

राष्ट्रीय महिला आयोग

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

FROM STOLEN LIVES TO FREEDOM

The Fight Against Human Trafficking





Suppported by:

Railway Protection Force, Ministry of Railway



APP's FOR WOMEN SAFETY



NCW: Her Legal Guide



Shakti



One Stop Centre



112



HIMMAT



RAKSHA

Useful Links

- □ NCW AHTC: https://www.ncw.nic.in/ncw-cells/anti-human-cell
- Ujjawala Scheme: https://wcd.nic.in/schemes/ujjawala
- NALSA Legal Aid: https://nalsa.gov.in





MESSAGE

Congratulations to the National Commission for Women for working to stop human trafficking. This is a serious crime. It violates human rights. It takes away the dignity, freedom, and future of people, especially women and children.

Indian Railways plays an important role in the fight against human trafficking. Since trains go everywhere, we have a big responsibility. Railway staff are often the first to see signs of trafficking. They can stop it before it goes further. They are the eyes and ears on the ground.

We are committed to protecting the most vulnerable. Indian Railways is ready to support the national fight against human trafficking. Together, we must build systems that are alert, quick to act, and kind.

The launch of this Handbook on Anti-Human Trafficking is a great step. It gives useful information and advice. This will help many people, including railway staff.

The handbook should be used as a guide for action. It shows our promise to stop this crime.

Best wishes for all future work to protect every person's dignity.

Ashwini Vaishnaw Minister of Railways, Government of India





MESSAGE

I extend my appreciation to the National Commission for Women for its unwavering commitment to combating one of the most heinous crimes of our time-human trafficking.

Trafficking in persons is a grave violation of human rights that erodes dignity, undermines freedom, and disproportionately affects women and children. It is both a crime and a humanitarian issue that demands collective resolve, coordinated action, and unwavering compassion.

The launch of this Handbook on Anti-Human Trafficking marks a significant step forward in our national effort to prevent, protect, prosecute, and rehabilitate. I am confident that this resource will serve as a practical guide for law enforcement agencies, service providers, policymakers, and civil society organizations working on the frontlines of this battle.

Together, through awareness, action, and advocacy, we can eradicate trafficking and restore hope, dignity, and justice to every life touched by this inhuman practice.

Let this handbook be not only a guide but a symbol of our resolve.

Annpurna Devi

Minister of Women & Child Development, Government of India





FOREWORD

Human trafficking is a terrible crime that harms people and takes away their freedom. It's a huge problem that we must face head-on to keep everyone safe and treat them fairly, which deprives people of their basic rights, violates human dignity, and takes advantage of their vulnerability. Women and children are disproportionately affected, becoming trapped in cycles of abuse, exploitation, and hopelessness. The National Commission for Women's initiative, this booklet, aims to empower survivors, increase awareness, and strengthen our shared resolve. Through governmental and legal measures, the Indian government has taken important action against human trafficking. Traffickers face severe penalties under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act. These rules are further strengthened by the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (2023), which has a survivor-centred legal approach. In addition to this, the country's comprehensive dedication to prevention, protection, and justice is reflected in the establishment of specialised Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs), victim compensation programs, and rehabilitation assistance.

As a Chairperson of the National Commission for Women, I firmly support trafficking survivors, whose bravery in the face of unfathomable hardship never ceases to amaze. This booklet stands as both a tribute to the unyielding spirit of survivors reclaiming their dignity, and a call to action for every institution, law enforcer, and citizen to rise in united resolve against human trafficking To ensure that no woman or child ever becomes a victim of human trafficking again, let it inspire awareness, action, and accountability.

Smt Vijaya Rahatkar Chairperson, National Commission for Women



Hon'ble SC's Direction on Child Trafficking



To ensure that child trafficking trials are completed within 6 months.

• Reporting:

- Treat missing children's cases as abduction or trafficking unless proven otherwise.
- Ensure mandatory reporting of all human trafficking cases by police or Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs).

• Strengthen Child Protection Systems:

- Create a state-level Anti-Human Trafficking Bureau in each state capital.
- Set up and improve Child Welfare Committees in every district.
- Ensure regular inspections of hazardous industries and take strict action against violators.
- Establish child-friendly courts to support child victims, as seen in Telangana and West Bengal.

