

LFHRI EFFORTS: EVE TEASING WILL BE NOW DEALT STERNLY IN PUNJAB, HARYANA & CHANDIGARH FROM NOW ON.

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In a PIL filed by lawyers For Human Rights International the 1st division bench of Hon'ble Punjab & Haryana High Court has directed Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh to place before it on 6th Nov 2013, the action plan for implementing the suggestion formulated by all the 3 states and the counsel of the petitioner. Navkiran Singh General secretary of the organisation as well as counsel in the case was able to get this historical decision. The agreed suggestions are as under :-

Civil Writ Petition No. 10258 of 2013

Lawyers for Human Rights International Vs. State of Haryana etc

A meeting was held at the Office of Advocate General, Punjab on 30.08.2013 to discuss measures required to be put in place for ensuring Safety of Women in States of Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh (U.T.).

The meeting took place on following 4 broad agendas:

- 1. Awareness of new amended provisions in Criminal Law relating to women.**
- 2. Steps taken to improve security of women in 2 states and the U.T.**
- 3. Step further suggested to improve the security of women.**
- 4. Recognition of limitations system and means to improve them to provide a safer environment for women in the form of preventive and corrective measures.**

“The following suggestions were placed on record by the Committee”:

(A) Role of Educational Institutions:

(i) Important provisions of IPC pertaining to domestic violence and sexual violence against Women and Children for eg. Provisions of Domestic Violence Act 2005, Sexual Harassment at Work Place Act 2013, Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012 etc. should be included in the syllabus of Schools & Colleges after screening by experts on Education Boards.

(ii) Self Defense Training and Confidence Building courses for Women in Schools and colleges.

(iii) It was observed by the Committee that the girl students especially in the rural areas often are not able to attend School/College due to safety concerns during their commute to school/college. Hence it was suggested that a provision be made in respect of the transport facilities from Bus stand to College/School for girl students be made by School/College management. Also, special women only buses/reserved seats for women in public transport be provided.

(B) Publicity Campaign: A planned and well coordinated publicity campaign should be undertaken by various agencies/departments of the States including National/States Commission for women, Department of Education, Department of Women & Social Welfare and Public Relations Department. Department of Women and Social Welfare in the States of Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh (U.T.) should be the nodal agency for this purpose.

(i) **Mechanism of Publicity:** Publicity boards in all local languages i.e. Hindi/Punjabi/English must be put up in educational institution, public spaces like Bus Stands and Parks etc. with highlights on the rights of Women under the amended provisions and information regarding the mechanism for lodging complaint, important Helpline numbers, Websites etc.

(ii) **Print media/Electronic media/Radio/Public transport** like buses/three wheelers/trains in addition to **Movie halls/cable networks and websites of concerned states governments** are suggested as medium of spreading awareness and widespread publicity.

(C) Role of Police and other Government Authorities:

(i) High risk areas like bus stands of girls colleges, discotheque/ nightclubs, Cinema Halls etc must be identified and be covered with Police patrols on priority basis. Also, the Nodal Department for Women & Social Security in the State/ U.T. shall be tasked for setting up information Boards containing important Telephone numbers of the Relevant Police authorities/Women Help Line etc. at identified High Risk points in coordination with Police Department.

(ii) Increased recruitment of Women in Police for employing mixed police patrols or all women police patrols as a confidence building measuring for women in public and deterrent to miscreants.

(iii) There is a need of a national level dedicated helpline for women in emergencies which may be accessible pan India without the need to dial with different prefix from one state to another. The Ministry of Home Affairs can be asked to examine the technical modalities for achieving this.

(iv) Public areas such as parks and streets may be well lit. Municipal authorities may identify old/abandoned buildings, unused public spaces etc. for getting them secured against misuse by miscreants because these are locations which can be used by criminals for planning mischief, including crime against women.

(v) The Concept of Community policing needs to be strengthened by associating NGO's, University and General Public from different walks of life for collaboration with the Police for prevention of Crime against Women and Safety of Women.

(vi) Additional safety measures in public transport such as recruitment of women drivers/conductors, close cameras in Public transport, wherever feasible.

(D) Role of State Legal Service Authority: State Legal Service Authority may ensure that all Courts premises in Punjab, Haryana and U.T. respectively have Publicity Boards. Also, Seminars and Conferences may be organized/funded by the State Legal Services Authority on the subject to promote awareness on Laws/Legal provisions pertaining to Crime against Women.

(E) Training in Gender Sensitization: Training in State Training Academy and District Training Schools may be imparted so that Police response to Crime against Women is sensitive and the Police Personnel have adequate awareness of legal provisions/amendments pertaining to Crime against Women.

(F) Effective Response of Police in respect of complainant: Another important suggestion of the Committee was the need for effective response and feedback/monitoring of the response to test the satisfaction level of the complainant by a senior officer which may be recorded for further training purposes. Punjab has recently launched a 24x7 Helpline 181 for the public to lodge complaint against Police inaction etc. Which is being monitored by an officer of the rank of ADGP. It was suggested that there must be a provision of filing a complaint online especially for the women victim on the website of the State Police and a shortest possible response time must be achieved. There is already a provision for online filing of complaints in Punjab and important Women Issues are handled by a dedicated Wing under an IGP rank officer.

Sd/-

(Gurpreet Deo)

IGP/NRI & WOMEN WING

Representative for State of Punjab –

Representative for State of Haryana –

Representative for Chandigarh (U.T.) –

Representative of the Petitioner –