

## Universalisation of Women Helpline Scheme

### **1. Background and Context**

**1.1** The right to a life free of violence is a basic human right enshrined in Article 21 of Indian Constitution. Violence or the threat of violence not only infringes upon this right but also restricts women's freedom and germinates imbalance of power between women and men. It has now been more than twenty years since India has ratified<sup>1</sup> the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), thereby committing to incorporate the principle of equality of men and women within its legal system, abolish all discriminatory laws and adopt those laws which prohibit discrimination against women. Since then, changes have been made in the law to prevent violence and create a system which rehabilitates women affected by violence and ensures their access to a violence free life.

**1.2** In recent years, there have been enactment of various legislations by the Parliament which address the issue of Violence Against Women (VAW) like Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2013, Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, the Protection of Women From Domestic Violence Act, 2005. These are provide women facing violence an opportunity to take recourse of the law. According to the latest National Crime Records Bureau data, during the year 2013, 3,09,546 incidence of crime against women (both under Indian Penal Code and other laws) were reported as against the 2,44,270 cases reported during 2012, showing an increase of 26.7% over the previous year. As observed by the Working group<sup>2</sup>, *these numbers have to be viewed keeping in mind that not all crimes against women are reported. The actual numbers may give even greater cause for concern.*' The NFHS III data indicates that 59.4 % of ever-married women in the age group of 15-49 have experienced spousal violence of physical and sexual character. Many of these cases go unreported or unaddressed.

### **2. Emergency Response System in India - Current Telecom Regulatory and Licensing Framework<sup>3</sup>**

---

<sup>1</sup> 9 July 1993

<sup>2</sup> Report of the Working Group On Women's Agency And Empowerment, 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan

<sup>3</sup> Consultation Paper 3/2013 by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India on Universal Single Number Based

2.1 Presently, the telecom access to emergency services in India such as 181 (Women in distress), 1091 (police helpline), 100 (Police), 101 (Fire), 102 (hospital/Ambulance) & 108 (Emergency Response Services) are being provided by Telecom Service Providers (TSPs). As per the National Numbering Plan 2003, these are Category-I services i.e. these are the mandatory services that are to be provided by all the TSPs.

2.2 As far as telecom service licenses are concerned, in the definition of terms and expressions given in the Cellular Mobile Telephone Services (CMTS) license emergency services has been defined as, *“Emergency service means an emergency of any kind, including any circumstances whatever resulting from major accidents, natural disasters and incidents involving toxic or radio-active materials and emergency services in respect of any locality means the relevant public, police, fire, ambulance and coast guard services for that locality”*. Further, as per the clause 30.1 of the CMTS license agreement, *“licensee shall independently provide all emergency and public utility services to its subscribers, including directory information services with names and address of subscribers”*<sup>4</sup>.

2.3 According to the clause 29.1 of Unified Access Service License (UASL), *“the licensee shall provide independently or through mutually agreed commercial agreements with other service providers, all public utility services including TOLL FREE services such as police, fire, ambulance, railways/road/Air accident enquiry, police control, disaster management etc. While providing emergency services such as police, fire, ambulance etc. it shall be delivered to the control room of concerned authority for the area from where call is originated”*.

2.4 As far as the location information of the mobile callers is concerned, the Department of Telecom (DoT), vide its amendment<sup>5</sup> to the CMTS/UAS License conditions, dated 31<sup>st</sup> May 2011, has mandated telecom service providers to provide location details of their mobile subscribers as per the following – *“(a) The Licensee shall provide location details of mobile customers in the License service area as per below mentioned time frame from the date of issue of this amendment and accuracy. It should be a part of CDR in the form of longitude and latitude, besides the co-ordinate of the cell sites, which is already one of the mandated fields of CDR. (b) To start with these details will be provided for specified mobile numbers.*

---

Integrated Emergency Communication and Response System

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.dot.gov.in/sites/default/files/AGREEMENT\\_1.PDF](http://www.dot.gov.in/sites/default/files/AGREEMENT_1.PDF)

<sup>5</sup> <http://dot.gov.in/AS-III/2011/as-iii.pdf>

*However, within a period of 3 years location details shall be part of CDR for all mobile calls. Depending upon the technological development the limits of accuracy could be modified any time in future.”*

2.5 Presently, most of the private service providers are routing calls to the emergency numbers through the network of BSNL/MTNL, as the PSU service providers have connectivity with control rooms of various emergency organisations. For this purpose, interconnection agreements between Private Access Service providers and BSNL/MTNL have been required.