• Other measures:

- o Improve Victim Support
- Promote community policing
- Improve coordination with NGOs for rescue, rehabilitation, and awareness efforts



We want to convey a message to one and all, more particularly to parents across the country that they should remain extremely vigilant and careful with their children. A slight carelessness or negligence or laxity on their part may prove to be extremely costly. The pain and agony which parents may have to face when a child dies is different from the pain and agony that parents may have to face when they lose their children to such gangs engaged in trafficking.

: Hon'ble Supreme Court





Introduction

Human trafficking is a grave violation of human rights and dignity. It involves the exploitation of individuals through coercion, deception, or force, and affects women. children. and marginalized communities the most. This booklet is an initiative to create awareness, highlight the legal framework, and empower victims and the public necessary remedies and helplines. Trafficking is not just a crime—it is a threat to humanity.

This booklet is an effort by the National Commission for Women to empower survivors, inform the public, and support efforts for prevention of injustice, and rehabilitation. It aims to educate readers about the legal rights of survivors, immediate response actions, available resources, and to remind every citizen that the fight against trafficking begins with awareness, empathy, and collective responsibility.



01

Understanding Human Trafficking



What is Human Trafficking?

Human trafficking is a grave crime where individuals are exploited through force, fraud, or coercion. Victims are often moved or held against their will for purposes such as forced labour, sexual exploitation, or organ removal.

Types of Human Trafficking:

1. Forced Labour

- People are made to work in factories, homes, farms, or on construction without fair pay or freedom.
- They are often threatened or physically abused to keep working.
- Victims may live in poor conditions with no access to help.

2. Sex Trafficking

- Victims are forced, tricked, or coerced into sex work or pornography.
- Traffickers often use violence, threats, or manipulation to control them.
- This can happen in brothels, massage parlours, online, or on the streets.

3. Child Trafficking

- Children are kidnapped, sold, or taken for labour, begging, or sexual exploitation.
- They are denied education, love, and safety.
- Often targeted because they are vulnerable and easy to control.

4. Organ Trafficking

- People are forced or deceived into giving up their organs, like kidneys or liver.
- This usually happens in places that are not legal or approved.
- Victims may suffer severe health problems or even die.





How Online Trafficking is done?



Through Social Media

- Fake profiles used to befriend or lure victims:
- Promise love, friendship, or money.



Through Job Portals

- Fake job offers in business, domestic work, etc.
- Unverified recruitment agencies.



Through Online Ads

- Misleading ads offering jobs or prizes.
- Scams in the name of auditions or travel



Through Chat Apps

- Encrypted apps like Telegram used for granted
- Hidden groups and private chats



Through Dating Sites

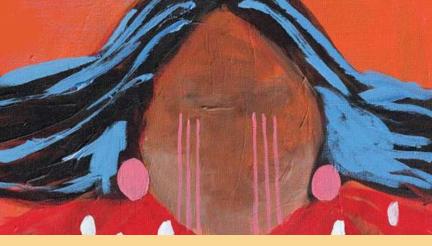
- Fake marriage or promise of relationship.
- Isolate victim from family/friends



Through Dark Web & Crypto

- Sell/trade victims anonymously.
- Use of Bitcoinfor untraceacible payments





Why is Human Trafficking still Happening?

Trafficking happens mainly because of:

Vulnerability of the Victim – Not the Cause, but the Circumstance

"Victims are never to be blamed. It is the traffickers—and the systems that enable them—who are solely responsible for this crime."

The root cause of trafficking lies not in the victims themselves, but in those who exploit their vulnerabilities for profit. Traffickers take advantage of people facing social and economic hardships, using deceit, coercion, or force. These vulnerabilities do not justify the crime—they expose the cruel intentions of those running this illegal trade.

Lack of Education: Traffickers prey on individuals who are unaware of their rights and legal protections.

Illiteracy: Inability to read or understand documents makes it easier for traffickers to manipulate victims with false promises.

Broken Homes: Children and women from unstable or abusive environments are targeted by traffickers who exploit their need for safety or belonging.

