

UMBRELLA SCHEME ON THE SAFETY OF WOMEN, MHA, GoI.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Umbrella Scheme on the safety of women accords the highest priority by creating a safe public environment for women so that they can safely work in the public sphere. The Women Safety Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, is striving to enhance women's safety in public places through this initiative. The government also aims to provide more opportunities to women in the process of nation-building in line with the vision of '*Amrit Kaal*', characterised by one of its features, i.e. women-led development. The safety of women is also conditioned and contingent upon stringent deterrence through law, effective delivery of justice and quick redressal of complaints and easy access to institutional support structures to victims.

The objectives of projects under 'Safety of Women' include strengthening the mechanism in States/Union territories for ensuring timely intervention and investigation in cases of crime against women, higher efficiency in investigation and crime prevention in such matters, and capacity building for a safer environment.

The background of the scheme is also embedded in our rich historical legacy, where power, prominence and dignity accrued and accorded to women have always accelerated the pace of social inclusion and development. Indeed, "शोचन्ति जामयो यत्र विनश्यत्याशु तत्कुलम्। न शोचन्ति तु यत्रैता वर्धते तद्धि सर्वदा", the family in which women are full of sorrow, it meets its destruction very soon; while the family in which women do not grieve, is always prosperous (*Manusmriti*). This is the broad context within which the umbrella scheme on the safety of women articulates its meaning and deserves importance.

The umbrella scheme on Safety of women was approved in MHA for the FY 2021-22 till 2025-26 with a total outlay of Rs. 1179.72 crore, i.e. concomitant with the tenure of 15th Finance Commission. The components under the scheme are: (1) 112 Emergency Response Support System 2.0 (2) Upgradation of Central Forensic sciences laboratories including setting up of

National Forensic Data Centre, (3) Strengthening up of DNA analysis, cyber forensic capacities in States (FSLs) (4) Cyber Crime prevention against women and children (5) Capacity Building and training of Investigators and prosecutors in handling sexual assault cases against women and children (6) Women help desk and anti-human trafficking units. The sunset of these components is March 31, 2026.

The scheme is operational in the States/UTs: (1) Andaman and Nicobar (2) Andhra Pradesh (3) Arunachal Pradesh (4) Assam (5) Bihar (6) Chandigarh (7) Chhattisgarh (8) Delhi (9) Goa (10) Gujarat (11) Haryana (12) Himachal Pradesh (13) Jammu and Kashmir (14) Jharkhand (15) Karnataka (16) Kerala (17) Ladakh (18) Madhya Pradesh (19) Maharashtra (20) Manipur (21) Meghalaya (22) Mizoram (23) Nagaland (24) Odisha (25) Puducherry (26) Punjab (27) Rajasthan (28) Sikkim (29) Tamil Nadu (30) Telangana (31) Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (32) Tripura (33) Uttar Pradesh (34) Uttarakhand & (35) West Bengal.

In order to evaluate the scheme, six study objectives were designed namely (1) to study financial and physical achievements of the scheme, (2) to study the status of timely interventions for the women safety, (3) to examine the cases of crime against women in the study area, (4) to study the impact of intervention on crime against women, (5) to study the status of capacity building for safer environment for women, and (6) to suggest measures to improve the effectiveness of the scheme.

In order to get responsive feedback on the study objective, the study was conducted using descriptive methodology in the positivist frame. The descriptive methodology of the study enabled us to take a quantitative hindsight with the balanced blend of qualitative information. The methodology of the study used a mixed method approach where the objectives of the study were put into the central place. The approaches used included goal-based, process-based, and outcome-based. The goal-based approach measured if the objectives of the scheme were duly met. The process-based approach studied the strengths and weaknesses of the scheme, and finally, the outcome-based approach evaluated if the outcomes were aligned with the pre-specified objectives of the scheme. For this purpose, the evaluation study relied on both primary and secondary sources for data collection. The tools used for data collection were (1) semi-structured questionnaire, (2) in-depth interview, (3) a focus group discussion and (4) Observation.

Keeping in view the objectives of the study and PFC notes, the study was conducted to get responsive feedback by taking up its 360⁰ views. The major findings of the study are as under:

