

THE WOMEN'S LAW BOOK

A Pocket Zine of Your Rights in India

For every woman who's ever wondered: "Can they do that to me?"
(Answer: No. And this zine shows you why.)



MADE WITH LAW

+

LOVE BY NITYA SINH

Legal Designer | Law + Art | @legalredesigned

Don't
be afraid
to speak



POSH
Act



Welcome to The Women's Law Book. This is not a boring legal book.

This is your friendly pocket guide to power — a zine designed to help you understand, claim, and use your legal rights as a woman in India.

You shouldn't need a lawyer just to know what's legal and what's not. This zine breaks it all down — clearly, practically, and without fear.

Whether you're a student, employee, homemaker, tenant, or survivor — you have rights. And knowing them is your first step toward using them.

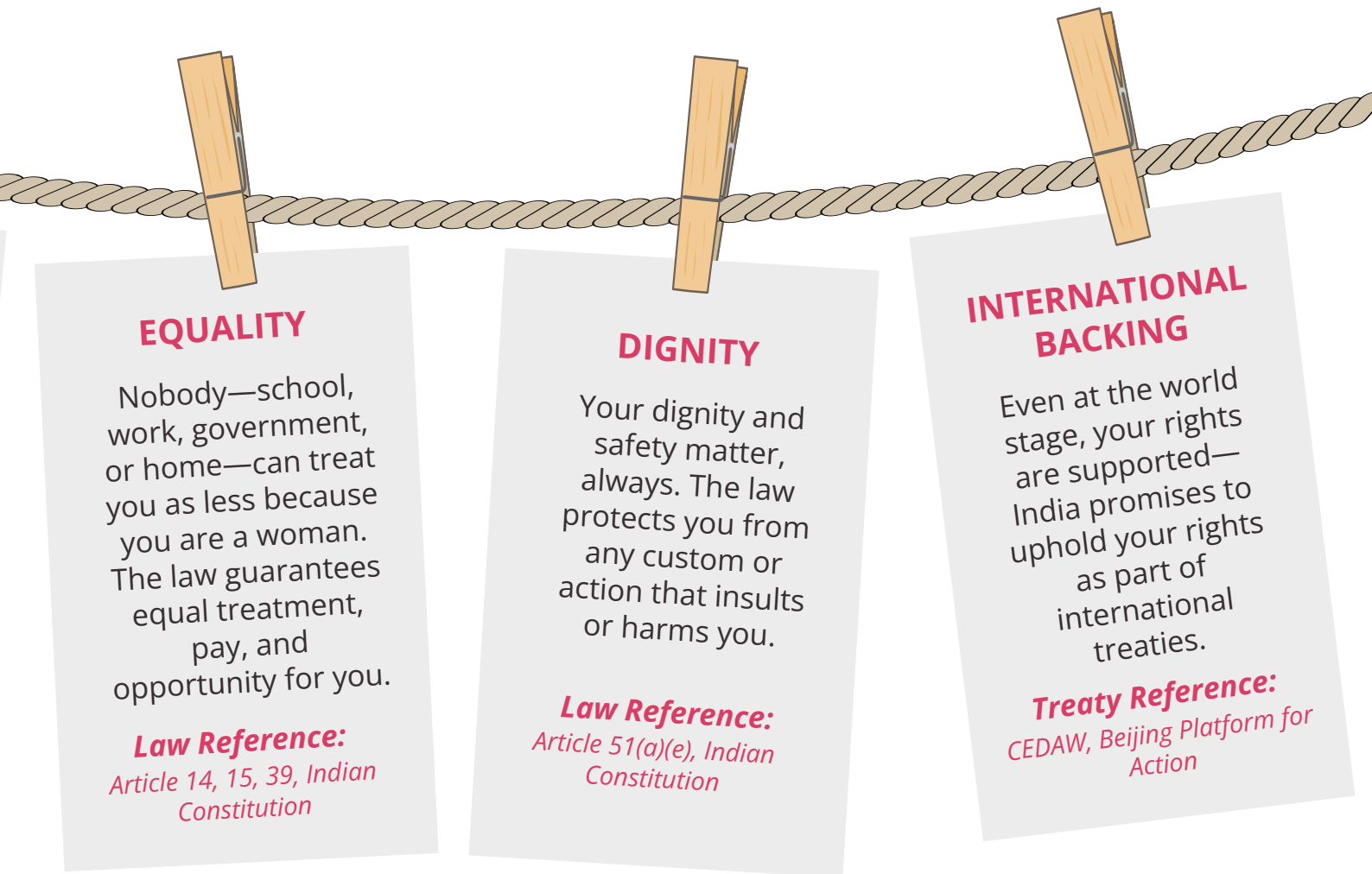
Every line is backed by real Indian laws and policies.
Every word is written like I'm sitting across from you, breaking it down over chai.