### **3. Proposal and Objectives of the Women Helpline**

3.1. Present laws and policies already acknowledge the limitations of existing institutional responses including intervention through the police and other implementing agencies. A large section of women affected by violence hesitate to approach the police or the court at the very first instance. Hence, there is a need to create holistic support service having strong and integrated service delivery mechanism that women affected by violence could approach with ease.

3.2 The scheme of Universalisation of Women Helpline (181) therefore is exclusively designed to support women affected by violence, both in private and public spaces, including in the family, community, workplace etc. Women who are victims of physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and economic abuse, irrespective of age, class, caste, education status, marital status, race, culture, and geography will be provided support. In addition, women facing any kind of violence due to attempted honour related crimes, acid attacks, witch hunting, sexual harassment, child sexual abuse, trafficking etc will also be provided with immediate and emergency services. There shall be no discrimination of any kind which affects the treatment of the aggrieved. This is specifically with reference to married women/women in consensual sexual relationships who are raped by their intimate partners, sex workers and transgenders who might be sexually assaulted but are refused treatment due to patriarchal mindsets and prejudices.

3.3 The Women Helpline (181) provides 24 hour emergency response to all women affected by violence both in public and private sphere. All the existing emergency services such as Police (100), Fire (101), women helpline (1091), hospital/Ambulance (102), Emergency Response Services (108), NALSA Helpline for Free Legal Service (15100) and Child helpline (1098) would be integrated with this women helpline. The proposed Women

Helpline will utilize the infrastructure of existing Chief Minister Helpline functioning in some States through 181 as well as that of 108 services. It will be established in every State/ UT.

3.4 It will be set up in an independent location with staff recruitment and hardware procurement for operationalising 181 Women Helpline . Alternatively, if needed, outsource the setting up of Women Helpline can be outsourced through an agency through fair and transparent procedures of the State Govt./UT administration. It will be integrated with all One Stop Centres set up in the State/UT. Information of the call data is provided to MWCD regarding the number of registered cases for women availing services from 181 Women Helpline. Information of the concerned officials/agencies/medical facilities/empanelled counsellors, legal aid providers/ Women institutions/One Stop Centres/other referral agencies should be available with the Women Helpline for coordination.

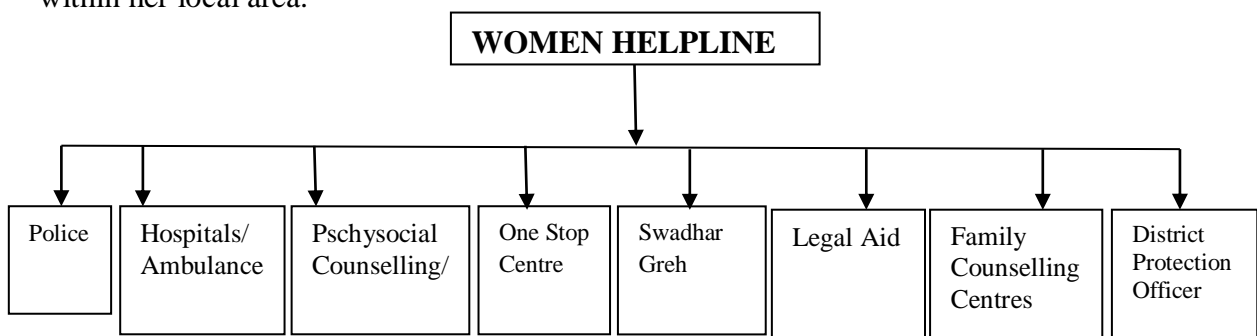
3.5 Women Helpline (state level toll free number such as 181) to be made universal for providing immediate and 24 hour emergency response to women affected by violence including rescue (where necessary), information, first point contact counseling and referral (linking with appropriate authority such as police, One Stop Centre, hospital) services to any woman in distress. This Helpline number would be compatible with all the existing telecommunication channels whether providing post/ pre paid mobile or landline services through any public or private network i.e. GSM, CDMA, 3G, 4G etc. All the state/ district/ city level helplines would be integrated with this women helpline.

