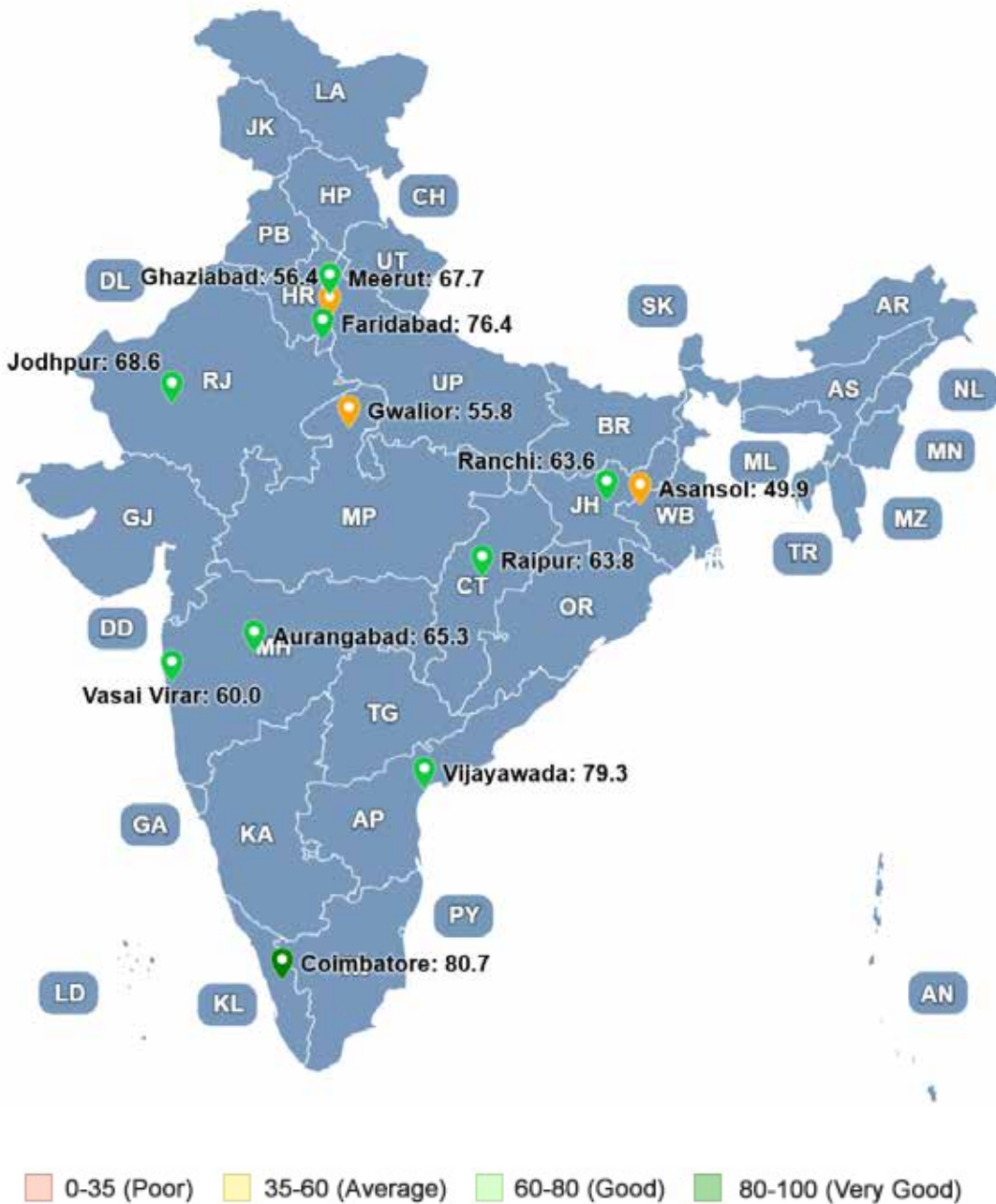
Methodology for Calculating City Safety Score

Women City Safety Score is based on the data variables categorized into three dimensions: Safe Public Places, Safe Workplaces, and City Preparedness. The creation of the Women City Safety Score involved three fundamental steps: Aggregation, Normalization, and the Women City Safety Score/Composite Index. In order to calculate, firstly, aggregation integrates various dimensions into a singular value, starting from the component level and progressing systematically to encompass dimensions and ultimately, the entire city. This process synthesizes diverse data inputs, enabling a holistic evaluation of city safety conditions.

Secondly, normalization serves as an initial standardization step, ensuring equitable comparisons across a range of indicators. Typically scaled between 0 and 1, normalization facilitates integration of disparate data-sets into a cohesive framework, thereby enhancing the accuracy of safety assessments.