YOUR SUPERPOWERS:

What the Law Guarantees You

These are your fundamental rights. They are not a gift, not a favor — they are your birthright. The Indian Constitution and global treaties guarantee them, and no one can take them away.



EQUALITY

Nobody—school, work, government, or home—can treat you as less because you are a woman. The law guarantees equal treatment, pay, and opportunity for you.

Law Reference:

Article 14, 15, 39, Indian Constitution

DIGNITY

Your dignity and safety matter, always. The law protects you from any custom or action that insults or harms you.

Law Reference:

Article 51(a)(e), Indian Constitution

INTERNATIONAL BACKING

Even at the world stage, your rights are supported—India promises to uphold your rights as part of international treaties.

Treaty Reference:

CEDAW, Beijing Platform for Action

Flip the page to see your superpowers in action at work, home, and beyond.

BOSS LADY RULES:

Your Rights at Work

They can't ask you if you're married. Or make you work late without safety measures. Yep. It's the law.

EQUAL PAY

No matter where you work—industry, office, or farm—the law guarantees equal pay for equal work. If you're doing the same job as a man, your salary can't be less (Equal Remuneration Act & Constitution, Art. 39)

Ask HR for a pay slip! You have the right to see how your pay compares

MATERNITY LEAVE

If you're pregnant, you get at least 26 weeks of paid leave—and your job is protected while you care for your baby (Maternity Benefit Act). This applies whether you're married or not, and includes adopted/newborns.

Hand your maternity application in writing. The law says you must get paid leave and workplace support.

NIGHT SHIFTS & SAFETY

You can work night shifts if you want—but your boss must keep you safe."

- Written permission required from you
- Secure transport between home and work
- CCTV, female supervisors, and group shifts
- At least 12-hour rest between shifts

You can say no to night shifts, or ask for safer conditions. It's the law!

POSH & ICC

Every workplace with 10 or more employees must have an Internal Committee to handle sexual harassment complaints (POSH Act, 2013). They must listen, act quickly (90 days), and keep it confidential. They're legally required to do yearly trainings and report to the government

If you feel harassed—even by a boss or customer—you can complain. Write or email the ICC directly!

*Workplace trouble? File a complaint with your company, call **181**, or contact the National Commission for Women. You are protected by law—no boss, manager, or owner can take that away.*



CAMPUS = SAFE SPACE

(Legally Speaking)

From your first class to your last exam — you deserve a safe, equal, harassment-free college experience. Here's what the law says.

RTE Basics

- Every girl has the right to free and compulsory education up to age 14 under the RTE Act (2009).
- Colleges must admit you fairly, without bias based on caste, religion, income, or gender.

Inclusion Scholarships

- National schemes like Beti Bachao, Samagra Shiksha, and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya help girls stay in school.
- Tribal, Dalit, and rural girls have special provisions to help them succeed like Special scholarships and hostels exist —plus free cycles, uniforms, textbooks, and support for disabled & marginalized. Ask your college about them.

