

**All Police officers should be re-trained on various aspects of sexual offences**

Ministry of Women and Child Development

**All Police officers should be re-trained on various aspects of sexual offences****Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi writes to Chief Ministers of all States/UTs highlighting necessary steps for dealing with sexual offences**

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In a letter addressed to Chief Ministers of all the States/UTs, Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi, Union Minister for Women and Child Development has outlined various steps to be taken by the States/UTs in preventing and curbing the crimes against women and children. Some of the steps mentioned in the letter are:

1. All police officers should be re-trained on various aspects of sexual offences particularly those related to collection and preservation of evidence.
2. Instructions may be issued to all police officers that utmost priority is to be given to complete the investigation of cases of sexual offences against children strictly as per the timelines of Law.
3. State Governments must take strict action against those police officers who are found to be obstructing the investigation or colluding with the perpetrators of such cases.
4. A quick and timely professional investigation is the only method in which a potential offender can be deterred but this can be done only by the states as the police department is the state subject. Forming a special cell only for sexual offences or specially for sexual offences on children, would be a significant step in this regard.

The Women and Child Development Minister offered help to State Governments in establishing Forensic Laboratories in states which can be used for forensic analysis of evidence in the investigation of sexual offences.

The WCD Minister has requested the states to generate awareness among the children in using the e-box set up under POCSO with child-help line number 1098. The Minister also highlighted that till date 175 One stop centres for women affected by violence have been set up by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. One Stop Centres are to help those women who have no access to either police or medical facilities or are not able to visit a police station in times of distress.

The letter also stressed that Section 21 of the POCSO Act may be invoked in all cases wherever failure to report or record is noted. Section 21 states that any officer who fails to report or record the commission of an offence under section 19/20 of the Act is liable for punishment.

The WCD Minister called for suggestions from the state Governments on dealing with the crimes against women and children.

AKR/NG/SKK

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