Following are some of the significant objectives of the Women's Helpline:

- Provide **toll-free 24-hours telecom service** to women affected by violence seeking support and information.
- Facilitate crisis intervention** through referral to police/ Hospital/ Ambulance services
- Provide **information** about the appropriate support services available to the woman affected by violence, in her particular situation within the local area in which she resides or is employed.
- Creation and maintenance of a comprehensive **referral database** by the Helpline within its local area.
- Should have trained gender sensitive staff operating the Women Helpline rendering services on a shift duty basis as women helpline is operational 24x7

#### **4. Structure and Key Features**

The proposed Helpline will function across the country by developing linkages with existing helplines i.e. 181 and 1091 number allocated by the Department of Telecommunications to all States and Union Territories. The proposed helpline will act as a centralised service within the entire State/ UT which will cater to the needs of women in distress residing in villages, blocks and towns of different districts. This will ensure that there is a systematic approach to providing the services as well as a state wide database of referrals and information. The police, hospitals, Ambulance services, One Stop Centres (proposed), Swadhar Greh will be linked with this helpline service along with other existing services and the moment, a woman approaches the helpline with a request for shelter, rescue, medical assistance or counseling, she will be referred to these above mentioned centres functioning within her local area.



## 5. How will the Women’s Helpline Work

Women helpline will be accessible through a single universal toll-free number across the country. A woman in distress or in difficult circumstances or somebody on her behalf can call this toll-free number and will reach the responder appointed there. Based on the urgency and the requirements explained by the women, the responder will refer her to relevant support services like medical aid, police assistance or connect her to One Stop Centre for professional counseling, shelter, legal aid etc; if the women needs to be rescued or is in urgent need of medical assistance then the PCR Van from the nearest police station or ambulance from nearest hospital/ 108 service/ One Stop Centre (whichever is closer) would be dispatched. In case woman need information about the laws and existing schemes of government then call would be connected to the nearest One Stop Centre which will provide this information to the women.

The helpline will also be accessed through text message for those who are unable to speak and will be sensitive to the needs of persons who are hearing and speech impaired or people with disability. It will have provision to locate/ trace the number from which a call has been

received. In case woman has been interrupted during her call or was unable to specify her problem or her address due to being sick/disabled then the same would be traced and within minutes the helpline will facilitate an emergency response through nearest One Stop Centre/ police station/ hospital.

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities of Key Stakeholders

The roles and responsibilities of the concerned Ministries/Departments are outlined in the table below.

S. No	Ministry	Primary Role	Other Support
1	Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Department of Telecommunications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide toll free text message service to 181 helpline</li> <li>• Compatibility with all the existing telecommunication channels i.e. Post/Pre paid mobile/landline across all networks</li> <li>• Ensure interstate connectivity</li> <li>• Provide technology to record and immediately trace the current location from which call/text has been made</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine requirement for suitable amendments in existing law/procedures i.e. Indian Telegraph Act, License conditions etc to facilitate connectivity through various telecommunication channels</li> <li>• Enforce compliance of connectivity to 181 through private channels or networks</li> </ul>
2	Ministry of Home Affairs/ State/District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate all helpline ran by police department with women helpline</li> <li>• Designate police help and support whenever requested by helpline</li> <li>• Depute women police personnel to provide security to helpline</li> <li>• SOPs to be issued in this regard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support gender sensitization of police personnel dealing with cases of women affected by violence</li> </ul>
3	Ministry of Health and Family Affairs/ State/ District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Hospitals follow the New Medico-Legal Guidelines,2014 for survivors and victims of sexual violence developed by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare recording the case in the Medico-Legal Case (MLC) examination performa of 13 pages.</li> <li>• A copy of the duly filled MLC form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure enforcement of protocols</li> <li>• Training and sensitization of Health personnel including para-medical staff</li> <li>• Support process of identifying para-</li> </ul>

		<p>to be given to the aggrieved woman being examined for her record</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protocols for Doctors to be placed in public domain</li> <li>• Made available in regional languages</li> <li>• To be given in a calendar form to Helplines</li> <li>• List of Doctors/ Hospitals/ Clinics (public or private)/Blood Banks</li> <li>• List with complete address, phone number of in-charge/ nodal Doctor to be made available</li> <li>• List of Ambulances (public or private) available for hire in the district</li> </ul>	medical staff
--	--	--	---------------

## 7 Implementation of the Project

7.1 The Ministry of Women and Child Development would be responsible for budgetary control and administration of the scheme from the Centre. At the State level, the Secretary, Department of Women and Child Development will be responsible for overall direction and implementation of the scheme. **The State Government may designate a District Collector/District Magistrate for implementation of the Women helpline Scheme in the State and funds will be released to the designated District Collector/District Magistrate directly.** The day to day implementation and administrative matters would be the responsibility of the State Governments/UT Administrations.