Anti-Harassment Cell

- Every university must have a Grievance Cell or ICC (Internal Complaints Committee) under UGC & POSH laws.
- You can report harassment by faculty, students, or staff — and they must take it seriously



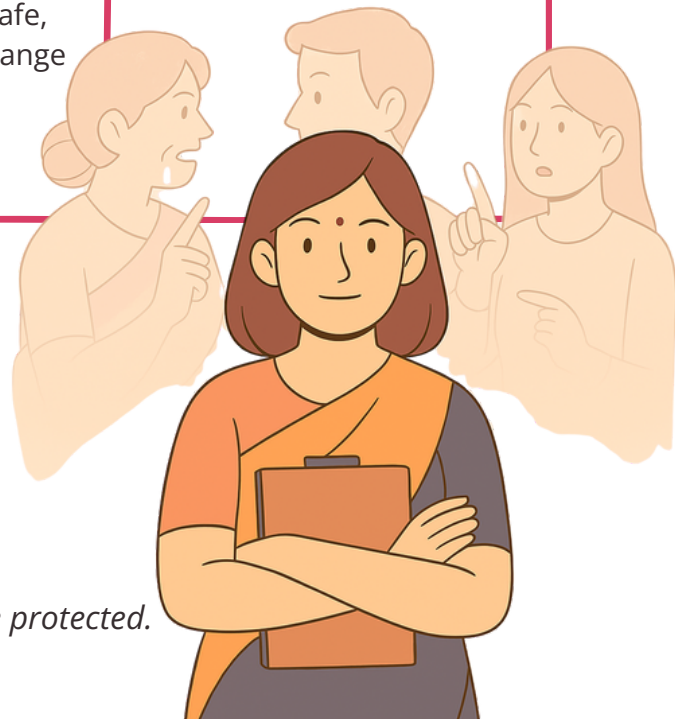
Did You Know?

"If your college or school won't accept your complaint, you can go straight to the police, university, or women's commission and still be heard."

YOUR HOME YOUR RIGHTS

Whether you're a daughter, wife, or daughter-in-law — the law stands with you inside your home.

DIVORCE, SEPARATION & MAINTENANCE	PROTECTION FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	MARRIAGE & DOWRY
EQUAL RIGHTS: You can seek divorce, separation, or annulment if you face cruelty, desertion, or incompatibility—regardless of faith (secular and religious law). MAINTENANCE & SHELTER: After separation/divorce, you and your children can claim monthly maintenance and residence under Section 125 CrPC and allied laws. Applies to married, formerly married, and live-in relationships. SAFE CUSTODY: Mothers can seek child custody and safety orders—courts prioritize children's welfare.	COVERED BY LAW: The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 shields you from ALL forms of abuse at home—physical, mental, verbal, sexual, economic. WHO'S PROTECTED: Not just wives! Daughters, sisters, mothers-in-law, or any woman living in the household. OPTIONS FOR HELP: • Call 181, go to any police station, or visit a One Stop Centre. • Ask a Protection Officer/court for urgent orders to keep you safe, provide shelter, or arrange for maintenance.	DOWRY IS ILLEGAL: Giving, taking, asking = crime under Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961. If you face harassment or abuse, you can use the Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA) to get: • Immediate protection • Right to stay in shared home • Money for expenses / children • Custody orders & support QUICK TIP: Call 181 or go to your nearest One Stop Centre to file a complaint or get help.



You are not alone. You are protected.

YOUR RIGHTS AS A PATIENT

Whether you're visiting a clinic, hospital, or government health center – you have rights. Let's break them down clearly.



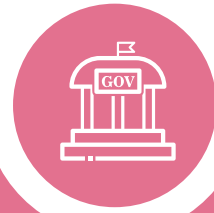
PRIVACY & CONSENT

- No doctor, nurse, or hospital staff can examine, treat, or reveal your health details without your clear, informed YES.
- All hospitals—public or private—must provide safe, private spaces for examinations and conversations.
- No one can deny you care, test, or medicines because of your gender.



ABORTION ACCESS (MARRIED OR NOT)

- As per 2021-2025 law, abortion is legal up to 24 weeks for both married and unmarried women, with only the woman's written consent needed.
- You do not need permission from anyone else, including partner or family.
- Refusal of service, threats, or moral judgement by clinics is illegal and can be reported.
- You have the right to confidentiality during all procedures.



GOVERNMENT HEALTH SCHEMES

- Women of any age/faith can access free or subsidized healthcare in empaneled hospitals under schemes like Ayushman Bharat (PM-JAY).
- This covers deliveries, surgeries, checkups, cancer screenings, and more.
- Ask at the hospital desk—no bribes or extra payments are needed to enroll.

