

Role of women power line: 1090 in women empowerment

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Abstract

Women empowerment means equipping women to be economically independent, self-confident, and capable to face any difficult situation.

The paper is on the awareness and success of the women helpline 1090 which is established by the Government of Uttar Pradesh for the protection of women against violence and harassment faced by them in the society and at the workplace. This helpline has been introduced by the Government to control the criminal offences increasing against women and the U P Government is taking each and every measure to expand this service in the whole of the State. The objective is to provide a platform where every woman is able to register a complaint whenever they face any kind of harassment/problem whether at home/workplace and in all spheres of the society.

To gauge whether the objectives of this powerline are being achieved, in this empirical paper based on a study of college going girls in Lucknow, certain deductions are arrived at, and some suggestions for a more effective powerline have been made.

Keywords: women powerline, aim, harassment, security, effectiveness

Introduction

The status of women in India has been subject to great changes and the situation now is very different from the past. The women now are more effective and no longer slotted to be either as a mother, wife or daughter, they are now becoming educationists, social workers as well as Government officials. Women form half of the society, without them the society is incomplete. Women are also a playing bigger role in economic field as workers, consumers, entrepreneurs, managers and investors. Empowerment of women means equipping women to be economically independent, self –confident, capability to face any difficult situation and be a part of developmental activities taking place in the society. Education is the best way to empower women thus the literacy of women has gone up from 46.4% to 56%. Certain changes have also been in the constitution of India in order to provide self-empowerment to the women so that our society can grow and develop. The recent measures for economic development has increased the demand for the educated female labour force in almost all fields. A new culture is developing in India where both partners work outside the home as well as share equally in housework and child care as we see in western families. Women empowerment cannot be possible unless women come with and help to self-empower themselves. The need of the hour is to promote education of women, and prevent as well as eliminate all forms of violence and harassment against them.

Women power line is a statutory body established by the Uttar Pradesh Government on the 5th of November, 2012 for providing assurance of protection against violence and harassment faced by the females in the society and at the workplace in Uttar Pradesh. Women power line is the toll free helpline number launched by the Government of U.P for empowering the rights of the women and giving

them security within the society. During the period November 2012 till November 2015, around 4,46,235 cases related to harassment and violence against women were registered on the UP police helpline 1090 in last three years, and 4,38,185 cases were resolved during the same period.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

- To understand the concept of Women powerline 1090.
- To know the extent and types of harassment faced by college going girls in Lucknow
- To know the awareness of girls as to protection available to college girls in Lucknow
- To know about awareness of women powerline among college girls in Lucknow
- To know the satisfaction level of such powerline amongst girls
- To study the effectiveness of the women powerline and make suggestions

Women Powerline (1090)

Women Power line was established by the government of Uttar Pradesh on 5th of November, 2012 for the protection of women against any kind of harassment. Women power line is the toll free helpline number launched by Government of U.P for empowering the rights of the women and giving them security within the society. As per their website “1090 is a Comprehensive Citizen Engagement and Grievance Redressal Service Cloud. Any beneficiary or any citizen can use the multi-modal 1090 Citizen Engagement for getting his problem solved” In order to expand this helpline, some responsible people will be trained and given knowledge about this power line in detailed manner so that they can spread the knowledge about the helpline number to each

and every village. Those responsible are called power angels and anybody can become the power angel and act as the medium of communication between the helpline team and the people of the society. Those who are interested in becoming power angels can get themselves registered at the official portal by giving all their details along with an essay stating the reason for choosing to become a ‘power angel’. The main role of this power line is to deal with harassment cases of vulgar and abusive callers within the state itself. The reason for the introduction of women power line is the increased rate of crime against women in the society and at the workplace and to decrease this harassment. It is because of these kinds of antisocial activities that the UP government has taken a step towards providing a safety to its women citizens. According to the Inspector General of the 1090 Power Line, Navneet Sikera “the helpline has resolved 3, 88, 658 cases between 2012 and July 2015, it’s a mark of the success [of the helpline] that the numbers of calls we receive are only increasing”,

