

In the direction of ensuring safety for women – Women Powerline 1090

What is Women Powerline 1090?

Women Power Line 1090 (WFL) was a social program implemented in Uttar Pradesh (UP), India, aimed at combating atrocities against women and making the state a safe place for all women. The program strived to ensure that all women of UP had a recourse when harassed or abused, and to do so, they maintained a comprehensive web of services aimed at allowing women to report incidents quickly, easily, and most importantly, anonymously. The program had seen explosive growth since its humble beginnings in 2012, and had received over 661,000 complaints over 4 years, for an average of 440 complaints a day. Of these 661,000 complaints, only 11,000, or 1.6% were yet to be acted on as of February 2017, and all of those complaints were less than 4 months old **(1)**. (See **Exhibit 11** for more information.)

The program followed a simple approach to harassment that focused on both the victim and the harasser, seeking to educate and reform the offenders so that they were less likely to harass again, while simultaneously ensuring the safety and comfort of the victim. While the program covered abuse as well, most of the resources of WPL were aimed at combating harassment against women in the workforce, academia, and other public instances of day-to-day life, and more serious cases were reported directly to the proper legal authorities. While the program's approach to different groups of women varied demographically, such as school girls being empowered through the Power Angels program, much of the program was the same regardless of cultural, economic, or professional differences. For example, the hallmark five-step process of the program, would remain constant across each and every demographic. The WPL was a free service offered to all the women of UP.

Socio-cultural Hurdles of the Women Power Line

The WPL faced a number of social and cultural hurdles surrounding the traditional handling of harassment in India. For example, many Indian girls were raised to believe that they should simply “ignore and tolerate” such incidents of harassment as they occur, or that they should not file a report because of the damage such a report could cause to an institution or individual. As a result of this line of thinking, many of the victims that the WPL sought to help were

uncomfortable with the idea of reporting complaints (2). A couple of examples of the most prevalent reasons for this attitude are listed here.

Victim Blaming

Victim blaming, a socio-cultural dilemma, had been unfortunately a common reaction to harassment, and aimed at making the victim feel responsible for what had happened to her. Victim blaming usually involved questioning what the woman was wearing, how she was speaking with her male colleague that did the harassing, or a plethora of other possibilities that shifted the blame of the attack from the attacker to the victim. While obviously flawed, the logic of victim blaming usually argued that the victim was encouraging the harasser's behavior through provocative dress or flirtatious conversation. Acknowledging this, it is easy to understand why a woman who at least partially believes that she is responsible for her harassment would have reservations about reporting it (3).

The “Greater Good”

A common belief regarding sexual harassment was the notion that should a woman report a coworker or a fellow student for harassment, it would have a negative impact on the greater organization as a whole. The institution would lose potentially talented female applicants who did not wish to work or attend school somewhere with a history of harassment. This socio-cultural hurdle also involved making the woman feel guilty about the harassment, however, now the focus was on less involved parties. “What will happen to your coworkers if business suffers from our tarnished reputation?”, “Think of the greater good, what matters more?”, etc. were statements that encapsulated this flawed logic. It is easy to understand why a woman could be made to feel guilty about her situation and her intentions through this line of questioning and, once again, if a woman felt that her report would hurt her company or school, she was much more likely to remain silent (4).

Fear for Their Careers:

An unfortunately real fear for many young women, was that reporting such incidents to the police would render them unhireable, the incident marring their résumé. Sadly, there are plenty of examples of this being a perfectly reasonable fear, which prompted the principle of anonymity adopted by the WPL. If women believe that filing a claim would further harm their professional

or academic goals, it is easy to understand why women would be apprehensive to make reports without anonymity.

Consequently, many young women were subjected to harassment spanning from simple teasing to outright physical assault, and many of them would never consider reporting such incidents. It is for these reasons the WPL strived to ensure the comfort and the accessibility of their reporting system through their seven guiding principles as detailed here, and the empowerment of women resulting from their educational programs. By curbing these social and cultural obstacles, the WPL could position itself to do a greater amount of good for a larger number of women.