You can speak up! You can file a complaint with the hospital, health department, or call



YOUR RIGHTS AS A TENANT

When You Pay, You Have Power



Written Agreement Is Mandatory: All rental agreements must be in writing and digitally stamped through a government portal. As of July 1, 2025, any agreement without a digital stamp is invalid, and landlords can be fined ₹5,000.

Fair Rent and Transparent Agreements: Rent must be at market rate—no excessive charges. If you feel rent is unfair, you may approach the Rent Authority or Tribunal as per the Model Tenancy Act and Rent Control Act.

Security Deposit Limit: Maximum 2 months' rent for residential tenancies, 6 for commercial. Amount and terms to be stated in the agreement. Landlord must refund your deposit within the time specified after proper deductions.

Formal Eviction Process Only:

- **Notice:** Landlord must serve proper written notice—generally 30 days, unless otherwise stated in your agreement or local law.
- **Valid Reasons:** Only specific legal grounds are valid for eviction: non-payment, major contract breach, property misuse, or landlord's bona fide need (with strong proof).
- **Court Order Required:** Eviction can only proceed via Rent Court/Tribunal order, not by force or intimidation. Illegal to cut water, power, or physically remove you.

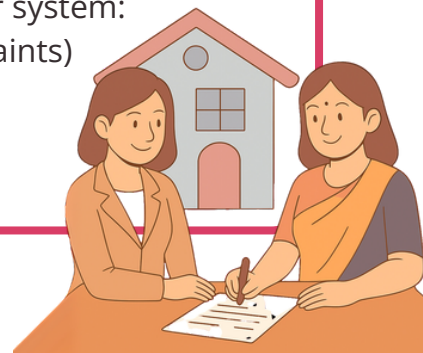
Peaceful Possession & Privacy: Landlord cannot enter the property without 24 hours' written notice and only between 7AM–8PM. No surprise visits allowed.

Right to Repairs & Habitable Housing: Landlord must maintain the structure and basic services. If neglected, you may claim repairs at their expense or reduced rent for period of disruption.

Receipts & Documentation: Get written receipts for every payment. Retain copies of your rental, deposit, and correspondence—essential in disputes.

Grievance Redressal: Disputes are handled by the three-tier system:

- a. Rent Authority (registers agreements, receives complaints)
- b. Rent Court (decides eviction/rent disputes)
- c. Rent Tribunal (appeals) — resolves all cases within 60 days by law. No need to go to civil court.



YOUR RIGHTS AS A CONSUMER

As a Consumer – Your Everyday Power!



Right to Safety: Protection from hazardous or unsafe goods and services. Products must have BIS certification if applicable.



Right to Information: Sellers must provide clear, truthful info about products/services, including price, ingredients, expiry, origin, return policies.



Right to Choose: Freedom to select products/services without forced sales or bundling.



Right to Be Heard: File complaints and be heard by sellers, manufacturers, platforms, and regulators.



Right to Seek Redressal: Get refunds, replacements, or compensation via legally mandated Redressal Commissions.



Right to Consumer Education: The government's "Jago Grahak Jago" campaign informs consumers about rights and scams.

HOW TO COMPLAIN

1. Contact seller/service provider directly; keep records.
2. If unresolved, contact National Consumer Helpline (NCH):
 - Toll-free: 1800-11-4000 / 1915
 - SMS: 8800001915
 - Online/app: consumerhelpline.gov.in
3. File formal grievance via E-Daakhil Portal for digital/district level resolution — no lawyer needed. Complaint resolution expected within 7 days per NCH 3.0 guidelines (2025)



KNOW THIS

Consumer Redressal: Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions resolve complaints within 60 days.

Keep Proof: Always get and keep receipts/bills or payment confirmations, physical or digital.

Beware Hidden Charges: Ask for detailed cost breakdowns before paying.

IN TROUBLE?

THE LAW IS STILL YOURS

A guide to knowing what you can do & where you can go when your rights are violated.

STEP 1: NOTE DOWN WHAT HAPPENED

Write the time, place, what was said or done, and who witnessed it. If you can, take screenshots, photos, or voice memos to keep proof.

STEP 2: REACH OUT FOR HELP

Talk to someone you trust—a friend, teacher, HR, or mentor. You don't have to face this alone. Speaking up is powerful.