Child Abuse: Traffickers often exploit runaway children who are escaping abuse, offering them false hope.

Gender Inequality: In societies where women and girls are devalued, traffickers find it easier to commodify them.

Natural or Man-Made Disasters: Displacement caused by crises creates a fertile ground for traffickers to exploit people in desperate situations.





Demand for Trafficked Persons

Human trafficking is also driven by demand in various sectors:

- Forced Labour: Industries like agriculture, construction, domestic work, and manufacturing often seek cheap or free labour.
- **Sex Trade:** There is ongoing demand for commercial sexual exploitation in many parts of the world.
- **Organ Trade:** Trafficked individuals may be exploited for illegal organ harvesting.
- Child Labour: Children are trafficked for domestic servitude, begging, or cheap labour.
- Conflict Zones: Armed groups recruit children and women through trafficking to use them as soldiers, porters, or sex slaves.



02 RESPONDING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING WHAT YOU MUST DO **BE ALERT** LISTEN REPORT





How can you help?



- **Report Immediately:** Inform the police or Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs) if you suspect trafficking.
- Use Verified Helplines: Call 1091 (Women) or 1098 (Children) for any emergency related to trafficking.
- Collect Evidence Safely: If possible, document time, location, or vehicle number discreetly without endangering anyone.
- Stay Informed: Educate yourself and others about trafficking signs and Indian laws (BNS 143, ITPA, etc.).
- Encourage Legal Aid: Guide victims to District Legal Services Authorities (DLSAs) for free legal help.
- Maintain Confidentiality: Always protect the identity of the victim, especially minors and survivors.
- Raise Awareness: Use social media or community forums responsibly to educate others without naming victims.





DONT's

- Don't Ignore Suspicion: If something seems wrong (locked rooms, scared individuals), do not overlook it.
- **Don't Delay Action:** Waiting too long can risk the life and safety of a trafficked person.
- Don't Share Victim Info: Never post pictures, videos, or names of victims-this violates privacy and laws.
- Don't Engage in Child Labour: Avoid hiring children under 14 for domestic or other work-it's illegal and fuels trafficking.
- **Don't Trust Unverified Placement Agencies:** Many fake job offers or agents are fronts for trafficking.
- **Don't Offer Money to Brokers:** Paying intermediaries for hiring maids, workers, or brides encourages the trafficking network.
- Don't Handle Alone: Always involve legal or law enforcement professionals-never try to rescue a victim on your own.
- Don't Stay Silent Due to Fear: You can make anonymous complaints through the helpline website: www.cybercrime.gov.in.
- Don't Believe It's "Not in My Area": Trafficking happens in rural and urban areas alike-vigilance is always needed.



O3 LEGAL PROTECTIONS AND RIGHTS





Constitutional Safeguards:

Article 23: Prohibits trafficking and forced labour. Article 24: Prohibits child labour under 14 in hazardous jobs.

Key Laws:

- ITPA, 1956: Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act
- POCSO Act, 2012: Protection of Children from Sexual Offences
- PCMA, 2006: Prohibition of Child Marriage Act
- Bonded Labour Act, 1976
- Child Labour Act, 1986
- Transplantation of Human Organs Act, 1994
- State Advisory Committees: To combat trafficking per the Supreme Court's directions.



Act	Key Sections / Provisions
Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (ITPA)	□ Section 3: Punishment for keeping a brothel □ Section 4: Living on the earnings of prostitution □ Section 5: Procuring, inducing or taking person for prostitution □ Section 6: Detaining a person in premises where prostitution is carried on □ Section 7: Prostitution in or in the vicinity of public place □ Section 8: Seduction of a person in custody
Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO)	□ Section 3-10: Penalties for penetrative and non-penetrate sexual assault □ Section 11-14: Sexual harassment and use of child for pornographic purposes □ Section 19-21: Mandatory reporting of offences
Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (PCMA)	□ Section 3: Child marriages to be voidable at the option of the contracting party □ Section 9-11: Punishment for male adult marrying a child, and others who perform/conduct child marriage
Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976	□ Section 4: Abolition of bonded labour system □ Section 16-18: Punishments for enforcement, advancement of bonded debt
Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986	□ Section 3: Prohibition of employment of children □ Section 14: Penalties
Transplantation of Human Organs Act, 1994	□ Section 9: Restrictions on removal and transplantation of human organs □ Section 19-22: Punishment for commercial dealings in human organs
State Advisory Committees	Constituted based on Supreme Court directions in cases like Prajwala v. Union of India Function: Coordinate rescue, rehabilitation, legal aid, and reintegration of trafficking victims





Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023 & Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023

Section	offence	Punishment
143(2)	Trafficking of person	Rigorous imprisonment for not less than 7 years but which may extend to 10 years and fine.
143(3)	Trafficking of more than one person	Rigorous imprisonment for not less than 10 years but which may extend to imprisonment for life and fine
143(4)	Trafficking of a child	Rigorous imprisonment for not less than 10 years but which may extend to imprisonment for life and fine.
143(5)	Trafficking of more than one child	Rigorous imprisonment for not less than 14 years but which may extend to imprisonment for life and fine.
143(6)	Person convicted of offence of trafficking of child on more than one occasion	Imprisonment for life which shall mean the remainder of that person's natural life and fine.
143(7)	Public servant or a police officer involved in trafficking of child	Imprisonment for life which shall mean the remainder of that person's natural life and fine.
144(1)	Exploitation of a trafficked child	Rigorous imprisonment for not less than 5 years but which may extend to 10 years and fine
144(2)	Exploitation of a trafficked person	Rigorous imprisonment for not less than 3 years but which may extend to 7 years and fine

OPERATION SHODH

"The Operation Shodh campaign was conducted at the level of each Police Sub Division and Missing Cell in the State for tracing missing women and children. Under this operation, a total of 4,960 women and 1,364 children who were reported missing were traced. Additionally, 106 women and 703 children, who were not on record, but separated from their families, were also located."

Free Legal Aid -A Lifeline for Survivors

Navigating the legal system can be overwhelming, especially for those recovering from trauma. To ensure that no survivor is denied justice due to financial hardship:

Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987

All women, regardless of their income or social status, are entitled to free legal aid services through District Legal Services Authorities (DLSAs), State Legal Services Authorities (SLSAs), and the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA).

Women can access:

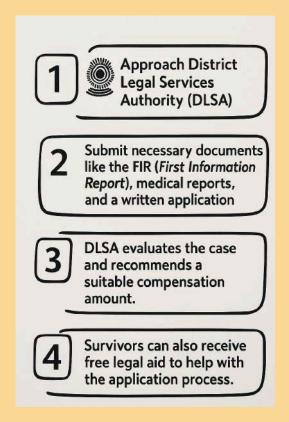
- · Legal advice
- Representation in court
- Assistance with compensation claims
- · Guidance during investigation and trial

Free legal aid plays a critical role in ensuring survivors can assert their rights, seek compensation, and bring perpetrators to justice without facing legal or financial barriers.



Process to be Followed

To apply for DLSA, the Victim or their representative needs to approach the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) and submit necessary documents like the FIR (First Information Report), medical and a written application. The reports, DLSA the case and recommends suitable evaluates a compensation amount. Survivors can also receive free legal aid to help with the application process. This compensation plays a vital role in helping survivors regain stability and live with dignity after such a traumatic experience.





Rescue, Rehabilitation and Eviction Responsibilities

Directing Rescues: When alerted to trafficking, the District Magistrate / Sub Division Magistrate can order police raids or launches of rescue teams. Police must then present rescued victims before the magistrate who ordered the operation. The DM/SDM bears responsibility for ensuring immediate safety and care of victims. This includes providing interim medical aid, safe shelter and legal support. Victims must be informed about post-rescue care options (rehabilitation homes, counselling, etc.) and their rights.

Post-Rescue Care: DMs/SDMs must coordinate with child protection officers, social welfare departments and NGOs to arrange appropriate rehabilitation services. This ensures victims (especially children and women) are protected from revictimization. For example, under ICPS, rescued children can be placed in foster care or specialised homes funded by government schemes (see below, p. 21).

