

# Prioritise safety and security of women and children

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**D**espite the existence of stringent laws like the POCSO, it is deeply disheartening to witness the rising cases of crimes against children in our state. Unless the mindset of people towards women and children changes, laws alone cannot bring about the desired impact. Such a regressive mentality is truly a curse for society.

Our members, when taking up such cases, often face threats from the families of the accused. My organisation, the Arunachal

Pradesh Women's Welfare Society (APWWS), has frequently encountered challenges for speaking out and exposing injustices. Instead of being appreciated, we are often threatened, which makes our work even more difficult.

Sometimes, I wonder what would have happened if the pioneers of the APWWS had not laid the foundation for this organisation in our state. Their vision and tireless efforts have empowered countless women and children, and their legacy continues to inspire us to fight for justice despite the obstacles.

What is even more up-

setting is the apathy of the state government. Crimes against children and women -whether it be rape, murder, or mysterious deaths - rarely find space for discussion in cabinet meetings or assembly sessions. The state government fails to even publicly condemn such incidents. This harsh reality stands in stark contrast to their rhetoric on nari shakti. What does nari shakti truly mean if children remain unsafe and women continue to live in constant insecurity? Does our government even understand the essence of nari shakti?

The social acceptance of practices like polygamy

further worsens the insecurity that women face. Talking about equality before the law is meaningless when true equality does not exist in the society. Economic packages are not a solution to achieving equality. True equality requires systemic change, respect for women, and robust protection mechanisms for all.

It was deeply upsetting to witness the tragic deaths of Techhi Meena Lishi and her unborn child, who were brutally murdered, or the case involving the sexual assault of 21 minors in Manigaon. There has been no public condemnation from the chief minister or the

home department, nor have they convened significant meetings to address these issues. This failure of the the state apparatus to protect women and children is deeply concerning.

The recent sexual harassment complaint at NIT Jote is yet another example of the authorities' indifference. It raises serious concerns over their commitment and responsiveness to such critical matters. The Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women and the Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Protection of Child Rights must play a more proactive role. (Contd. on P-5)



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(From P-1) These bodies need to put pressure on the government to prioritise the safety and security of women and children in our state.

As the president of the APWWS, I am deeply saddened by these realities. True nari shakti can only be realised when every woman and child feels secure, respected, and empowered in our society. (*Maling is President, APWWS.*)