Standing Order No. 81-17

"HELPDESKS" FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN AT POLICE STATIONS

1) **Objectives:** The extension of women's right is the basic principle of all social progress. Given the structure of our social and criminal justice system, the woman and especially the child does not dare to approach a police station, because, sympathy is the last thing they expect there, a report says. Imagine a traumatized victim of violence walking into a police station and how reassuring will the person feel if a "Women and Child Desk" manned by a woman police officer is there to hear the grievance.

The aim and objective of setting up of "Helpdesk for Women and Children" in all Police Stations is to help those women and children, who suffer from social inequalities and seek Police assistance. Dowry, domestic violence, rape, harassment of women at home, work places or in public places, child abuse, child trafficking, child marriage, child labour, sexual exploitation of children and various other inequalities come under the purview of the "Helpdesk for Women and Children".

2) **Constitution:**

2.1 **Helpdesk** for women and children shall be set up in a separate room of all the Police Stations in the A & N Islands. The room shall be located preferably adjoining to the reporting Room or at the entrance of the PS building.

2.2 A women police officer in the rank of SI/ASI/HC available in the Station shall be designated as Desk Officer of the Women and Children Helpdesk and at least one lady constable shall be exclusively posted to assist the Desk Officer through specific order by the District Superintendent of Police concerned.

2.3 The Helpdesk shall function during daytime i.e from 8 AM to 8 PM on all days.

2.4 The Helpdesk shall function under the control and supervision of the Station House Officer of the concerned Police Station.
2.5 A bi-lingual sign-board depicting "Women and Children 'Helpdesk' should be prominently displayed outside the room and at the entrance of Police Station. A name board with name and designation and contact number of the Desk Officer should be displayed conspicuously behind the Desk Officer.

3) General Duties and Responsibilities:

3.1 The Desk Officer and the staff attached should:-

(i) Be polite and caring to the women & children approaching the desk.
(ii) Listen to the complainant/victim with patience and compassion.
(iii) If required, provide facilities such as drinking water and use of toilet.
(iv) Ensure that the details are kept confidential and facilitate to lodge the complaint or the FIR.
(v) Provide services without being judgmental and biased due to caste, creed, current situation, family background or past history.
(vi) Uphold the dignity and respect of the Complainant/victim.
(vii) Not give any wrong hopes and information.

3.2 The Desk Officer shall be responsible for receiving all complaints lodged at the Police Station by women and children.

3.3 The Desk Officer should maintain a register (format enclosed) and the same must be checked by the Station house officer daily and by the SDPOs once in a week.

3.4 If the complaint by a women or child reveals commission of any cognizable offence, it shall be the duty of Desk Officer to get the case registered immediately and ensure that a copy of the FIR is given to the complaint free of cost. The acknowledgement of the complainant should be retained for record and the details must be entered in the concerned register.

3.5 If the complaint does not reveal commission of any cognizable case then the Desk Officer shall enter the fact in the General Diary and concerned register, inform and advise the victim to opt for other available recourse in her/his situation.

3.6 The Officer-In-Charge of the Police Station, the Desk Officer of the "Women and Children 'Helpdesk'" and the staff attached to the desk should be conversant with laws in force relating to women and children
Including special provisions relating to them and ensure that these are implemented in letter and spirit.

3.7 Copies of all Laws/Rules related to Women and Children such as POCISO, Dowry Prohibition Act, Domestic Violence Act, JJ Act, Protection of children from Sexual Offences Act etc. should be readily available at all Women and Children Helpdesks.

3.8 The traumatized women victims and children require counseling and temporary shelter before they are accepted back in the families or otherwise rehabilitated. The Desk Officer shall arrange to refer such cases to the Short Stay Home, Destitute Home and Children’s Home etc. as the case may be. To facilitate this, the Desk Officer shall maintain a list of Family Centers, Short Stay Homes, for Women and Children etc. with the names and addresses of the functionaries as well as their telephone numbers to contact them at the time of need.

