



‘Nirbhay Chetna’ Rolled Out : To Sensitize Over 17.5 lakh Male Elected Representatives on Women Safety & Gender Equality Issues at the Grassroots

First-of-its-kind National Initiative under the Nirbhaya Fund ; Cadre of 28,500 Master Trainers to be Developed

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The Ministry of Panchayati Raj organised a three-day Training of Trainers (ToT) programme on **Nirbhay Chetna** from 17th–19th June 2026 in New Delhi under the Nirbhaya Fund project. Recognised as the largest drive of its kind anywhere in the world, Nirbhay Chetna is a landmark national initiative on the sensitisation of men towards women-related issues, including women’s safety and security that aims to strengthen gender-responsive governance at the grassroots level. The program also marked the launch of the Nirbhay Chetna training module, developed by Transform Rural India. The initiative seeks to create a cadre of master trainers who will engage male elected representatives on gender equality, women’s safety, rights, and leadership within Panchayati Raj Institutions. The pilot batch comprised around 40 master trainers from six States : Assam, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Uttarakhand and will serve as the foundation for a cascading training model to be expanded across all States and Union Territories.

Addressing the inaugural session, Shri Vivek Bharadwaj, Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, underscored that the vision of Viksit Bharat cannot be realised without ensuring the safety, dignity, and equal participation of women. He highlighted the pivotal role of Panchayats as institutions of social and democratic transformation, capable of driving meaningful change in attitudes and behaviours at the grassroots level. Emphasising the objective of Nirbhay Chetna, he noted that the initiative seeks to foster gender-sensitive leadership by positioning women’s dignity, safety, and opportunities as essential pillars of development. Addressing the participants, Shri Sushil Kumar Lohani, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, emphasised that ensuring the safety and dignity of women is a collective societal responsibility. He highlighted the critical role of Panchayats in fostering gender-responsive governance and creating a safer, more enabling environment for women and girls. He noted that Nirbhay Chetna aims to build awareness, sensitivity, and accountability among male elected representatives, empowering them to champion women’s safety, dignity, leadership and empowerment within their communities.

The programme adopted a participatory approach through expert sessions, group discussions, case studies, and experiential learning to deepen understanding of gender issues, challenge social stereotypes, and promote gender-responsive leadership. Key themes included positive masculinity, community participation, and the role of Panchayats in advancing women’s safety, dignity, and inclusion.

About Nirbhay Chetna

Nirbhay Chetna is a key intervention under the Nirbhay Raho initiative, launched on 11th March 2026, which comprises three complementary components. Nirbhay Netri focuses on capacity-building and legal awareness among elected women representatives; Nirbhay Chetna seeks to sensitise elected male representatives on gender equality and women's safety; and Nirbhay Drishti envisages the installation of CCTV cameras at strategic rural locations to strengthen technology-enabled safety infrastructure in Panchayats. Under Nirbhay Chetna, a cadre of 28,500 Master Trainers is being developed at the State, district, and block levels to reach over 17.5 lakh male elected representatives across the country.



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