

# Empowerment of women

Praveen Dixit

Former Director General of Police,  
Maharashtra State, India

[www.praveendixit.com](http://www.praveendixit.com)

# Characteristics of atrocities

- Irrespective of region, religion, race, language, age women through--out face severe physical and mental atrocities.
- These may be in the form of infanticide, sexual misuse through internet, molestation, rape, child marriages, domestic violence, sexual harassment at work places, economic exploitation in the form of dowry, economic starvation of widows, neglect at old age by family members.
- In addition, the atrocities through social media, and cyber offences have increased geometrically in the recent past. These are in the form of economic offences and cheating for false promises of marriage, jobs, lottery or such other nature. In street level crimes chain snatchings , purse picking are very common.

# Technological interventions

- In a major initiative, the Government of India has introduced several amendments to existing laws by making stringent provisions
- Juveniles indulging in heinous crimes such as rapes, and murders are being prosecuted as adults
- In all offences in which punishment exceeds seven years, forensic evidence has been made mandatory
- Biometric details are being collected under Identification of Prisoners Act so as stringent punishment is met to repeat offenders
- In case of rape, two finger test has been done away with.

# Technological interventions

- Government of India has implemented in all the States toll-free help line in the form of 112 India app. This can be freely downloaded by any individual in smart phone. This is being manned 24\*7 and depending upon the nature of emergency, appropriate authority including police, fire brigade and medical personnel are alerted. Response from these authorities is between 5 to 7 minutes.
- For cyber offenses, complaint can be lodged even anonymously, through [www.Cybercrime.gov.in](http://www.Cybercrime.gov.in) or through helpline 1930
- Several training programs are being organised in schools, colleges and self help groups of women to create digital awareness

# Technological interventions

- CCTV cameras have been installed in important locations in most of the major cities
- CCTV cameras are installed in taxis, hospitals, schools, housing societies to identify criminals
- Upgradation of these CCTVs is being planned to make use of artificial intelligence (AI) to issue prior alerts
- Ban on publishing identity of the victim & Fast track courts to ensure speedy trials
- Special prosecutors are appointed in sensational crimes
- In case of molestation, instructions are issued to send chargesheet along with accused in 24 hours

# Technological Interventions

- Round the clock patrolling manned by women police has been implemented through dedicated vehicles
- RFID tags are being used at sensitive places frequented by women such as bazaars, schools, colleges, bus stands, railway stations to monitor visits by policemen
- Strict monitoring of work places to avoid sexual harassment at work places through special laws mandating committees headed by women.
- Suo moto cognisance of any report indicating atrocities against women by NHRC and NCW as well as State Women Commission.

# Additional Measures to create confidence

- Visits by women help groups to near-by police stations whenever they are free
- Creation of women police volunteers (Police मित्र/ दीदी ) to educate women about legal and administrative help
- Women Police volunteers strive to create confidence among victims to report the crime and stand by them during the trial till the offender is punished
- Organise regular training courses for law enforcing agencies, government officers, teachers, parents, corporate houses among others

# Measures to improve conviction rate

- Need to register offences using CCTV footage without waiting for the complainant to reach police station
- Unless the offenders are convicted, the threat to women in large continues
- Provide protection to complainants and witnesses till the trial is complete
- Organise mock trials before actual trial
- Special briefing to complainants and witnesses
- Training for prosecutors
- Considerable scope to improve the situation.

# Future course

- Above mentioned legal & administrative steps are still inadequate
- Vigilance and constant encouragement to victims through NGOs, right minded individuals is essential to create awareness among women
- Making cheap legal assistance available to victims through legal aid committees is essential
- Unfortunately even then justice is highly delayed and costly
- Media needs to step up their efforts to create social awareness.

# Suggestions

- State to ensure the creation of inclusionary spaces for women, especially in decision-making bodies , so that other transformations can be brought about
- Educational institutes should be asked to take proactive steps to ensure that students are made sensitive to various gender related issues, as well as aware of how to conduct themselves in situations involving the opposite sex.
- (From Report of NHRC Symposium on Women's safety at work and Public spaces, held at Lucknow on 26 July 2025)

# Steps needed by authorities

- Gender audit should be conducted regularly to sensitize everyone on gender fair basis and implement these with gender sensitivity.
- Encourage complainants to access justice and fight for their legal rights
- Ensure documentation of every complaint and action taken
- Conduct regular briefing sessions for personnel under you.
- Conduct reach out sessions for women to guard them against trusting anyone particularly family members, relatives, neighbours and friends who are potential perpetrators of serious crimes including rapes & cyber offences
- Analyse helpline data and take suitable steps

# Steps needed by authorities

- Gender audit should be conducted regularly to sensitize everyone on gender fair basis and implement these with gender sensitivity.
- Encourage complainants to access justice and fight for their legal rights
- Ensure documentation of every complaint and action taken
- Conduct regular briefing sessions for personnel in every office
- Conduct reach out sessions for women to guard them against trusting anyone particularly family members, relatives, neighbours and friends who are potential perpetrators of serious crimes including rapes & cyber offences
- Analyse helpline data and take suitable steps

# Alarming pointers

- Incidents of gang-rape , rape and murder , honor killing, molestation, are reported regularly
- Victims of sexual assault, financial frauds, cyber crimes through internet and social media are reported frequently
- Incidents of harassment in work places, on account of dowry are reported from urban as well as rural areas ( Most of the accused are highly educated, 34% from IT)
- Harassment and neglect of elderly women is a cause of concern
- Refusal by relatives to rehabilitate women who are medically certified by psychiatrists

# Drawbacks

- Per centage of school drop outs girls from eighth standard onwards is still more than forty percent in urban as well as rural areas
- Practice of child marriage is rampant in almost all parts of the country
- Very few girls have freedom of deciding whom to marry and when to marry
- Incidents of honor killing & dowry related deaths/suicides continue to be reported from time to time
- Thousands of girls are reported as missing every year and they are not traced, Nearly 51 FIRs registered every hour in such crimes.

# Government initiatives

- Beti bachao beti padhao campaign has taken deep roots
- Drastic action against doctors, individuals attempting female feticide
- Female ratio has improved in adversely affected states
- Special efforts to encourage SC/ST girls to continue in schools through scholarships. Mid-day meal scheme has reduced drop out ratio. All sectors opened for women employment.
- Arrangements for loans to SC/ST women in public banks
- Houses in urban and rural areas with women as owners
- Helplines including 112 India app.

# Measures needed to trace missing girls

- It is suspected that many missing girls are trafficked to brothels, spas, massage centres
- Almost everyone has Aadhar no from early age
- Need to make it mandatory for every brothel, spa, massage centre to display Aadhar no of every person working in these places
- Public transport including Air, Railways, buses should issue tickets only after Aadhar no is furnished

# Conclusion

- Country would be considered as developed if women who constitute nearly 50% in the society are safe from young age to elderly
- Every section including government bodies, NGOs, private companies, families, media, schools and colleges join hands in achieving this goal.