The Women Power Line 1090 Reporting System

The main operations of Women Power Line 1090 revolved around receiving, processing, and finalizing reports of atrocities against women. While the telephone reporting option was incredibly popular, the WPL offered a variety of reporting methods to ensure that every woman, regardless of her preferences or technological access, had the tools that she needed to stand up for herself against harassment and abuse. Regardless of how a report was received, it was processed under the following seven guiding principles essential for the success of the WPL (2).

1. **One State, One Number:** The WPL could be accessed by anybody seeking to file a complaint through the number 1090. The organization began its work using phone banks, and while it expanded into other reporting tools, the principle of a centralized reporting agency that it *will* follow up on *all* reports remained at the core of the program.
2. **Any Victim or Her Relative Could File a Complaint *Free of Charge*:** The second principle of the program was that it should be accessible by *all* the women of UP, not just those who could afford to report, ensuring that all women would always have the option to stand up for themselves.
3. **Identity of the Complaining Woman Would Be Kept Confidential:** The third principle of the WPL ensured complete anonymity for any woman seeking to file a complaint. In a culture where women had traditionally been raised to silently tolerate instances of harassment, it was of the utmost importance that women have access to an anonymous reporting system, as many of the women being harassed would likely not be comfortable publicly coming forward to confront a harasser.

4. **No Woman Filing a Report Would Need to Go to a Police Station:** The fourth principle of the WPL, was geared towards removing a hurdle for lower income women that may not have access to the required transportation or free time required to travel to the police station to file a complaint.
5. **Complaint Would Be Processed by a Woman Police Officer:** The fifth principle of the WPL reporting guidelines was that any complaint received would be processed by a female police officer who would be empathetic and able to understand the victim more easily. This principle was vital in ensuring the comfort of the victim and making the program more accessible for women that would not be comfortable talking to a man about instances of sexual harassment or abuse. .
6. **Women Police Officers Would Only Reveal Information about the Victim to Their Superiors:** The sixth principle of the WPL was oriented towards ensuring the confidentiality of reports that was so important for the success of the WPL. Principle six ensured that women who had been harassed, and sought justice, could comfortably and reliably divulge personal information should it be useful to the investigation, while understanding that this information would remain completely confidential.
7. **Call Center Would Monitor the Lodged Complaint Until the Complaint Had Been Completely Resolved:** The seventh principle of the WPL was absolutely vital for ensuring that the WPL met the expectations of the women relying on it. With over 7,000 calls a day, it would be easy for many calls to simply get lost in the process, however with the WPL pledging to continuously monitor reports until those reports were finalized, they were ensuring that every woman who filed a complaint would receive the attention and the help that she required.

These seven principles governed how the WPL managed their operations, and they were uniform across all reporting methods. They were all built around three main ideas of confidentiality, accessibility, and follow-through. Any woman reporting a complaint to the WPL could be certain that her information would be kept confidential, that she would be able to make a claim regardless of her resources or social status, and that her report would be monitored until it was resolved. These reasons had led to the explosive growth of WPL, and these three ideas would ensure that the WPL would continue to grow.

Reporting Options:

To maximize the reach of the organization, the WPL developed a wide variety of reporting methods for women who did not have access to a Power Angel or who would like to file a report themselves (**Exhibit 2A**). Unfortunately, the vast majority of the reporting options available to Indian women were based on the internet. However, there were significant resources allocated to non-digital reporting options, the most popular being the telephone report.

Telephone Reporting:

The WPL Hotline was developed as a manner to report harassment over the telephone for those women without access or preference to the internet, and processed over 90% of all reporting volume. To ensure the comfort of the women who reported, the WPL Hotline was staffed exclusively by women, and it functioned around the clock to ensure that any woman could file a report at any time.

However, its increasing popularity had placed an immense strain on the WPL Hotline, as the volume of daily calls was quickly beginning to overwhelm the available resources to process them. Uttar Pradesh was the most populous of India's states, and as a result, also had the highest number of mobile users in the country with over 120 million registered subscribers. As the popularity of the WPL continued to grow, a larger percentage of mobile users would seek the service. In 2019, there were only 96 officers working on the helpline, and they received over 7,000 calls a day, meaning that each officer processed 72 calls each day. Women across the state had been complaining that they were unable to reach a WPL representative when they made their calls, and that as a result, they were not able to receive any help.