7.2 The States/UTs have been categorised based upon the population of States/UTs. For smooth functioning of Women Helpline Centre, the State Government may outsource activities required for functioning of Centre such as management, counseling, call responding, IT, multipurpose and security etc.

- ***Having more than 5 crore of population*** : The States/UTs having more than 5 crore of population, a maximum amount of Rs.18,00,000 as non-recurring and a maximum amount of Rs.93,00,000 as recurring grant will be provided.(No of States/UTs- 9)
- ***Having more than 1 crore and less than 5 crore of population:*** The States/UTs having more than 1 crore and less than 5 crore of population, a maximum amount of Rs.17,50,000 as non-recurring and a maximum amount of Rs. 68,16,000 as recurring grant will be provided. (No of States/UTs- 12)
- ***Having less than 1 crore of population:*** The States/UTs having less than 1 crore of population, a maximum amount of Rs.17,00,000 as non-recurring and an amount of Rs.68,16,000/- a maximum recurring grant will be provided. ( No of States/UTs- 15)

The population wise details of State/UTs are provided at Annexure-8.(i).

#### **7.4. Location of the Helpline**

It is envisaged that the Helpline will utilize the infrastructure of existing Helplines functioning in various States through 181 or the infrastructure of any other women related Helplines.

### **8. Monitoring Mechanisms**

#### **8.1 At the National level:**

At the National level a Task Force may be set up with the Secretary, WCD as the Chairperson and concerned Joint Secretary, Financial Advisor and representatives of the relevant line Ministries as members. The Task Force would develop a mechanism for monitoring, coordinating and course correction of the Women Helplines working in the country. Secretary, WCD may cause minor changes in Women Helpline Scheme Guidelines for operational exigencies in needed cases without affecting basic aim, objective and substance of Women Helpline and without additional financial implications.

**8.2 State Level:** At the State level a Task Force may be set up with the Principal Secretary, DWCD/Social Welfare Department as the Chairperson with the representation of the relevant line departments to undertake a review of the working of the Women Helpline. The Task Force would monitor, coordinate and course correct of the Women Helpline in the State.

**8.3 District Level:** At the district level the Task Force may be set up with District Collector/District Magistrate will also be responsible for oversight, monitoring, coordinating review and course correction of the functioning of the Women Helpline. The Task Force would furnish reports as needed to the State/UT as well as the National level Task Force.

### **9. Monitoring Protocols**

- Data of calls received at the Women Helpline will be reviewed by State/UT DWCD/Social Welfare Departments/MWCD to evaluate the type of data being generated such as calls received and referral services provided and the performance of the responders etc. The review would be based on following standards:
  - ✓ 90% of the total distress calls were answered within 10 seconds
  - ✓ 100% of the total distress calls were answered in not more than 20 seconds and
  - ✓ In any given hour, not more than 1% of emergency calls had encountered busy signal.
- Cases will be tracked to check adequacy of interventions made by the stakeholders i.e. police, hospitals, Lawyers etc.
- Regular performance appraisal of helpline staff
- Systematic feedback, either of all callers or those selected by random sampling.

### **10. Budgetary Provision**



The Ministry of Women and Child Development will be responsible for budgetary control and administration of the project at the Central level.

**For setting up women helpline one time non-recurring grant will be provided to the designated District Collector/District Magistrate. Similarly for running the Centre, recurring grants (which include rent for the Centre, outsourcing of services for management of the Centre, administrative cost of the Centre etc.) will also be provided to the to the designated District Collector/District Magistrate .**

The requirement proposed for the scheme for the 2017-18 to 2019-2020 is Rs. 86.46 crore. The details of recurring and non-recurring cost estimates for the remaining plan period are at **Annexure 8 (ii) to 8.(v)**.