The important features of this power line number are:

1. It is not necessary to visit any police station to register a complaint against the accused.
2. The identity of the victims is not disclosed in order to maintain protection and ensure security to them.
3. The phone calls of the victim are received by the lady constable to avoid hesitation.
4. This one state one number 1090 is valid within the entire state of the U.P.
5. The police official is involved in the case and remains in touch with the victim until the problem is resolved.
6. When the complaint is registered, the unique reference ID is sent to the victim for further process. The victim may call and give the reference number to know about the status of their problem.
7. To register complaint of any victim or her relative free of cost.
8. Women police will provide only that information to seniors which is necessary for the investigation of the problem.

The women power line is the comprehensive program that is based on three basic pillars. They are:

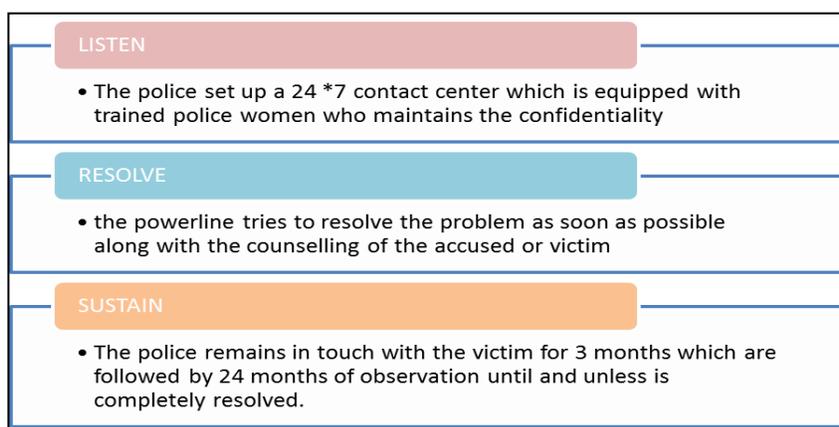


Fig 1

Infrastructure and Human Resource of Women Powerline

The power line has 75 workstations which are based on 24 hr call centre in order to register complaints from all over the state via all possible ICT channels. It is the state of internet telephony and cloud computing based solution. The technology used is very advanced and user

friendly. At present a total strength of 162 police personnel including 124 women are working in the power line. The work is done in shifts and the transportation facility is also available to the people working. There are several methods of filing complaint in the power line they are:

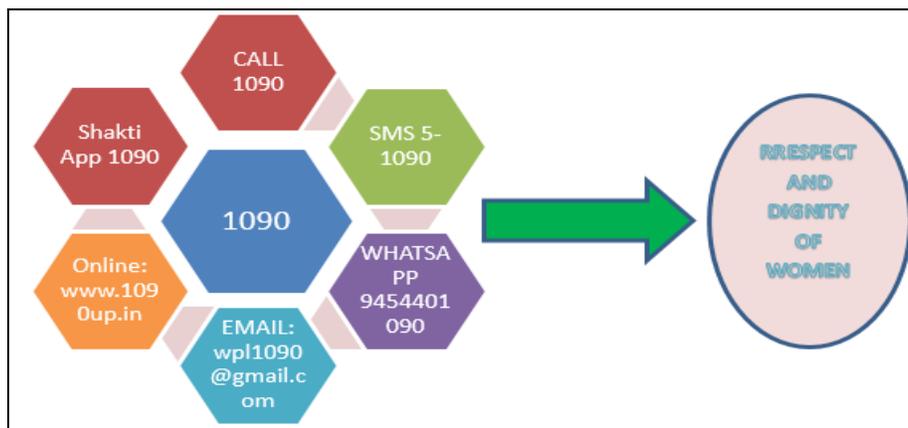


Fig 2

Aim of the WPL

The primary purpose of the establishment of this helpline is to reform the society for once and forever. Since the establishment of this helpline confidence and security feeling has been generated in women of U.P. It aims at reforming the society in 5 to 7 years with its consistent efforts provided focus is not lost. It has major three priorities:

1. To encourage women so that they can raise their voice without any hurdles or problems.
2. Empowering them by giving them voice and the freedom to speak.
3. To build such a system that counsels and reforms the offender and discourages them from committing the crime again.