The organization would need to expand their processing capacity to keep up with the explosive increase in demand (**5**). Fortunately, the organization had other reporting options that were becoming increasingly available across the state. While telephone reporting was the easiest and most accessible way to file a report, as smartphones became more and more prevalent across the state, more women would be able to use the online-based reporting systems. However, while UP's increased web presence would surely offset some of the growth in demand for the helpline as women shifted into more of the web-enabled reporting options, the WPL was still facing a

monumental surge in demand that would certainly require increase in capacity across all of their reporting options.

Online Reporting:

Following the rapid increase in telephone reporting, the WPL's digital reporting methods were also beginning to explode with popularity. As each complaint was processed by one workstation, with each station having a computer and a telephone available for the officer on call, the online reports were being processed by the same officers processing the telephone reports. While this processing flexibility was useful in that any constable could process any request, jumping between Skype, email, Facebook and the telephone in whatever order they should, it was dangerous in that all the reports coming in must be processed by the same pool (**Exhibit 2B**). As the Helpline was already experiencing problems with processing capacity, an increase in popularity with online reporting would only place further strain on the WPL's limited ability to process reports.

However, despite the sharing of processing resources, the online reports offered an advantage over the telephone systems in that they did not have to be processed immediately. A digital report in the form of an email or other digital message, the message could be opened at a later time and the report filed, regardless of whether or not an officer was present to begin the process.

There was a huge potential for growth in the online reporting department of the WPL, as evident from the huge increase in internet connectivity across India. The effects of surge in smartphone, internet, and social media usage throughout the country^[n1] are detailed below.

Facebook: With India experiencing huge increase in the number of social media users, the WPL received 10-15 calls each day related to online harassment, much of the time related to Facebook and WhatsApp (**6**). Starting out as a heavily phone-based reporting system, recent changes and trends in Indian technology usage indicated a high probability of new opportunities for the WPL. India had the world's highest number of Facebook users, numbering over 195 million, and surpassing the United States by over 4 million. However, it is worth noting that over 75% of Indian Facebook users were men, indicating that there was still room for plenty of growth for social media as a reporting tool for Indian women as more and more women began to use the service.

Internet: In India, there were over 462 million internet users, with over 200 million of them actively involved in social media. As the internet continued to grow in popularity, and as more and more people gained access, the WPL would likely need to restructure their reporting mix to offer more support and manpower to staffing the internet reporting methods. Estimates projected that Indian internet usage would grow from 24.3% in 2016 to over 37.5% in 2021, offering the WPL a flood of new users and potential reporters, as well as new avenues for harassers to pester women.

Smartphone Usage: Smartphone usage in India was also steadily increasing, following a trend closely mirroring that of internet and social media usage. As more and more Indians began to make use of smartphone technology, the WPL was almost certainly to see an increase in the number of reports generated through the internet and social media. Similarly, as the number of smartphones increased throughout India, there could be a correlational increase in digital harassment as well. This increase in digital harassment is likely, as one of the limiting and controlling factors of digital harassment in India is the relatively low percentage of women with regular access to the Internet and social media profiles. With only 26% of the population of India having regular access to the Internet, the projected increase in smartphone technology would bring roughly another 10% of the population online (7).

Types of Reports:

The Women Power Line 1090 handled four different grades of complaints, ranging from less serious at Phase 1 to the most serious offences at Phase 4. The different phases were a structure originally set forth to dictate the rollout of the WPL initiative, however, it was useful for deciphering how the WPL categorized different types of reports.

Phase 1: Phase 1 reports were of the most basic nature, and included any reports of harassment through phone calls. It was by far the most common, with over 90% of reports being related to telephone harassment (8).

Phase 2: Phase 2 reports stemmed from any such report that involved harassment over social media sites or the internet. As web apps and technology continued to spread across India, it was likely that incidents of Phase 2 complaints would continue to rise.

Phase 3: Phase 3 reports included any incidents of harassment anywhere, and were focused most heavily on reports of public or face-to-face harassment. Phase 3 reports were some of the most common instances of harassment in India, and almost entirely responsible for the creation of the WPL Power Angels initiative, which appointed representatives in professional, academic, and other public settings to monitor for and report instances of Phase 3 incidents.