Eviction of Trafficking Dens: Beyond rescue, a key power of the DM is to evict traffickers and close exploitative premises. Under ITPA, once the DM/SDM issues a closure order (after serving notice and hearing defences), it must be executed without delay. This action is distinct from criminal prosecution and can be initiated on a police report or suo motu by the DM/SDM upon believing a place is used for trafficking. Hearing must be provided, and the final order should be a detailed "speaking order" addressing facts and law.

Prosecution Support: While the DM/SDM does not prosecute crimes themselves, they facilitate legal action. They coordinate with police to ensure First Information Reports (FIRs) are filed against traffickers, especially in bonded or child labour cases. DMs also liaise with prosecutors via District Legal Services Authorities (see below) to fast-track cases. Importantly, timely rescue and eviction actions by the DM help preserve evidence during prosecution.





Compensation to victims of Human Trafficking

Section 396 of BNSS - Victim Compensation Scheme

As per MHA advisory dated 20.04.2015, A minimum compensation of 1 lakh is to be paid to victims of human trafficking attack through DLSA/NALSA.

The compensation part of the rehabilitation of victims of violence including rape is governed by provision of Section 357A of the Code of Criminal Procedure which states that every State Government in co-ordination with the Central Government shall prepare a scheme for providing funds for the purpose of compensation to the victim of crime. So far 24 states and 7 UTs have formulated the Victim Compensation Scheme.

The government has introduced the Central Victim Compensation Funds (CVCF) scheme to support victims of rape, acid attacks, human trafficking, and women who have been killed or injured in cross-border firing. This initiative aims to ensure a fair and uniform compensation system across the country.



Victim Protection and Re-trafficking Prevention

Comprehensive Rehabilitation: The DM/SDM plays a central role in preventing rescued victims from being trafficked again. Proper rehabilitation is key – lack of shelter, livelihood and counselling often drives victims back into exploitative situations. The district administration must therefore ensure victims (especially women and children) receive holistic care: trauma counselling, health check-ups, legal aid, education or vocational training, and placement in safe homes or with family (via ICPS foster care, etc.).

Economic Reintegration: DMs should facilitate long-term support, for example, issuing identity documents, ensuring banks open accounts for survivors, linking them to skill-development schemes or subsidised loans. By activating CSR funds and welfare schemes, the DM helps survivors achieve sustainable livelihoods. Quick issuance of release certificates for freed bonded labourers, for instance, allows them to claim government benefits (per legal precedent).

Legal Protection: Victims often face threats from traffickers; the DM/SDM will ensure they are kept safe. This may involve arranging witness protection (through courts and police), preventing intimidation, or even relocating victims if needed. The DM should also watch for secondary victimisation – for instance, ensuring that women rescued from brothels are not prosecuted for prostitution (a prior bad practice) but treated as survivors. Publicly reinforcing victim rights (through press statements or policy) contributes to a protective environment.





Partnering with NCW

What is the NCW Anti-Human Trafficking Cell (AHTC)?

The AHTC at the National Commission for Women (NCW) acts as a national coordination unit addressing the trafficking of women and girls, facilitating rescue, legal support, and rehabilitation. It recommends policy reforms and supports interstate cooperation.

Helpline and Complaint Redressal

NCW operates a 24x7 women's helpline number: 7827170170. Complaints can be submitted online at the website: www.ncw.gov.in

NCW supports trafficking victims and coordinates rescue operations with state authorities

Rescue, Legal Aid, and Rehabilitation

NCW collaborates with police, State Women's Commissions, and Legal Services Authorities to ensure FIR registration, legal aid, and post-rescue support. It monitors survivor safety and ensures judicial follow-up in trafficking cases.

Shelter Home Monitoring

NCW inspects shelter homes (Ujjawala, Nirbhaya) to assess legal access, hygiene, infrastructure, and mental health support for survivors. Reports are shared with state and central authorities for action

Training and Capacity Building

Over 70 workshops have been conducted to train police officers, including 10 sessions held with the Railway Protection Force (RPF) in the past year. Additionally, NGO staff and legal personnel have been trained on survivorcentred rescue protocols and trauma-informed care.





