



Safety of Women During Lockdown

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Why in News

Recently, the Union Minister of **Women and Child Development had a video-conference with** personnel associated with the Ministry. The purpose was to consider measures to protect women in distress during the lockdown.

Nearly **1,000 people** joined the video conference live, including the staff members of

- One Stop Centres.
- Shelter homes for women in distress (such as Swadhar Greh, Ujajwala homes).
- Working Women Hostels.

Key Points

- **Reasons Behind Holding the Conference**
 - **Rise in Crimes Against Women:** The National Commission of Women has recorded
 - A more than **two-fold rise in domestic violence and sexual assaults and**
 - A three-fold increase in cases of **police apathy** in the first week of lockdown since March 24, 2020.
 - **Call Taken by Various Organisations:** The **gender rights activists and the United Nations (UN)** have called for the need to boost helplines, psycho-social support and online counselling to support women in distress.

- **Instructions by the Ministry:** Officials of the ministry were asked to ensure that **One Stop Centre** are linked with local medical teams, police, NIMHANS, **National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)** to ensure that their **services are not impacted due to restrictions** on movement.

NIMHANS (National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences), Bangalore is a multidisciplinary institute for patient care and academic pursuit in the field of mental health and neurosciences.

- **Suggestions**
 - To **equip counsellors** across the country to deal with the unique problems faced by women.
 - Use of **digital governance** to ensure safety of women which must be replicated at the State-level and with Non-Government Organisation (NGOs) so that there is no deficit of either information or help.
 - Urged NGOs to try to ensure that every individual calls at least 10 women every day so that “women know that they are not alone”

One Stop Centre

- One stop centre is a **centrally sponsored scheme of the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD)**. It is a subscheme of the **National Mission for Empowerment of Women**.
- One Stop Centres have been established **across the country to provide integrated support** and assistance under one roof to women affected by violence, both in private and public spaces.
- **Funding:** The scheme is funded through **Nirbhaya Fund and the central government provides 100% financial assistance** to the state governments /Union Territories administrations.
- **Auditing:** Audit is done as per **Comptroller & Auditor General of India** norms and social audit is also undertaken by civil society groups.
- **Services Provided by the One Stop Centres**
 - Emergency response and rescue services.
 - Medical assistance.
 - Assistance to women in lodging the FIR.
 - Psycho- social support and counselling.
 - Legal aid and counselling.
 - Shelter
 - Video conferencing facility.

Working Women Hostels scheme

- The Working Women Hostels scheme is implemented by **the Ministry of Women and Child Development**.

- It aims to ensure safe accommodation for women working away from their place of residence.
- **Provisions :**
 - To provide **safety for working women**, a provision has been made to keep security guards and to install CCTV Cameras in Working Women Hostels.
 - To provide **quality of stay for working women**, provision has been made to provide safe and affordable accommodation with clean and well-ventilated day care centres for the children of inmates, medical first-aid and providing washing machines and geysers/solar water heating systems.

Swadhar

A Scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances was launched by the Department of Women and Child Development in 2001-02. The scheme through the provisions of shelter, food, clothing, counseling, training, clinical and legal aid aims to rehabilitate women in difficult circumstances.

Ujjawala Home

A comprehensive scheme for prevention of trafficking and rescue, rehabilitation and re-integration of victims of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.

Source: TH