## **11. Funding Pattern**

11.1 Ministry of Finance, Government of India has established 'Nirbhaya Fund' with an initial corpus of Rs. 1000 cr. (as per the announcement in Budget 2013-14) for women safety pertaining to the strategic areas of prevention, protection and rehabilitation. For subsequent financial years of 2014-15 and 2015-16, an amount of Rs. 1000 Cr. (each financial year) have been provided under the Nirbhaya Fund. This scheme will be funded under the Nirbhaya Fund. **The Central Government will provide 100% financial assistance.** The funds would be made available by Ministry of Women and Child Development to the designated District Collector/District Magistrate directly.

11.2 A separate designated Bank Account would be opened by District Magistrate/District Collector for implementing the Women Helpline Scheme. The details of the Bank Account needs to be filled in the Bank Mandate form duly signed and stamped by the District Collector/District Magistrate and intimated to the MWCD for transfer of Funds through Public Financial Management System (PFMS). For this, PFMS registration should be undertaken immediately after opening of the separate designated Bank Account by the District Magistrate/ District Collector for implementing the Women Helpline.

## **12. Fund Flow**

The MWCD will be responsible for budgetary control and administration of the scheme at the Central level. The MWCD will transfer the funds to the designated District Collector/District Magistrate. The designated District Collector/District Magistrate will operate a separate bank account for scheme of Women Helpline.

## **13. Evaluation**

Third party evaluation of Women Helpline Scheme will be done by 2019-20 and bring up for re-appraisal by end of 2019-2020.

## **14 Audit and Social Audit**

14.1 Audit: Audit shall be done as per Comptroller & Auditor General of India norms and that channel will be followed at the Central and State Government levels.

14.2 Social Audit: Social Audit will also be undertaken to obtain direct feedback from those who have availed the services of the women helpline and other services provided under the scheme through appropriate evidence gathering methods.

## Annexure-8.(i)

Sl. No	States/UTs	Population
<b>Category -A</b>		
1	Uttar Pradesh	199,812,341
2	Maharashtra	112,374,333
3	Bihar	104,099,452
4	West Bengal	91,276,115
5	Madhya Pradesh	72,626,809
6	Tamil Nadu	72,147,030
7	Rajasthan	68,548,437
8	Karnataka	61,095,297
9	Gujarat	60,439,692
<b>Category -B</b>		
10	Andhra Pradesh	49,386,799
11	Odisha	41,974,218
12	Telangana	35,193,978
13	Kerala	33,406,061
14	Jharkhand	32,988,134
15	Assam	31,205,576
16	Punjab	27,743,338
17	Chhattisgarh	25,545,198
18	Haryana	25,351,462
19	Delhi UT	16,787,941
20	Jammu & Kashmir	12,541,302
21	Uttarakhand	10,086,292
<b>Category -C</b>		
22	Himachal Pradesh	6,864,602
23	Tripura	3,673,917
24	Meghalaya	2,966,889
25	Manipur	2,570,390
26	Nagaland	1,978,502
27	Goa	1,458,545
28	Arunachal Pradesh	1,383,727
29	Puducherry	1,247,953
30	Mizoram	1,097,206
31	Chandigarh	1,055,450
32	Sikkim	610,577
33	A&N Islands	380,581
34	D&N Haveli	343,709
35	Daman & Diu	243,247
36	Lakshadweep	64,473