NCW Key Contributions in Fight Against Human Trafficking

- \cdot + 2,500 women assisted
- + 300 inter-state cases handled
- + 20 states covered
- + 70 workshops and training programs conducted

Importance of 4 'P'

Prevention

Reduce vulnerability of survivors through awareness, empowerment & support. Demand-side reduction also helps in prevention of human trafficking.

Prosecution

Increase certainty of conviction and opportunity cost. Trafficking will be reduced when cost of the trade is more than its alternatives.

Protection

Government and nongovernmental organisation support of survivors. Care for survivors to acknowledge and rehabilitate them.

Partnership

Tap into the interconnectedness of multiple layers of authority & society to combat trafficking. A combined effort across networks is required.







Role of Railway Protection Force (RPF)

Recognizing women as symbols of love, care, strength, and eternity, the RPF as on March 2024 boasts the largest share of women personnel (9%) among Central Paramilitary Forces in India. Specially trained to ensure safety and provide assistance to female passengers in distress, they create a secure environment for travelers, particularly women.

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) remains committed to safeguarding the vulnerable, particularly women and children, across the vast expanse of the Indian Railways network. In alignment with the national mission to combat human trafficking and ensure dignity for all, RPF has undertaken proactive initiatives such as Meri Saheli and Operation Nanhe Farishtey.

Key aspects of RPF role for women safety:

• Meri Saheli initiative - Launched across the Indian Railways network, this initiative aims to provide safety and security to lady passengers traveling alone or with minors on long-distance trains. Presently, on an average, 230 teams are being deployed for this purpose covering more than 400 trains on an average daily across Indian Railways. These teams have been instrumental in apprehending individuals found inappropriately traveling in ladies' compartments, ensuring a safer environment for female passengers. During the year 2023, 77839 males found travelling in reserved for ladies compartments have apprehended followed with legal course of action.

- Operation Matrishakti RPF personnel, especially women officers, go beyond their call of duty to assist pregnant women who go into labor during their train journeys. In the year 2023 alone, lady personnel of RPF assisted in 206 childbirths.
- Operation AAHT (Against Human Trafficking) Women and girl child are more vulnerable to Human trafficking. RPF has launched an operation against Human Trafficking. In 2023, 1048 persons were rescued from traffickers, with 257 traffickers.
- Operation Nanhe Farishtey An intensive drive to rescue children in need of care and protection found in contact with railways has been launched. During the year 2023, 3973 girl children were rescued by RPF.
- Operation Dignity RPF lady personnel also play a crucial role in rescuing adults, including women, in need of care and protection. These individuals may be runaways, abandoned, drug addicts, destitute, or needing medical assistance. In 2023, approximately 3492 such persons were rescued.

Through these operations and initiatives, the RPF not only ensures the security of passengers but also demonstrates the invaluable contributions of women in creating a safer, more inclusive railway environment for all. Women in the RPF are not just symbols of empowerment; they are the embodiment of strength, compassion, and dedication, contributing significantly to the safety and well-being of railway passengers across India.

The stories of courage, vigilance, and compassion reflect RPF's unwavering resolve to create a secure environment across the railways and contribute meaningfully to national efforts against trafficking and exploitation.





Helpline for Women

National Commission for Women 24 x 7 Helpline-

7827170170

Police Helpline

112

Domestic Violence, Assault and Abuse Helpline

1091

Cyber Helpline

1930

Women Helpline Number

181

Child Helpline

1098





NATIONAL COAMMISSION FOR WOMEN

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Complaints and Inquiry Cell

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Legal Cell

Phone: +91-11-26944877 Email: legal-ncw@nic.in

Anti-Human Trafficking Cell

Email: antitrafficking-ncw@nic.in

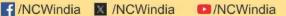
North East Cell:

Email: nricell-ncw@nic.in

NRI Cell:

Email: nricell-ncw@nic.in











IF YOU ARE FACING OR WITNESSING HUMAN TRAFFICKING / EXPLOITATION

CONTACT NCW





NCW Helpline Number 7827-170-170

(24x7 Helpline)



Online Complaint Portal ncwapps.nic.in/onlinecomplaiIntsv2



complaintcell-ncw@nic.in



The National Commission for Women Plot No. 21, Jasola Institutional Area, New Delhi - 110025



Suppported by: Railway Protection Force, Ministry of Railway