STEP 3: FILE A COMPLAINT OR GET SUPPORT

If safe, report formally—go to HR, your workplace Internal Complaints Committee (ICC), the police, or call helplines like 181. You have the right to seek justice and support.



Remember: If you feel unsafe or hurt, speak up. Asking for help is your right—never a favor.

HOW TO FILE A COMPLAINT AT WORK

1



Know your rights – You have the legal right to report harassment or discrimination.

2

Document what happened – Note down dates, times, what was said/done, witnesses (if any)



3



Speak to HR or Inform your Internal Committee (IC)

Write a complaint – You can email or submit a written application



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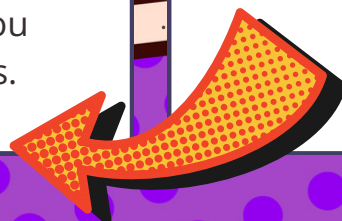
If there's no IC? – You can approach the Local Committee (LC) or complain to legal authorities.



6



You can have a friend or colleague support you through the process.



EXTRA SHIELDS:

New Laws & Justice Access

New Laws & Justice Access in 2025

Child Marriage Act: Raising the Age to 21 Years for Women

- The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, amended in 2021, now increases the minimum legal age of marriage for women to 21 years (previously 18).
- Marriages below this age are voidable at the woman's option until five years after reaching 21 (up from two years).

SHe-Box: Online Sexual Harassment Complaint Portal

- The SHe-Box portal allows any woman working with or visiting Central Government offices to file sexual harassment complaints online, securely and anonymously.
- Complaints can be monitored for status, and the portal connects complainants to Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs).
- SHe-Box 2.0 integrates this digital tool into broader legal reforms improving access to justice at the grassroots level.

Trafficking Protection: Tougher Punishments & Support

- Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, sections 143 & 144 define trafficking and exploitation with harsh penalties, particularly for children and organized crime rings.
- The government funds Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs) across the country to rescue and rehabilitate victims.
- India signed international agreements to combat cross-border trafficking.
- Victims receive legal, medical, and rehabilitation support under government schemes.

Victim Compensation: Right to Financial Support

- Under Section 396 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, states must prepare schemes to compensate victims of crime who suffer injury, loss, or disability.
- Compensation is available even if offenders are unknown.
- Victims receive free immediate medical aid and rehabilitation support.



These laws apply to you — no matter your background, religion, or region.

EXTRA SHIELDS:

New Laws & Justice Access

New Laws & Justice Access in 2025

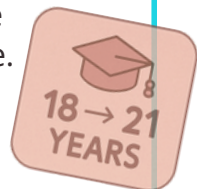
Child Marriage Act

What Changed?

- Legal Age for Women: 21 years (Earlier: 18)
- If Married Below 21? You can void the marriage anytime till 5 years after turning 21.

Why It Matters:

Empowers women to complete education & decide their future.



Quick Tip:

If pressured into marriage, call 1098 (Childline) or 181 (Women Helpline)

Trafficking Protection:

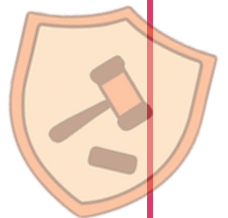
(Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 – Sec. 143 & 144)

Key Protections:

- Strict Penalties for traffickers, especially child & organized crime cases.
- AHTUs (Anti-Human Trafficking Units) in all states for rescue & rehab.
- Cross-Border Protection: India's global commitment.

Support:

- Legal Aid, Medical Care, Counselling funded by the government.



Report → Rescue → Rehab → Justice

SHe-Box

What is it?

- An online sexual harassment complaint portal, confidential portal for women working in organized and unorganized sectors
- Track Your Complaint + linked to Internal Committees (ICCs).

Why Use It?

Safe, paperless, and you stay informed

Link: <https://shebox.wcd.gov.in/>



Victim Compensation

(BNSS, 2023 – Sec. 396)

You're Entitled To:

- Compensation for injuries/loss – even if the offender isn't found.
- Free Immediate Medical Aid & Rehab.

Type of Harm	Support
Injury/Disability	Medical + Cash Support
Loss of Livelihood	Monthly Relief

Contact your State Legal Services Authority (SLSA) to apply.

These laws apply to you — no matter your background, religion, or region.