Implementation in a Phased Manner

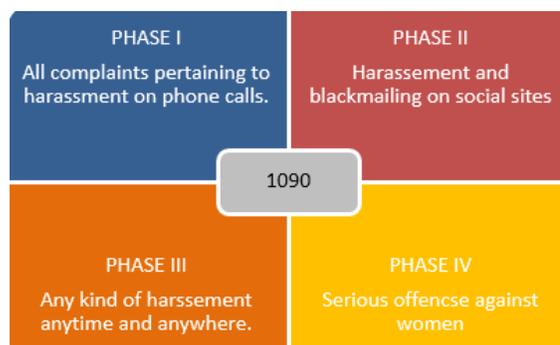


Fig 3

The focus of 1090 is from punishment to relief.

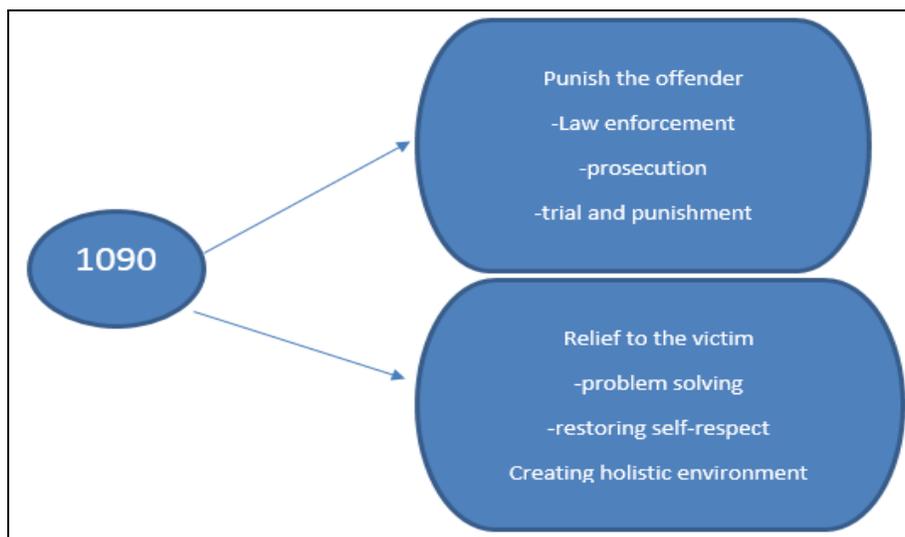


Fig 4

Success of the Initiative-WPL 1090

1. Complaint registration has increased by 104 times.
 2. Till now power line has resolved 4.21 lakhs cases with three successful feedbacks.(As per WPL website)
- As per data from UP Police Department, 4,46,235 cases

related to harassment and violence against women were registered on the UP police helpline 1090 in last three years, and 4,38,185 cases were resolved during the same period.

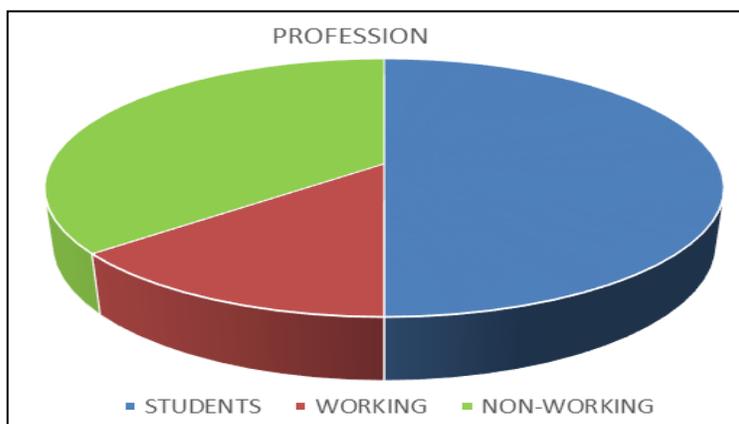


Fig 5

Also “52 % of distress call of harassment was made by students (2, 33, 482) followed by domestic housewives or non-working women which accounted up to 35.46% (1,

58, 238) and Working women (54, 515)” for the period upto November 2015.