Phase 4: Phase 4 reports were focused on the most serious of atrocities against women, and were guaranteed a level of attention deserving of such horrible occurrences. Phase 4 reports involved atrocities against women who had moved out of the realm of harassment into that of abuse, assault, or other, more despicable physical crimes against women. Phase 4 reports required the most attention and resources, as those offences were considered the most abhorrent of offences, and thus the highest priority of the WPL. Phase 4 reports were almost always immediately sent to the appropriate law enforcement agencies for immediate legal action.

Report Processing:

The WPL processed its reports using a star system categorized into five different stages. The stages are defined below, and are a measure of the persistence of harassment, not of severity like the phase system (refer to **Exhibit 3**).

One Star: The first star of this process was the reporting stage, where the victim filed the report and gave the WPL the necessary information to contact the harasser.

Two Star: The second was the stage where the male police officer contacted the harasser, relayed the instances of the harassment while keeping the identity of the victim confidential, and then issued a warning. If the harassment had been severe, the harasser was submitted to counseling, but if not this phase would end with a warning. Many reports would end at the second star, with a police warning being enough to deter further harassment for most individuals **(6)**.

Three Star: Should the harassment not end; the report was then classified as 3 star. The third star took place if the victim reported continued harassment, and the harasser was again sent for more counseling, with another warning from the police.

Four Star: After seven days had passed from the second instance of counselling, the WPL reached out to the victim. If the harassment had continued, the WPL once again sent the harasser for counseling, and issued a final warning.

Five Star: After 30 days had passed since the Four Star report, the WPL once again reached out to the victim to inquire into the harassment. If the harassment continued, the WPL reported the case to the appropriate legal channels and legal action was taken against the harasser.

As of February 12, 2017, there were 40 male constables operating the counselling line, responsible for reaching out to the harassers and issuing counseling as well as verbal warnings. According to an article published in the *Hindustan Times*, over 90% of reports received by the WPL were related to telephone calls, and most of these individuals were dealt with on the very first call. Officer Yadav of the male counseling line, asserted that over 99% of cases were dealt with using the standard procedures, being closed before ever reaching the fourth star. These procedures included the officers threatening further action, and reaching out to the family of the harasser to get them to help with the counseling.

Women Power Line Functions:

After receiving complaints, the WPL had to take action to rectify them. While certainly serving a large reactionary capacity, the WPL also worked hard to take preventative action against harassment. Their methods were varied, but effective, and the different types of both preventative and reactionary actions are as follows.

Harasser Counseling:

The WPL sought to prevent harassment through a number of channels, however the vast bulk of the work done by full- time WPL officers was reactive in nature and centered on the

counseling of the victim's harassers to deter future harassment. However, while certainly reactive from a sequential perspective, the counseling of harassers actually served an important *preventive* purpose. By successfully counselling harassers, the WPL stopped future instances of harassment before they could happen, while also actively following up on the existing case. This was important from a capacity perspective in that the WPL was effectively resolving multiple reports despite only allocating the resources required to process one. If the WPL could successfully counsel a harasser, and by definition, prevent any future instances of harassment, the WPL would have successfully processed not only the current report, but also effectively processed all of the future instances of harassment by the harasser.

Looking at harassment from a supply chain perspective, every report of a harasser can be seen as a unit to be processed, with every re-offender being considered a unit that requires rework in the form of additional reports being filed. If the WPL did not offer any counseling for the harassers, it is likely that they would have to expend a great sum of resources "reworking" the same harasser as they repeatedly processed reports linked to the individual. However, if they could successfully "rework" the harasser after his first instance of harassment, they would not have to expend resources filing reports linked to that individual again. In a sense, it can be argued that the counseling portion of the WPL's activities was similar to the quality control portion of any manufacturing process, and it should be considered just as important. By preventing instances of "rework", the WPL was able to work efficiently, only spending resources processing new reports of harassment, and increasing their overall capacity as a result. The following are a few approaches of the harasser counseling process.

