



Government gives highest priority to safety and security of women and girls and has taken various steps to support and supplement the efforts of the States / UTs in ensuring their safety

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The Government has established a comprehensive legal, institutional and policy framework for prevention of acid attacks, punishment of offenders, protection of survivors and their rehabilitation, implemented in coordination with States and Union Territories.

“Police” and “Public Order” are State subjects under the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India. Accordingly, the primary responsibility for maintaining law and order, investigation, prosecution and protection of citizens, including victims of acid attacks, rests with the respective State Governments and Union Territories. The State Governments are competent to deal with such offences under the extant provisions of laws.

Under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, which has replaced the Indian Penal Code with effect from 1 July 2024, acid attack has been recognized as a distinct and grave offence. Section 124(1) of the BNS provides that whoever causes grievous hurt by use of acid or similar corrosive substance shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not less than ten years, which may extend to imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine. The provision further mandates that such fine shall be just and reasonable to meet the medical expenses of the treatment of the victim. Section 124(2) of the BNS criminalizes the attempt to commit an acid attack and prescribes imprisonment of five to seven years along with fine, thereby ensuring strong deterrence even where the offence does not culminate in actual grievous injury.

As per Section 396 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, every State Government in coordination with the Central Government shall prepare a victim compensation scheme for providing funds for the purpose of compensation to the victim or his dependents who have suffered loss or injury as a result of the crime and who require rehabilitation. The section further provides that compensation payable shall be in addition to the payment of fine to the victim. The Ministry of Home Affairs has also issued a comprehensive Advisory on 20th April 2015 on taking steps to implement the provisions of Indian Penal Code (IPC) now BNS, expediting action in cases of acid attack, and to provide treatment and compensation to victims.

All the State/ Union Territories have notified victim compensation scheme in their respective State/ UT. Through the Central Victim Compensation Fund (CVCF) scheme under Nirbhaya Fund, financial assistance of 200.00 Crores as one time grant has been released by Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to all the States/ UTs in Financial Year 2016-17 to support their respective State Victim Compensation Schemes.

Further, pursuant to the Hon'ble Supreme Court's order dated 11.05.2018 in the WP(C) No. 565/ 2012 - Nipun Saxena Vs. Union of India, National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) formulated the revised scheme enhancing the compensation to be given to Women Victims/ Survivors of Sexual Assault/ other

crimes. The scheme also covers the cases of acid attacks. The scheme was circulated by Ministry of Women & Child Development on 18.05.2018 and by Ministry of Home Affairs on 28.06.2018 to all States/UTs for compliance.

Moreover, the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) has framed NALSA (Legal Services to Victims of Acid Attacks) Scheme, 2016 under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. The main objectives of the Scheme include enabling victims of acid attacks to get access to medical facilities and rehabilitative services, and strengthening legal aid for victims of acid attack.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has circulated the Model Poisons Rules vide an advisory dated 30.08.2013 to all States/ UTs for notifying the same to regulate the sale of acid in respective State/ UT. MHA has also issued another Advisory dated 12.08.2021 to all States/ UTs to review and ensure that retail sale of acids and chemicals are strictly regulated in terms of the Poison Rules so that these are not used in crime. These advisories are available on www.mha.gov.in.

The Central Government gives highest priority to the safety and security of women and girls and has taken various steps to support and supplement the efforts of the States / UTs in ensuring their safety. The Government of India implements "Mission Shakti", an umbrella scheme for safety, security and empowerment of women. The Scheme includes components of 'One Stop Centers (OSCs)' under which integrated services such as Medical Aid, Psycho-social Counselling, Police Facilitation, Legal Aid and Counselling and Temporary Shelter upto 5 days are provided under one roof to any women under assault or distress. 24×7×365 toll-free Women Helpline (181) has been universalised. It provides emergency and non-emergency services to any women in need by connecting them with appropriate authorities. As of December 31, 2025, a total of 96,37,805 women have been assisted across the country. Besides, Emergency Response Support System (ERSS), which is a pan-India single number (112)/ mobile app-based system for emergencies is also available to women in distress. Now, Women Help Line (WHL) is integrated with ERSS for providing 24×7 emergency and non-emergency help and support to needy women. In addition, under Nirbhaya Fund, the Central Government has provided financial assistance to States/ UTs for setting up/ strengthening Women Help Desks (WHDs) in all police stations. So far, 14658 Women Help Desks have been established in police stations. Further, the Ministry of Women and Child Development also administers sub-scheme "Samarthaya" under Mission Shakti, in which the component of Shakti Sadan is for relief and rehabilitation of women in difficult circumstances, including victims of acid attack.

Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) has also undertaken several initiatives, which, inter-alia includes training and skill development programs for Investigation Officers, Prosecution Officers and Medical Officers. BPR&D has also prepared Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) for 'Women Help Desk at Police Stations' to ensure their smooth functioning. Emphasis has been laid upon appropriate behavioural and attitudinal skills of the police in course of prevention and detection of crime against women and children and interaction with victims of crime. Webinars on women safety with sensitivity and gender sensitization of police personnel have also been organized by BPR&D.

Moreover, the Government, through institutions like the National Commission for Women (NCW) and its counterparts in States has been spreading awareness through seminars, workshops, audio- visual, print and electronic media etc. to sensitize the people about the safety and security of women and also about various provisions of the legislation and policies etc. In addition, Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Home Affairs have issued advisories to States/ UTs from time to time on various issues pertaining to safety and security of women. In respect of the registered complaints, NCW takes up the matter with stakeholders especially the Police Authorities to ensure that the complaints are redressed and brought to logical conclusion.

This information was given by the Union Minister for Women and Child Development Smt. Annpurna Devi in Rajya Sabha in reply to a question today.

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