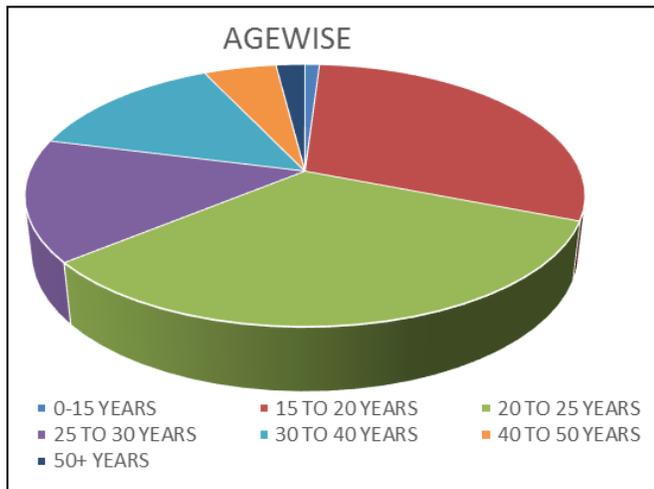


Fig 6

Further age wise grouping of complainants showed that most number of (1,59,209) complaints were registered by women between 20-25 years of age (more than 35 %), followed by 15-20 age group which accounted to 27.52% (1,22,828).

Whereas women between 25-30 years of age accounted for 16.23 % (72,453) of complaints, and of 30-40 age

group reported 13.25% (59,590) and 40-50 age group reported 22,143 cases.

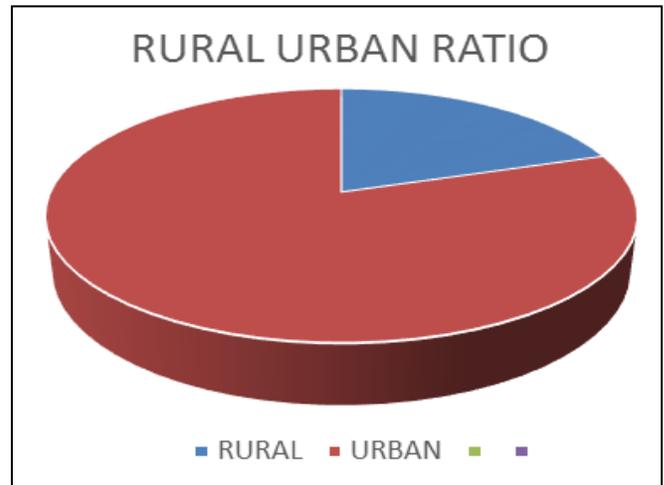


Fig 7

The rural-urban demarcation is very clear with majority of cases being registered in urban cities like Lucknow, Kanpur, Allahabad, Varanasi, Agra, Sitapur and Meerut (80%) in the same order as of number of complaints.