Harasser Counselling Approaches

The WPL applied societal pressure for intimidating, guilting, and educating the harassers out of their bad behavior. The approaches varied in method, however, they all shared the same foundation of using societal pressure before legal action to change the behavior of the individual.

Intimidation: The WPL took pride in their educated intimidating male officers, who were not afraid to get rough with the harassers and convince them to change their ways. The actions taken by the male officers could include everything from threatening further legal

action to sometimes making the individual “take an oath on Gita never to harass women again” (6).

Guilt: Sometimes, the WPL would reach out to the families of the harassers, most notably the mothers and sisters, to shame the harassers into evaluating their ways.. If the harassers were forced to think how they would feel if their own mother and sisters were being harassed, they were much more likely to realize the damage of their actions and the error of their ways (9).

Education: Due to many of the societal factors mentioned here, many of the young harassers did not actually realize that they are harassing their target. They often believed that the young woman was interested in them and welcoming their behavior in the manner she spoke or dressed. Further compounding this problem was the fact that many young women did not report such incidents, meaning that many of these young harassers had never been told that their actions were wrong, or had faced any consequences for them. The male officers would often seek to educate the harassers, using a combination of guilt and intimidation through the process if necessary, to ensure that they did not harass any more women. Both forms of convincing were equally important to the process, but different cases required different approaches for the most effective resolution. Which of the two forms of convincing to use for educating the harasser, depended on the discretion of the officer (6).

Legal Action: However, occasionally there were men who refused to yield, and were moved on to the third, fourth, and fifth stars. As of early 2016, there were 600 men that the WPL was not able to counsel by the fifth star in the last four years, and had to be arrested. According to officer Yadav, they were all over the age of 50 years, and were more often than not anonymously purchasing cell phone numbers of women from “recharge stations” around the state, that keep books full of phone numbers of women to be sold for exactly this purpose (6).

Power Angels Initiative:

While these reporting regulations were effective in guaranteeing the privacy of any woman wishing to make a report, there were still a few women who for one reason or the other, choose not to report the incident even when facing harassment in public spaces such as at school, or in the workforce. It is for this reason that the WPL developed the Power Angels initiative, which aimed to protect all women from harassment, even those who are unwilling or incapable of filing reports themselves. The Power Angels were an all-female group of Special Police Officers (SPOs) who operated as liaisons between the women of UP and the WPL, and as sentries against academic harassment **(2)**. While any woman could approach a Power Angel SPO to file a report, the Power Angels had the added power and responsibility of being able to file harassment reports on behalf of other women even when the victim was not ready to do so. The Power Angels were, in many ways, the eyes and ears of the WPL, and allowed the organization to reach out to and protect women that it normally would not be able to. The program was widely popular, with over 86,000 girls applying for the post of Power Angels in the Uttar Pradesh region as of April 2016 **(10)**.

Despite the importance of these responsibilities, Power Angels did not exclusively serve as sentries and enforcers, as they are also educators, being familiar with the laws and regulations associated with harassment and how to prevent or respond to it. Power Angels had the added responsibility of educating the women around them about their rights, and the laws that protect them, as well as how to recognize harassment from simple teasing. Unfortunately, many of the at-risk women in the UP region were not aware that they were being harassed or that they had any forms of recourse. For this reason, the Power Angels' educational approach was absolutely crucial for combating harassment **(10)**.

One segment of the population that had historically been a hurdle for the Power Angels were women who are harassed or abused in private, and who would not come forward to file a report. While the Power Angels could not directly file reports on behalf of these women, as they were not around to witness the abuse, they could help them through education and empowerment, and influence them to help themselves. If the Power Angels could succeed in changing the perspective of these women through education and empowerment, they were more likely to come forward and report their oppressors, but until such time, there was little else that could directly be done for this segment of the population.

By serving as another method for women to file reports of harassment, or to have reports filed on their behalf, the Power Angels served the important role of increasing the WPL's process capacity, and extending their services to women who had no access to them earlier. This expansion was two-pronged, in that the Power Angels were increasing the number of reports coming into the WPL by making more women aware of the program and its operations. Also, they are relieving the WPL Helpline and officers of excessive work, as they are capable of doing some of the early filing work, adding extra processing capacity to the whole program.