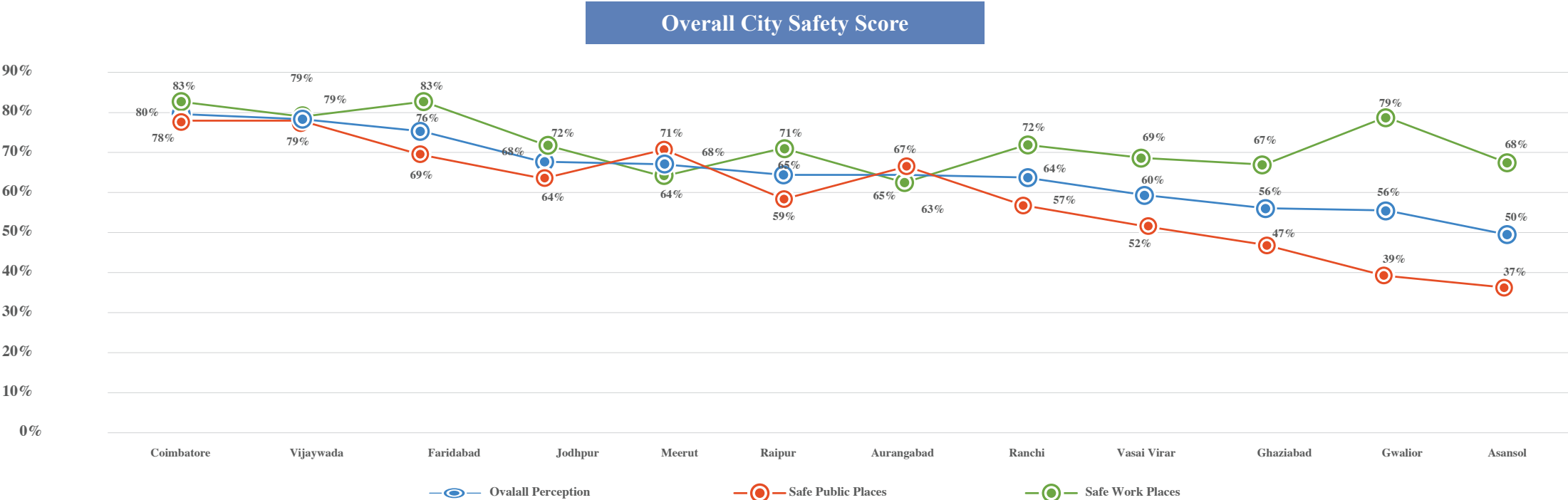
The City Safety Score, representing the overall composite index, emerges as a critical outcome of this process and offers stakeholders a comprehensive perspective on the safety