Types of Complaints

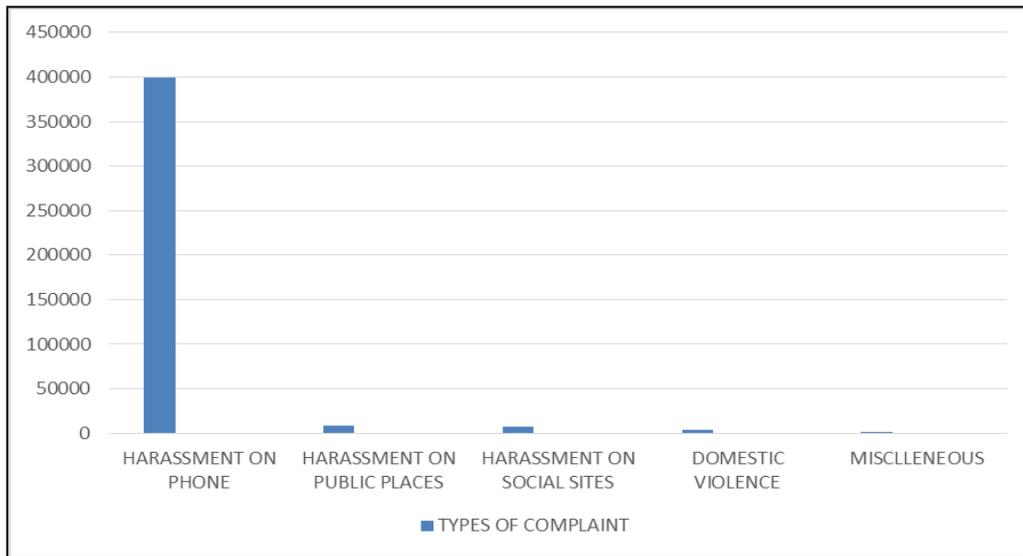


Fig 8

As per UP police data, more than 93% (4,17,443) complaints out of the total resolved, were related to harassment on phone for the three year period from launch to November 2015. Harassment at public places 8,775 resolved cases followed by 7,533 cases, harassment on social websites, 3,243 cases of domestic violence reported, while 1,192 complaints were miscellaneous in nature.

As per the Deputy SP of the 1090 Power Line, Babita Singh, “Cases of phone harassment are the ones most commonly received, and the highest number of calls are from Lucknow,”

Recent Initiatives of WPL 1090

Deployment of power angels at Lucknow Metro

“Lucknow Metro requires a special team of power angels to be deployed permanently at Metro stations for sensitizing female passengers about 1090's core theme— “Chuppi todo, khul kar bolo” as per IG Navneet Sakera. Since girls hesitate to share their problems Power angels will encourage them to speak about their experience. This will instil confidence in them to seek police help in case of any kind of misbehaviour/harassment. Feeling of safety would be generated by the presence of power

angels and women police in the station. For generating awareness IDs will be distributed to these power angels from January. Also placards, stickers and pamphlets about women safety on Metro premises will be given to these special police office. Hoardings around Metro corridor will be display and help sensitise people.

Communication Officers from Shelter Homes

A communication officer work entails the taking of distress calls, handling and registering a complaint and to conduct feedback on the complaint. Women Power Line1090 has now decided to induct girls from shelter homes to become its communication officers which were earlier outsourced from a government-based agency. The

qualification include Class XII pass, possessing basic knowledge of computer and good communication skills. They would be given training for a month on soft skills. The target for first phase is 30 communication officers as per Dy SP 1090, Babita Singh.

Research methodology

This study is mainly based on primary data, which has been collected through questionnaire. Questionnaires have been filled by the female college students. Data has been analysed using averages and mean statistical tool.

Universe: Girl Students of Degree Colleges of Lucknow and University in Lucknow.

Sample size: 500 girls

Data analysis

- **Harassment faced by girl students in Lucknow**

Table 1: Have you faced any kind of gender related problem

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	299	59.8	59.8	59.8
	No	201	40.2	40.2	100.0
	Total	500	100.0	100.0	

- **Awareness of protection available to girls**

Table 2: Are you aware of the laws and protection available against crime regarding women?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	350	70.0	70.0	70.0
	No	150	30.0	30.0	100.0
	Total	500	100.0	100.0	

- **Awareness about Women Power Line in Lucknow**

Table 3: Do you have power line number?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	306	61.2	61.2	61.2
	No	194	38.8	38.8	100.0
	Total	500	100.0	100.0	

- **Use of women power line in Lucknow**

Table 4: Have you ever filed complaint with women power line?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	241	48.2	48.2	48.2
	No	259	51.8	51.8	100.0
	Total	500	100.0	100.0	

- **Effectiveness of Women Power Line in Lucknow**

Table 5: How was the response after filing the complaint?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Quick	191	38.2	38.2	38.2
	delayed response	45	9.0	9.0	47.2
	no response	8	1.6	1.6	48.8
	Not applicable	256	51.2	51.2	100.0
	Total	500	100.0	100.0	

