

Standing Committee Report Summary

Issues related to safety of women

- The Standing Committee on Human Resource Development (Chair: Dr. Satyanarayan Jatiya) submitted its report on issues related to safety of women in March 2020. Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include:
 - **Strengthening of legislation:** The Committee observed that several laws have been framed for the welfare of women. In spite of the legislative framework in place, women continue to face inequality, discrimination and violence. The Committee recommended that laws to protect women should be strictly implemented. Some ways in which implementation of laws can be improved include: (i) filing of charge sheets within 30 days, (ii) denial of bail to accused, and (iii) trial of pending cases within six months.
 - **Representation of women:** The Committee observed that crimes against women are due to their lack of representation in decision-making positions. It recommended 33% reservation for women at all levels of government.
 - **Fast Track Courts:** The Committee observed the importance of the timely delivery of justice in reducing crimes against women. It noted that states such as Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal have not given confirmation for setting up Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs). The Committee recommended that the Department of Justice should ensure that 1,800 FTSCs become operational across India at the earliest.
 - Further, the Committee observed that there is a skewed distribution of FTSCs across states. For example, there are 18 FTSCs in Andhra Pradesh, 218 in Uttar Pradesh, 14 in Tamil Nadu, and 31 in Karnataka. It recommended that there should be a balanced distribution of Courts across states. Further, there should be one FTSC within a 500 km of radius.
 - **Human Trafficking:** The Committee observed that there is no comprehensive law for the prevention of human trafficking. It recommended that a National Anti-Trafficking Bureau should be established. It should be composed of police, NGOs, and other stakeholders. It should have the power to investigate intra-state trafficking cases, and coordinate anti-trafficking efforts with international bodies. Further, an Anti-Trafficking Relief and Rehabilitation Committee should be constituted for providing relief and rehabilitation to victims of human trafficking.
- **Nirbhaya Fund:** The Committee observed that the total amount under the Nirbhaya Fund is Rs 7,436 crore for 32 projects and schemes across India. However, only Rs 2,647 has been disbursed to the concerned bodies for implementation of the projects and schemes. It recommended that the projects and funds should be implemented in a timely manner and should be utilised effectively. Further, a Committee chaired by the Cabinet Secretary should oversee projects and schemes under the fund.
- **Infrastructure:** To address crimes against women the Committee recommended certain infrastructural and institutional measures which may be implemented. These include: (i) setting up of women's cells in police stations, (ii) increasing the number of women police officers, (iii) setting up a single helpline number for complaints related to women's safety, (iv) setting up forensic labs in all state capitals to convict offenders, and (v) installing CCTV and panic buttons in all public transport.
- **Education and awareness:** The Committee recommended that textbooks and school curriculums should teach values of respect towards women. Further, universities should set up Departments of Women Studies which can counsel distressed women. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare should educate healthcare workers on dealing with victims of gender based violence.

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