However, the benefits of the Power Angel system extended far beyond simply increasing the WPL's processing capacity, for their efficient and effective approach to educating and empowering women was a powerfully *preventative* tool as well. This empowerment was beneficial not only to the women whose lives had changed through the knowledge required to defend themselves, but also to the capacity of the WPL itself. As more women became empowered through the cost-effective and efficient efforts of the Power Angels initiative, being able to identify harassment and respond appropriately through legal or social channels, the WPL could process more of the public's demand for decreased harassment through resource-efficient, preventative channels instead of the costly responsive channels of the prevailing system. Prevented cases would always require fewer resources as the woman being harassed was empowered to deal with the situation herself.

The WPL would not be expending central resources on the case, which would leave them with more resources for responsive cases. One can argue that the WPL had spent resources training Power Angels, and that these personnel were responsible for this empowerment. However, the cost-effective reality of empowerment still holds, as the Power Angels cost significantly less resources than full-time officers at the WPL headquarters and their empowerment was effective. By proactively preventing harassment before it could happen, the WPL would be efficiently *and* effectively dealing with demand, as they would be "processing" it before it necessitated the costly expenditure of central WPL resources, such as the time of their full-time officers. For every one case that the Power Angels could prevent through education and empowerment, there was one less case worth of resources required by the WPL for processing.

Despite all the advantages of the Power Angel system, there were still ineffective in a number of areas. First, the Power Angels were a relatively recent development, and could not be present everywhere at once. Hence, they focused most in areas of academia, which left working

women without the benefits of the Power Angels initiative. Women who did not have access to a Power Angel or who went to school before Power Angels came into being, were less likely to know their rights, how to identify harassment, or how to properly report and end it. Also, in instances where the Power Angels had not actually seen the harassment, while they could empower and encourage women to file reports concerning private harassment, there would always be women who will never be comfortable filing a report.

To alleviate these issues, the WPL had to educate women without access to a Power Angel about their rights and how to identify harassment. Provided resources on their website was one of the ways to do it, however, this was ineffective in aiding women without access to the internet. Flyers, pamphlets, and other non-digital means of information dispersal were the best option for educating and empowering women with no access to a Power Angel.

Options for Expanding Processing Capacity:

The WPL faced a dire need for an increase in its processing capacity. They did not have enough officers to act upon the existing reports and all trends indicated that the demand was only likely to increase in the near future **(1)**. With the reputation and effectiveness of the WPL hanging in balance, here are a few potential options for the organization to consider.

Dramatically Increase the Number of Power Angels:

In addition to offering valuable benefits to the women of UP, the Power Angels were also significantly important in bolstering the capacity of the organization by their ability to process reports in the field. They were in a unique position as they were WPL agents, who could divert demand from the central WPL facilities to the local police stations to process reports. The Power Angels initiative had become incredibly popular, and received tens of thousands more applicants than the number of positions. Also, as the Power Angels were volunteers and unpaid, the increase in capacity would be relatively inexpensive for the budget-conscious WPL. The only significant costs associated with the appointment of more Power Angels was the cost of training. As Power Angels served for a period of 3 to 5 years, the cost of this training was marginal compared to the long increase in reactive capacity as well as the preventative benefits they could bring to the organization.

Incorporate a Power Angels System for Young Men

With the immense success of the Power Angel initiative for the women of India, it is plausible that such a system could also work with men. However, one of the main drawbacks of the Power Angels initiative is that it did not offer any proactive, preventative benefits to the men that needed counseling. While the existing Power Angel initiative was successful in preventing instances of harassment by educating women on how to avoid or appropriately handle harassment, a second program that focused on teaching young men about appropriate behavior was welcome. This could be a great opportunity for the WPL to prevent more instances of harassment, since they would be simultaneously teaching the next generation how to avoid being harassed by men, and how to avoid harassing women, effectively taking preventative action on both sides of the problem. As the current system did not counsel men until they committed an offense, the male-focused counseling was reactive, which was always going to be more expensive than proactive solutions. By engaging volunteers to proactively counsel young men, the WPL would be allowing their costly, central counseling teams to focus on the high-priority offenders, while also ensuring that the WPL was able to keep up with the theoretically decreased demand.