Table 6: Within how much time your problem was being solved?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	within 24 hrs	163	32.6	32.6	32.6
	in 2 or 3 days	47	9.4	9.4	42.0
	in 1 week	12	2.4	2.4	44.4
	more than 1 week	9	1.8	1.8	46.2
	not solved	14	2.8	2.8	49.0
	Not applicable	255	51.0	51.0	100.0
	Total	500	100.0	100.0	

• **Satisfaction level of power line**

Table 7: Are you satisfied with women powerline 1090?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Satisfied	209	41.8	41.8	41.8
	Not Fully satisfied	81	16.2	16.2	58.0
	Needs improvement	184	36.8	36.8	94.8
	Not satisfied	26	5.2	5.2	100.0
	Total	500	100.0	100.0	

Findings and conclusion

After analysing the data, it is found that;

- Out of 500 college girls, 59.8% girls are facing harassment in their day to day life, this shows that a majority of girls have faced some form of harassment, be it eve teasing, crank calls, sexual advances, cat calls etc. Thus there is urgent need for some mechanism for redressal of this common problem.
- 70% girls are aware about this form of protection (Help line 1090) available to them. Reason for lack of awareness among 30% should be analysed and tackled. There are a number of laws and rules for protection of women in our country but our respondents are unaware of those measures.
- 61.2% of girls are having the Women Power Line Contact Number (1090). One very encouraging finding is that majority of the girls have saved the number which may be used in emergencies by them.
- Only 48.2% girls take the help and file complaint with women power line across the college going girls in Lucknow. The reason for this could be their feeling shy or introvert/reticent to share such problems. Another big social cause is parental pressure of not involving a third party/police and discussing the problem or lodging a complaint.
- About only 38.2% of the girls have reported a quick response from the helpline in registering their complaint i.e. within 24 hours, 9.4% say it took 2-3 days to register their complaint whereas 2.4% girls took about a week to lodge their complaint.
- Lastly only about 41.8% of the above girls are satisfied with the helpline resolution mechanism and 36.8% of them feel there is scope for improvement in the services offered by the helpline.

From the above study we can see that women in U.P are not safe and do not live with dignity as majority of them have faced some or the other kind of harassment/misbehaviour in their lives. The WPL has given them a certain measure of confidence but many are still not aware about this helpline. It can also be said that the women power line is a good initiative of the U.P. Government and continuously working for empowering

its womenfolk.

The main objective however to reform the society more deeply in which WPL 1090 will work as an antidote to undo the very inimical problems lying at the core of society is still a far cry.

Suggestions

1. It has been almost five years since the launch of WPL 1090 in 2012. A thorough review and analysis needs to be undertaken. Technological expansion and upgradation to improve its effectiveness and reach is the call of the day.
2. UP is a densely populated state with a lot of rural population. Now with the availability of mobile phones, the reach of 1090 should also grow so that this facility can be used by more and more girls and women throughout the State of UP. This should not remain an urban phenomenon.
3. A large segment of college going girls (educated class) are still not aware of this helpline. Thus the method and use of this toll free number should be propagated more by Radio and TV media to make 100% awareness.
4. The resolution mechanism needs to be strengthened so that cases may be registered and disposed off timely. Many of the problems can be nipped in the bud through proper counselling.
5. The number of power Angels needs to be increased and given effective training so as to cover the vast area and population of the state. A target ratio should be drawn up.
6. More awareness programs through workshops/nukkad natak at schools, colleges as well as by lanes of all cities and towns should be conducted to apprise girls of this helpline which can save many a crime against women.
7. The offender should be reformed/punished if required in such a manner so that the chance of a repeat mistake is minimized.
8. The mind set of our Society needs be broadened. Girls should be treated as equals. Further boys should be sensitised to women issues, the initiative of which

should begin from home. Girls should not hesitate to complain about any misbehaviour/ harassment. The slogan of Chuppi todo, khul kar bolo should be implemented in its true spirit.

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