1. The Ministry of Home Affairs has provided budget to set up a dedicated Women Help Desks (WHDs) in police stations to improve women's access to police services at the time of need. A total of 14,658 WHDs are operational across all States and UTs, out of which 13,743 WHDs are led by women officers, which is a moving outcome. It helps facilitate women victims to share their grievances and register complaints.
2. Under the ERSS component, it was found that the Disaster Recovery (DR) centers for all States/UTs are operational at C-DAC, Noida and C-DAC, Thiruvananthapuram. A total of 24 States/UTs Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Odisha, Puducherry, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Manipur, Sikkim, Tripura, Meghalaya, Ladakh & West Bengal have upgraded their existing system to ERSS 2.0.
3. The integration of ERSS/Dial-112 is complete with Railways in all States/UTs, Child helpline in all States/UTs, disaster in 35 States/UTs except for Telangana, and Women helpline in 35 States/UTs except for West Bengal. A total of over 56 crores calls have been received, more than 52 lakhs 112 India App has been downloaded. The national average response time is 17.75 minutes (2025).
4. 827 Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs) have been established across all States/UTs. The Cyber Crime Prevention Against Women & Children project is implemented in all States/UTs. So far, Cyber Forensic Training Laboratories have been set up in 33 States/UTs and over 24,624 officials, including police officers, judges, and prosecutors, have been trained.
5. DNA and Cyber Forensic capabilities in State Forensic Labs across 30 States/UTs have been enhanced. The DNA Analysis facility has been established in Chandigarh. Six National Cyber Forensic Labs, along with a National Forensic Data Centre, have been approved. 35,306 officials, including Investigation Officers, Prosecution Officers and Medical Officers, have been trained on DNA evidence management and the use of Sexual Assault.

6. Various crimes against women have been reported. Based on focus group discussions with the stakeholders it was found that major crimes across nation are murder with rape, dowry deaths, abetment to suicide, miscarriage, acid attack, cruelty by husband and relatives, kidnapping and abduction of women, kidnapping for ransom, kidnapping and abduction of women to compel her for marriage, procurement of minor girls, importation of minor girls from foreign countries, human trafficking, selling of minor girls, buying of minor girls, rape, assault on women with intent to outrage modesty, insult to the modesty of women, procuring inducing children for sake of prostitution, detaining a person in premises where prostitution is carried on, prostitution in the vicinity of public places, cybercrime etc.
7. Based on primary data, the study reveals that crime against women is gradually decreasing. In the sample state, it was found that crime against women cases were 30.8% in 2022, which has gone down to 28.8% in 2023 and further dropped to 21.5% in 2024 and resulting in 18.9% in 2025. A similar trend was followed by other sample States, namely Assam, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Telangana.
8. t-test on the information collected for 7 sample states on crimes has been done. The p-value comes out to be 0.49, which implies the externality created due to different spatial as well as socio-economic factors playing instrumental roles in the crime against women for the years 2022 & 2023. The t-stat has been calculated as 0.02, which is less than the t-critical one-tailed value of 1.78 and the t-critical two tail value of 2.18. As such, the similar number of crimes for both years fails to be accepted. There is significant difference between the number of crimes for the years 2022 and 2023.
9. Access pool of trained and skilled investigators dealing with sexual assault has been 76% across the sample states providing information. The access to forensic experts has been reported as 79% across the sample States. The cybersecurity experts have been found to the tune of 69%. The percentage needs to be brought up to 100% so that the degree to which women's safety is to be executed can be fully ensured.
10. The study reveals that the umbrella scheme on Safety of Women places strong emphasis on training and capacity building as a means to reinforce institutional responses to crimes against women. A dedicated component under the scheme focuses on the **Capacity Building and Training of Investigators and Prosecutors in handling sexual assault**

cases against women and children. This initiative seeks to create a skilled pool of Investigation Officers, Prosecutors, and Medical Officers across States and Union Territories, with particular attention to areas such as DNA evidence collection, preservation, and the use of Sexual Assault Evidence Collection (SAEC) Kits.

11. The analysis of primary data from field visits, focus group discussions, and stakeholder interviews, supported by NVivo coding, revealed recurring themes of uneven implementation, institutional bottlenecks, and gaps in community awareness. At the same time, best practices observed in certain States and Union Territories demonstrate the scheme's potential when interventions are well-resourced, monitored, and locally adapted. **Keeping in view the effectiveness of the scheme in bringing about positive transformation in women's safety, the umbrella scheme on 'Safety of Women' is recommended for continuation beyond its sunset period of March 31, 2026.** However, the required suggestions are adhered to in the next phase of the scheme.

Indeed, यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवताः ।
यत्रैतास्तु न पूज्यन्ते सर्वास्तत्राफलाः क्रियाः ॥ मनुस्मृति ३/५६ ॥ **Where women are honored, divinity resides; where they are dishonored, all endeavors crumble into failure.**

In this *Amrit Kaal*, India's transformative era, women's safety schemes would serve as powerful catalysts for comprehensive women empowerment. The components of the initiative would propel our nation to the forefront of inclusive development, establishing India as a global leader where women stand as equal partners with men in every sphere of national progress. This is not merely a scheme's objective but a civilizational commitment, to restore the reverence for women that has been our cultural heritage, and to build a society where every daughter, sister, and mother can live, work, and thrive with dignity, security, and absolute equality.