City Safety Scores for 12 Cities Surveyed

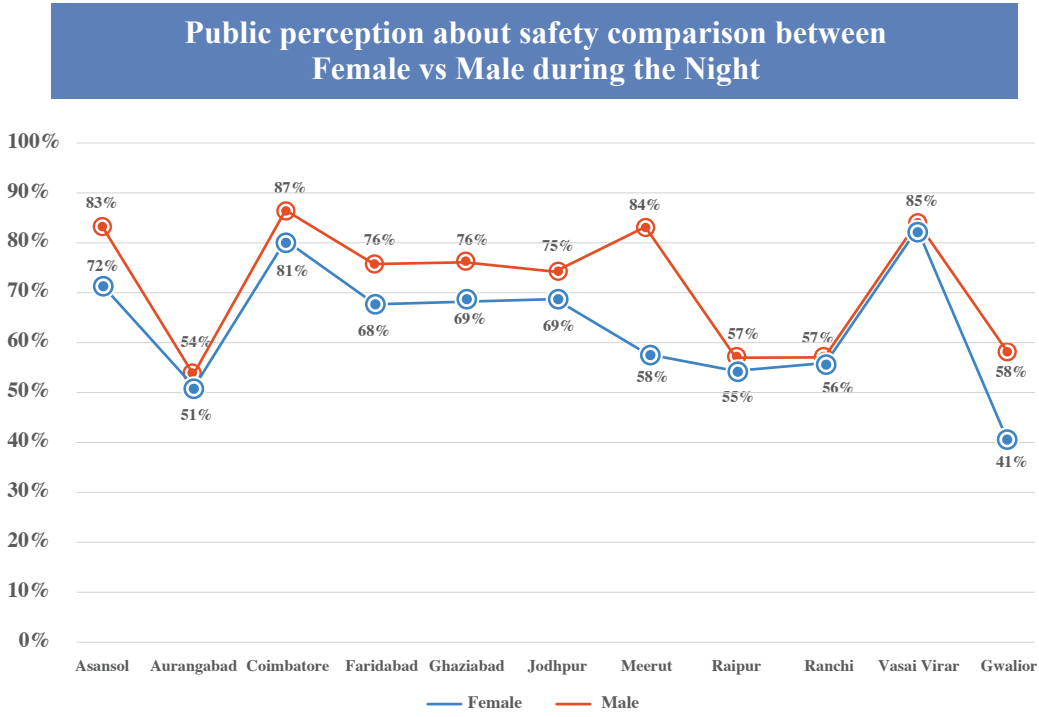
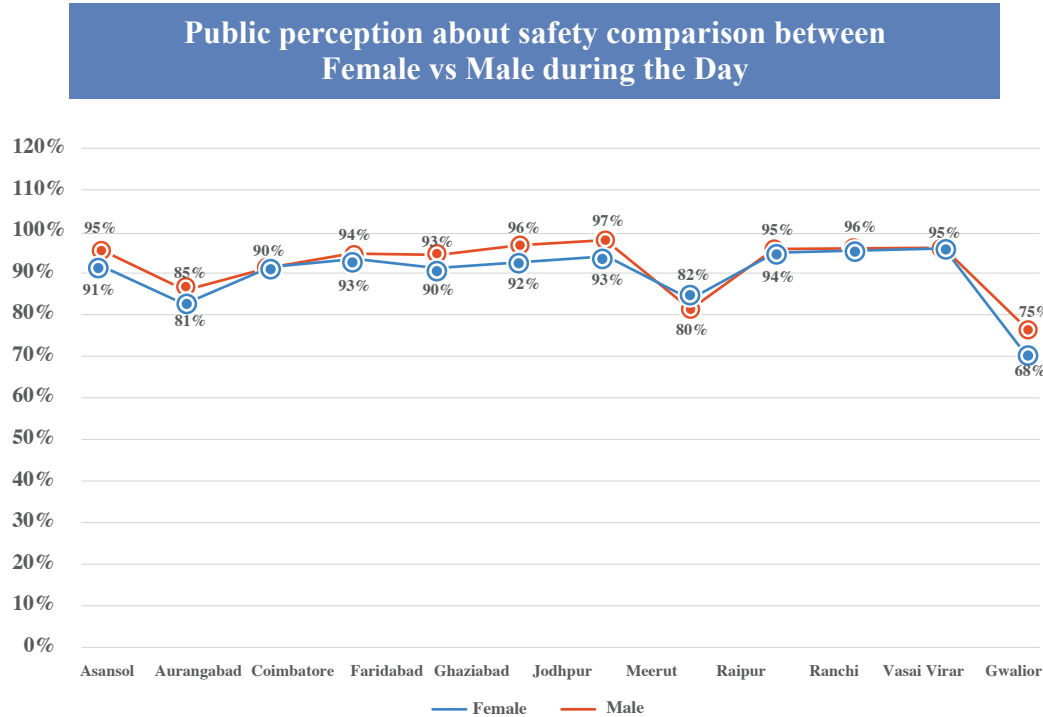