Introduce a Power Angels System for Young Professionals

One of the drawbacks of this system was that the reach of the Power Angels was restricted to young women who were still in school. As time progressed, more and more women would have become empowered by their access to the Power Angels in their schools and universities. However, a large portion of the UP population would have no reasonable access to a Power Angel, leaving them at an increased risk of harassment. If the WPL could introduce a Power Angel system for young professionals, a whole new demographic of women could enjoy the benefits of this system.

This solution is attractive for two reasons. The first is that once a girl was trained to become a Power Angel, she would serve as one for 3 to 5 years. It would be cheaper to use these trained Power Angels in a new environment than to train new personnel. As many of the Power Angels would be graduating and entering the workforce anyway, a significant number of Power Angels were available for the new program, and would require very little training owing to their years of experience as special police officers.

Second, this solution would allow the WPL to extend its proactive, preventative approach against harassment to new groups of women, who would earlier have had to fend for themselves

and report instances of harassment directly to the WPL. By extending the preventative benefits of the Power Angels to new segments of the population, the WPL would be further reducing the number of calls to be processed by central WPL officers, and making it much more likely that they would be able to manage the rising demand.

Develop a Cooperative HR Campaign for Professional Use

Regardless of whether a Power Angel should be provided to a certain company, or other factors would prevent provision of Power Angel to the company - the WPL could develop a cooperative educational program for distribution with the company's management team. While it would be extremely cost-prohibitive to develop a customized program for each unique workplace, it would be feasible for the WPL to develop an educational program or booklet for the management of local companies. It could be an effective, preventive tool in the fight against harassment, and a means for educating new population segments that had been historically unreachable by the Power Angels initiative.

Options for Reducing Incoming Demand

Shutting Down the Illicit Mobile Recharge Station Operations

While the Power Angels were an efficient way of increasing processing capacity by reactively diverting demand from the central WPL officers, another method for the WPL to increase their effectiveness was by proactively fighting harassment before it could become a problem. The Harasser Counseling Services as well as the Power Angels Initiative served as both reactive and preventive measures for the WPL, but the following segment will focus purely on its proactive options..

Many of the men who harassed women over the telephone had purchased telephone numbers of those women at various "recharge shops" around UP. To proactively fight harassment as well as prevent them from generating more instances of harassment, it would be prudent for the WPL to work with law enforcement agencies around the state to hunt down and dismantle such operations. Inspector General Navniet Sekera stated that while WPL did not know how many recharge stations were operating in the state, they were aware that these stations were in a large part fueling the phone stalking epidemic, and were most often associated with the worst repeat offenders. These repeat offenders were the harassers who took up the most resources on a per case

basis, and by hampering their ability to purchase the phone numbers of women, the WPL would be proactively preventing a great deal of harassment.

Leveraging availability of data on social media channels and applying machine learning algorithms to actively detect potential harassers

Although rise in mobile phone usage and access to the Internet helped more people have access to WPL, it also led to a new form of sexual harassment in the form of cyber-bullying. According to WPL's official website, the number of cyber-bullying cases comprised 8% of the total number of harassment cases reported between January 1, 2018 and July, 31 2019 (11). Such a small percentage could lead to the false impression that curbing cyber-bullying is secondary. However, an exponential rise in number of smartphone users, combined with the projected huge increase in average mobile data consumption per month and online video consumption by 2022 (12), could lead to an exponential rise in cyber-bullying, which could include new forms of sexual harassment (sending videos or messages with dirty content to bully the victim, or making obscene calls over social media. which is convenient, easy and free to use). Nearly, half of those complaints occurred on WhatsApp (49%), followed by Facebook and Instagram (40%) (11) (**Exhibit 4**).

Furthermore, India already had the highest percentage of parents claiming that their children were bullied over the Internet (13) and it was shown that Indian kids were the most cyberbullied in the world (10) (**Exhibit 5**). Therefore, it was critical to curb this problem before it gained critical mass, most likely by 2022. If WPL could collect and analyze data available from the users' profiles set in "public" mode (which was abundant) , it would be able to proactively identify potential harassers. Clearly, machine learning algorithms were among the best tools available for free to analyze such data (for example, WPL could leverage the availability of a recursive neural network algorithm developed by Chandra et al. (2018) for detecting cyberbullying and re-train it with the data taken from the profiles on Facebook/Instagram/ Whatsapp of the people of UP (14)).

