

The Influencer bulletin

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When we welcomed you to the Influencers journey to empower the disempowered, we had promised that your support and voice will enable millions of nameless, faceless women to access social justice and equal opportunity. In this issue we celebrate breakthrough developments in the judicial landscape that are milestones in India's quest for gender justice and also bring you stories of hope and triumph at the last-mile, from our grassroots coalition partners, Jan Sahas and Kutch Mahila Vikas Sansthan.

Stories of triumph from the grassroots

Enabling women and girls to access legal justice

Since two years, 17 year-old Ramya (name changed) who hails from a village in Rajasthan, has been **fighting for justice**. She was raped by a local shopkeeper who was arrested but released on bail after convincing the court that she wasn't underage and therefore the act was consensual.

The daughter of a widowed mother who works as a casual labourer, and one of five children, Ramya was victimised first by the assault, and then repeatedly by the system. **Jan Sahas Social Development Society**, which works for women's legal rights in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh joined her in her struggle to access justice, through providing free legal services. The shopkeeper has finally been arrested but his family, wealthier than Ramya's in the village, continues to harass her to settle out of court. Jan Sahas remains the family's mentor in their legal and social battles.

We are happy to share that the State Police Departments of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh have instructed police stations to work integrally with Jan Sahas on cases involving violence against women.

#accesstolegaljustice

Systemic change for sustainable impact

Facilitating freedom from violence and discrimination

This June, **Women in Prisons (India)** a report of the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), among other recommendations, insisted on strengthening linkages with District and State Legal Service Authority (S/DSLA) to ensure access to legal aid for the women prisoners.

To sensitise the Government functionaries to the plight of women in prisons, **Kutch Mahila Vikas Sanghatan (KMVS)**, an NGO that works on women's safety and access to rights and justice in Kutch, Gujarat, facilitated a visit for officials from the District court and DSLA, to Gadhapadhar Jail in Gandhidham block. **The visitors interacted with the prisoners and understood the status of and lacunae in the basic facilities available for sanitation, healthcare and safety for women and their children.** KMVS is following up with them for redressal of the grievances.

#freedomfromviolence

Facts from the report

- Only 17% women prisoners live in exclusively female prisons; majority stay in women's enclosures of general prisons
- Exposure to violence
- Poor grievance redressal mechanisms
- Overcrowding
- Inadequate female staff
- Poor nutrition
- No legal aid cells
- Vocational training in unmarketable skills
- Poor services for children of prisoners

In the news

Celebrating the legal legitimacy of the third gender: SC decriminalises homosexuality

#RIP377 #genderjustice



*Representational image

Facts, feelings, and a roadmap for the future

- Bestiality and sexual acts without consent are still crimes - **Supreme Court judgment**
- Take steps to disseminate the judgment, sensitise functionaries - **Court to Government**
- Judgment is implementable in **Jammu & Kashmir** as well.
- No "advance ruling on questions like inheritance to (same sex) live-in partners, whether they can marry, etc". - **Chief Justice Dipak Misra.**
- "Providing support to homosexual clients to become comfortable with who they are and get on with their lives" will be more important - **Justice DY Chandrachud.**
- Reading down of Section 377 won't lead to reopening of concluded prosecutions but can certainly be relied upon in all pending trial, appellate and revisional matters - **Justice Indu Malhotra.**
- Ending discrimination in workplaces - companies can put clauses on paper - **B.Ramiah, a petitioner.**
- Future focus on rights in marriage, inheritance, adoption and surrogacy - **LGBTQ community.**