

F. No. 15011/126/2020- SC/ST-W
Government of India
Ministry of Home Affairs
(Women Safety Division)

New Delhi, dated 19th May 2021

To,
Chief Secretary
(all States, UT of Delhi and Puducherry)
Administrators
(Union Territories)

References:

- (i) MHA Advisory No. 24013/4/2020-ATC dated 6 July 2020
- (ii) MHA Advisory No. 15011/115/2020- SC/ST-W dated 13 July 2020
- (iii) MHA Advisory No. 15011/126/2020-SC/ST-W dated 29 July 2020
- (iv) MHA Advisory No. 15011/190/2020-SC/ST-W dated 9 Oct 2020
- (v) MHA Advisory No. 15011/46/2020-ATC dated 1 Dec 2020
- (vi) MoSJE Advisory

Subject: Advisory for protection of vulnerable sections of society such as women, children, senior citizens and scheduled caste/ scheduled tribe, etc-reg.

Sir/ Madam

I am directed to request your attention to the references on the above-mentioned subject. Government taking cognizance of the impact COVID-19 pandemic may have, particularly, on vulnerable groups, gave high priority to the matter and requested States/ Union Territories to put in place adequate mechanisms for ensuring dedicated support and assistance in a timely manner to such persons. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had, accordingly, issued above mentioned advisories to the States/Union Territories on Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures for preventing and combating crimes against vulnerable sections of the society, including women, children, senior citizens and scheduled castes/ scheduled tribes, and as well as for putting in place institutional mechanisms for preventing and countering human trafficking.

2. In order to facilitate implementation of the above guidelines/ SOPs, attention is drawn to Rs.107.49 crore released to States/Union Territories for setting up/ strengthening Women Help Desks in Police Stations. The Desk envisages to have enlisted panel of experts like lawyers, psychologists, NGOs who can assist in

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accessing support, provide shelter, rehabilitation etc. and help in registration and follow-up in the cases giving required assurance and support to the women approaching them. This has supplemented several initiatives launched by the Government for the safety and security of women, which include implementation of Emergency Response Support System, establishing National Database on Sexual Offenders to facilitate better investigation etc. Several laws for combating crimes against weaker sections have also been enacted/ strengthened such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005; the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986; the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, the Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, amended in 2019, and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 (amended in 2015 and 2018).


3. The States/Union Territories have been further enabled through provision of several IT modules by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) in this area, including the Crime Multi Agency Centre (Cri-MAC) for police to share information of inter-state relevance, and a National Alert Service for police on missing & found persons using the CCTNS. The NCRB has also launched an automated photo matching web-based application UNIFY that uses Machine learning model to enable police personnel to search the photographs of missing persons/ criminals/ unidentified dead bodies against the national image repository in the CCTNS. A central citizen service on digitalpolicecitizenservice.gov.in portal is now available to citizens for online search on missing persons. Further, the Ministry has also circulated guidelines and SOP for supporting senior citizens during COVID-19 (copy enclosed). The guidelines provides for steps to be taken to ensure necessary monitoring and support to senior citizens. The Union Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment has issued an advisory for transgender persons to protect themselves during COVID-19 (copy enclosed).

4. In order to address issues related to trafficking, Rs.100 crore has also been released as grants to the States/ Union Territories to set up/ strengthen Anti Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs) in every District. These AHTUs would be integrated task

forces, consisting of police, and other line departments dealing with prevention and combating trafficking. These units are highly relevant, especially in the current COVID-19 pandemic where children may have been orphaned due to the sad demise of their parents due to COVID-19. States/Union Territories were also requested to put in place suitable mechanisms, including engaging at panchayat/ local body level and undertaking IEC activities involving community for ensuring greater awareness on the anti-trafficking support available in the State/Union Territories. MHA advisories dated 6 July 2020 and 1 December 2020 may be referred (copy enclosed).

5. Several States/Union Territories have initiated action and strengthened their machineries to support the vulnerable groups and various success stories and best practices are now available with States/UTs where emergency services have been provided to the vulnerable groups impacted by COVID-19. However, in order to meet the new challenges arising out of recent wave of COVID-19 affliction, it is requested to undertake an immediate review of the existing facilities for vulnerable groups inter-alia on the lines of the measures given in the various advisories issued by the MHA, especially for children who have been orphaned, senior citizens who may require timely assistance and support (medical as well as safety & security), and members of scheduled castes/ scheduled tribes who may need guidance to access Government support facilities. The review may include steps taken for sensitization of police personnel, coordination with agencies/ departments concerned as also communities and civil society organizations.

Encl: as above


(Pawan Mehta)
Deputy Secretary
Women Safety Division

Copy to:

1. ACS/ Principal Secretary/ Secretary
Home Department (All States/ UTs)
2. DGP (All States)
3. Commissioner of Police, Delhi Police