EMERGENCY HELPLINES

Who to Call. Where to Go.

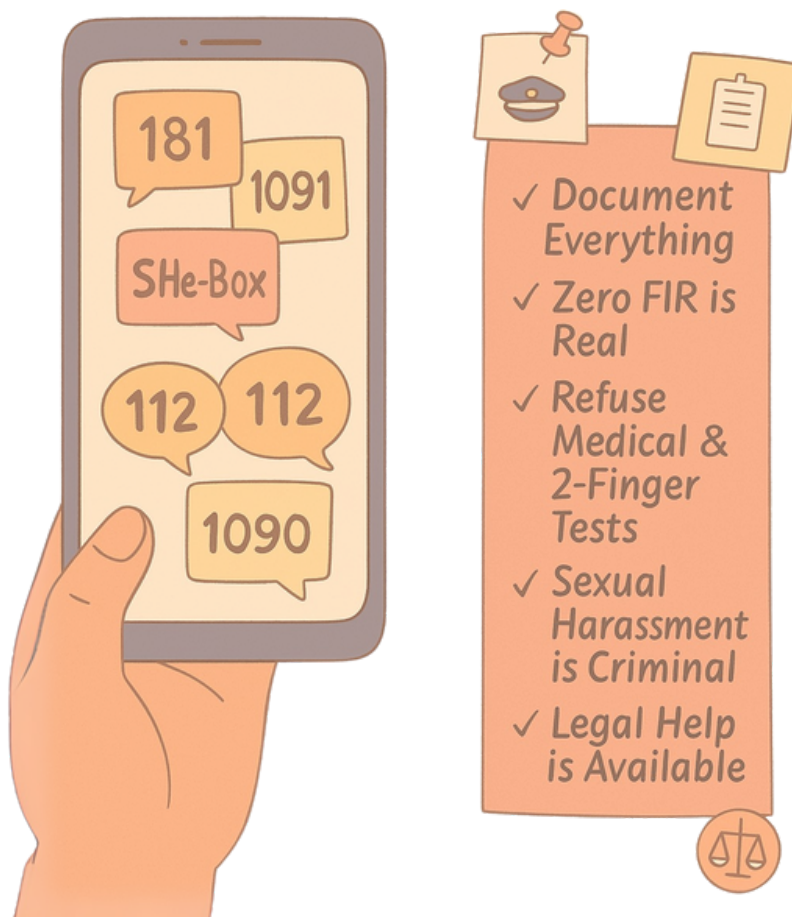
Helpline / Service	Contact	Description
Women's Helpline (24/7)	181	Immediate assistance, referrals to police, hospitals, legal aid, or psychological counseling. Supported by Govt under Mission Shakti and linked with One Stop Centres for women's protection. Confidential and anonymous.
Emergency Response Number	112	Police, ambulance, fire, rescue, integrated emergency services anywhere in India.
NCW Helpline	7827-170-170 / ncw.gov.in	Operated by National Commission for Women offering legal support, complaint registration, counseling.
National Child Helpline	1098	Children's emergencies and protection.
Cyber Crime Reporting	Cybercrime.gov.in / 1930	National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal for online abuse, stalking, fraud. Anonymous reporting and tracking.

This zine gives updated info as of August 2025. For personal legal advice, contact your local legal services or women's support organization.

EMERGENCY HELPLINES

Who to Call. Where to Go.

Helpline / Service	Contact	Description
Free Legal Aid (NALSA)	District Legal Services Authority / nalsa.gov.in	Free legal counseling, representation, and aid for women, children, marginalized groups.
Women Help Desks & One Stop Centres	At local police stations and district offices	Direct assistance on domestic violence, sexual harassment, and related issues.



Don't
be afraid
to speak



POSH
Act



Dear Reader,

You now hold in your hands not just a zine, but a little shield of knowledge. Every right you've read here is yours — you don't need permission to claim it. The law is for you, and it works best when you know how to use it.

May you never feel powerless again, and may you pass this knowledge on — to your friends, your daughters, your co-workers, and even strangers who need it.

This book is yours. Your rights are yours. Never let them go.

Don't stop here. Share this zine, talk about it, and keep asking questions. Knowledge grows when it's shared.