3.9 Several NGOs at the District level are working for the cause of women and children. The SHO of the Police Station and the Desk Officer should be accessible to such NGOs and co-ordinate such efforts to improve the condition of women and children within the legal frame work. To facilitate this, the Desk Officer shall maintain a list of such NGOs functioning in the P. S area and the district, with names, addresses of the functionaries and telephone numbers to contact them as and when necessary.

3.10 The women victims and children may require medical attention for their medico-legal examination and treatment. The Desk Officer shall maintain a list of hospitals and lady doctors available in the P.S. Jurisdiction/Sub-Division for referring the cases of women and children victims at the time of need.

3.11 Women and child victims shall NOT be allowed to be photographed after raids as law prohibits revealing the name of victims of offences U/s 376, 376A, 376B, 376C and 337D I.P.C., and child participants in offences under the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, 1956 as they are victims of crime.

4) Duties & Responsibilities while handling Delinquent Juveniles and Accused/Arrested Women:

4.1 No lady or children shall be made to stay for long period in Police Station. The SHO should ensure strict compliance of laws and guidelines in force relating to examination/detention of women and delinquent children.

4.2 The Desk Officer and staff will ensure that the guidelines prescribed under various laws and by the Apex court relating to arrest and treatment of women and children while at the Police Stations are
4.3 The women victims/accused persons shall be dealt with all decency and due regard to their honor and dignity, so that they do not feel harassed at the hands of the police on the plea of examination or interrogation.

4.4 Similarly, the child victims and juveniles in conflict with law shall be taken care of and dealt with sympathy in accordance with provisions of law relating to children.

4.5 The traumatized women victims as well as women accused and delinquent juvenile of any offence, while at Police Stations shall be segregated from others, and examined & interrogated separately in a separate room of the P.S. with due regard to their privacy and in accordance with law.

4.6 In addition to the aforesaid duties, the officers and constables attached to the Helpdesk shall perform normal duties of the Police Station assigned to them.

5) **Training and Material:**

5.1 It shall be the duty of the Principal, Police Training School, A & N Islands to organize ‘Sensitization Training Courses’ for Officers and Constables attached to “Women and Children Helpdesk”. The District SP’s, shall ensure that all officers and Constables attached to the desk attend the training course.

5.2 The District SsP shall subscribe to various publications of the National Commission for Women including the monthly Newsletter “Rashtra Mahila” in Hindi and English and make it available to all the “Women and Children Helpdesk”. Arrangements should also be made to provide these desks with all the latest laws/rules/gazettes as well as various judicial pronouncements and guidelines of the Apex Court and different High Courts related to women and children.

6) **Nodal Officer:**

6.1 The Deputy Superintendent of Police (CID) will be the nodal officer of A & N Islands for all cases involving women and children which may have any human trafficking angle to it. He shall analyze all such cases and act accordingly.

6.2 The Desk Officers of “Women and Children Helpdesk” through their respective Station House Officer’s should invariably submit detailed report to the Nodal Officer of cases such as kidnapping, abduction, etc involving women and children which may have human trafficking angle to it.

7) The SHO/PS should ensure that these instructions are followed meticulously by all concerned while dealing with the case of a women and child victim.
8) Copy of these instructions may also be kept by Helpdesk of every Police Station.

(Sudhir Yadav, IPS)
Director General of Police
A & N Islands

Copy to:

1. District Superintendent of Police (South Andaman)
2. District Superintendent of Police (N&M Andaman)
3. District Superintendent of Police (Nicobar Group)
4. Superintendent of Police (CID)
5. Dy. Superintendent of Police (CID (Nodal Officer))
6. SDPO South Andaman
7. SDPO Bamboofat
8. SDPO Rangat
9. SDPO Diglipur
10. SDPO Havelock
11. SDPO Nicobar
12. SDPO Campbell Bay
13. In-charge SPUWC
14. All Station House Officers (23)
15. All Desk Officers of Women & Children 'Helpdesk' (All PSs)
17. DGP/Genl/68/19/2010-14

Copy for Information to:

1. Inspector General of Police
2. Inspector General of Police (Intelligence)
3. Inspector General of Police (Law & Order)
4. Dy. Inspector General of Police (HQ)