II. Data Analysis

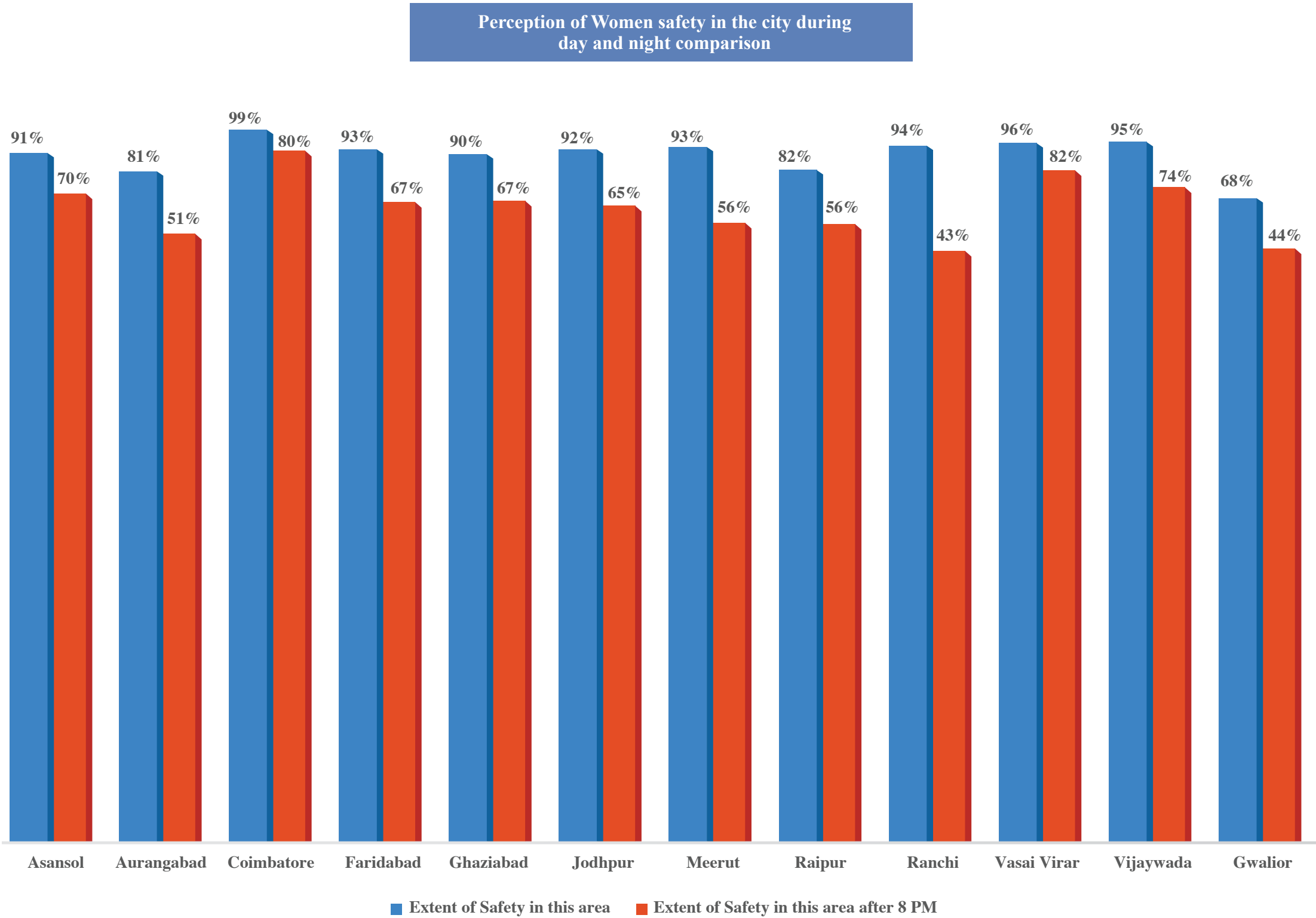
A. Overall City Safety Score



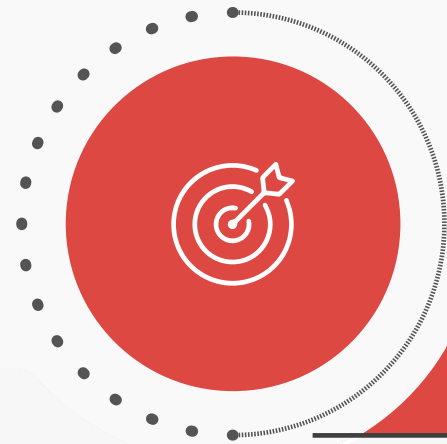
C. Public Perceptions about Safety- Comparison between Male and Female



B. Perception of Women Safety in the City during Day and Night a Comparative Study



II. Recommendations and Conclusion



Target Social Norms

- Gender sensitization and creation of awareness among police personnel and the society at large.
- Improve social messaging through banners at traffic lights and messaging on public transport.

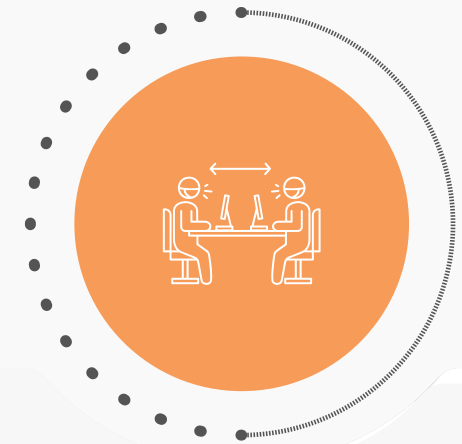
1



Enhanced Infrastructure Support

- Installation and maintenance of CCTV surveillance systems and monitoring equipment to enhance security.
- Appointment of more security personnel by deploying traffic police on roads, patrolling vans and woman patrolling officers especially at night to ensure public safety.
- Build more women-specific functional toilets in cities equipped with adequate lighting and water supply.
- Deployment of security personnel within the public transportation system, especially at bus stands and railway stations.

2



Workplace Measures

- Institutionalise Gender sensitization and awareness programs at workplaces on the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace.
- Review and update workplace policies.
- Implement inclusive recruitment strategies to achieve gender balance in workplaces.
- Build an inclusive workplace infrastructure to ensure equal participation of women in the workforce.

3

The study underpins that the safety of women in cities demands immediate attention and a concerted effort. The study underscores the need for proactive measures to ensure a secure environment. Prioritizing women's safety is crucial for fostering a just and inclusive society. A collective and concerted effort between the Central, State and Local governments supplemented with a strong commitment by society is essential for creating safe urban spaces.



Acknowledgments

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