## Annexure- 8.(ii)

**Proposed Component Wise and Year Wise Estimated Expenditure for Universalisation  
of Women Helpline in States/UTs**

**Estimated Cost for Setting up Women Helpline in States/UTs**

SI. No.	Particulars at each level	Cost per unit	No of State s/UTs	Year wise	Year Wise	Year wise	Total Rupes	Total Rs. in crore
				2017-18	2018-19	2019-20		
<b>I. Central Level</b>								
	Research & Documentation, Evaluation, MIS Training and IEC			22000000	22000000	22000000	66000000	6.6
	<b>Sub total (I)</b>			<b>22000000</b>	<b>22000000</b>	<b>22000000</b>	<b>66000000</b>	<b>6.60</b>
<b>II. State Level</b>								
(a)	<b>State Norms for Recurring Grant</b>							
	<b>A Category States</b>	93,00,000	9	83700000	83700000	83700000	<b>241380000</b>	24.14
	<b>B Category States</b>	6816000	12	81792000	81792000	81792000	<b>245376000</b>	24.54
	<b>C Category States</b>	6816000	15	102240000	102240000	102240000	<b>306720000</b>	30.67
(b)	<b>Non Recurring *</b>	1700000	3	5100000			<b>5100000</b>	0.51
	<b>Sub total (II)</b>			<b>269592000</b>	<b>264492000</b>	<b>264492000</b>	<b>798576000</b>	<b>80</b>
	<b>Total Cost ( I+II )</b>			<b>291592000</b>	<b>286492000</b>	<b>286492000</b>	<b>864576000</b>	<b>86.46</b>

\* During 2015-16 funds have been released to 33 States/UTs. Hence provision for non recurring grant for remaining 3 States/UTs have been kept

## State Level Norms for A Category States

Sl. No.	Item	Unit	Estimated Cost (In Rs)
<b>I</b>	<b>RECURRING</b>		
1	Women Helpline Centre Management @630000 pm	12	75,60,000
2	Rent @ Rs. 30000 pm	12	3,60,000
3	Administrative Cost including Hiring vehicle @ Rs. 65000 pm	12	7,80,000
4	Telephone Bills for the call centre @ Rs. 50000	12	6,00,000
	Sub-Total (Recurring)		<b>93,00,000</b>
<b>II</b>	<b>NON RECURRING</b>		
	Setting up Women Helpline which includes EPABX-Cum Call Centre Solution, PRI Lines/ Dialers/Intercom/Extension Instrument etc., Headphones/ Earphone & Dialer (Analog Phone) Audio Port/Head set with dialer,Computer/Lap tops and Printers/Scanners, UPS/Generator of 5 KVA For Power Backup, Furniture, Air Conditioners, Renovation etc.		18,00,000
	Sub-Total (Non-Recurring)		<b>18,00,000</b>
	<b>Total ( I+II )</b>		<b>1,11,00,000</b>

## State Level Norms for B Category States

Sl. No.	Item	Unit	Estimated Cost (In Rs)
<b>I</b>	<b>RECURRING</b>		
1	Women Helpline Centre Management @4,23,000 pm	12	50,76,000
2	Rent @ Rs. 30000 pm	12	3,60,000
3	Administrative Cost including Hiring vehicle @ Rs. 65000 pm	12	7,80,000
4	Telephone Bills @ Rs. 50000	12	6,00,000
	Sub Total (Recurring)		<b>68,16,000</b>
<b>II</b>	<b>NON RECURRING</b>		
	Setting up Women Helpline which includes EPABX-Cum Call Centre Solution, PRI Lines/ Dialers/Intercom/Extension Instrument etc., Headphones/ Earphone & Dialer (Analog Phone) Audio Port/Head set with dialer,Computer/Lap tops and Printers/Scanners, UPS/Generator of 5 KVA For Power Backup, Furniture, Air Conditioners, Renovation etc.		17,50,000
	Sub-Total (Non-Recurring)		<b>17,50,000</b>
	<b>Total ( I+II )</b>		<b>85,66,000</b>

## State Level Norms for C Category States

Sl. No.	Item	Unit	Estimated Cost (In Rs)
<b>I</b>	<b>RECURRING</b>		
1	Women Helpline Centre Management @4,23,000 pm	12	50,76,000
2	Rent @ Rs. 30000 pm	12	360000
3	Administrative Cost including Hiring vehicle @ Rs. 65000 pm	12	7,80,000
4	Telephone Bills @ Rs. 50000	12	600000
	Sub Total (Recurring)		<b>68,16,000</b>
<b>II</b>	<b>NON RECURRING</b>		
	Setting up Women Helpline which includes EPABX-Cum Call Centre Solution, PRI Lines/Dialers/Intercom/Extension Instrument etc., Headphones/ Earphone & Dialer (Analog Phone) Audio Port/Head set with dialer,Computer/Lap tops and Printers/Scanners, UPS/Generator of 5 KVA For Power Backup, Furniture, Air Conditioners, Renovation etc.		17,00,000
	Sub-Total (Non-Recurring)		<b>17,00,000</b>
	<b>Total ( I+II )</b>		<b>85,16,000</b>