Improving the role of judiciary and setting stricter laws for cyber-bullying cases

From the studies (15-18), we infer that either the laws are strict on paper but not executed properly by the authority (basically, "abuse of power" and/or "corruptions" are two *big* social issues in developing countries), or the current law put in place for cyber-bullying is not sophisticated

enough. So, we can stress more on this aspect, and this is irrespective of how well the WPL operates. WPL can only play the role of an activist to impact the lawmakers and UP government, but does not have a final say on how the law should be framed.]

Some takeaways from this case.

- Every operational system will face a bottleneck issue that has to be solved to scale out its operations for serving a much larger pool of audiences.
- Technology does play a role in fixing operational issues, but only **after** the issue has been clearly identified and a proposed “solution” has been devised.
- We can explore the possibility of applying WPL in other cities across India and abroad. We can do that by examining countries that share the same characteristics of UP such as high sexual harassment, high smartphone penetration, similar culture, women not receiving sufficient help from government agencies and lawmakers, lack of educational system on sexual issues, etc.

Future of Women Power Line

The WPL stood at a crossroad with a great deal of opportunities and challenges stretched out before them. They had made a significant stand against harassment in UP, and with their growing popularity, the demands placed on this organization were only increasing. The opportunities outlined here are those that would most likely benefit the organization without a significant increase in operational costs. Should the WPL be willing and able to increase their budget, they could hire more officers and build new facilities as required. However, should the operation require cheaper, more cost-efficient means of boosting their capacity, the options outlined here should serve as reasonable considerations. While an increase in budget would certainly not be unreasonable given the importance of the initiative and the monumental benefit it was bringing to the community, until such a time that the budget did not increase, the organization would have to work both smart and hard to increase efficiency with the resources at their disposal.

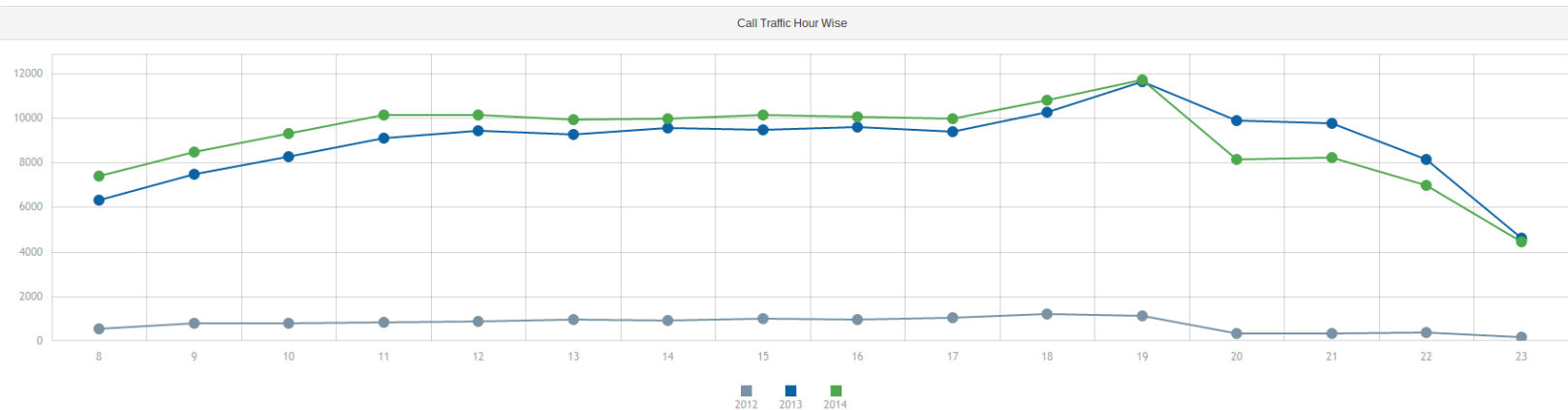


Exhibit 1: Call center traffic by the hour (2)

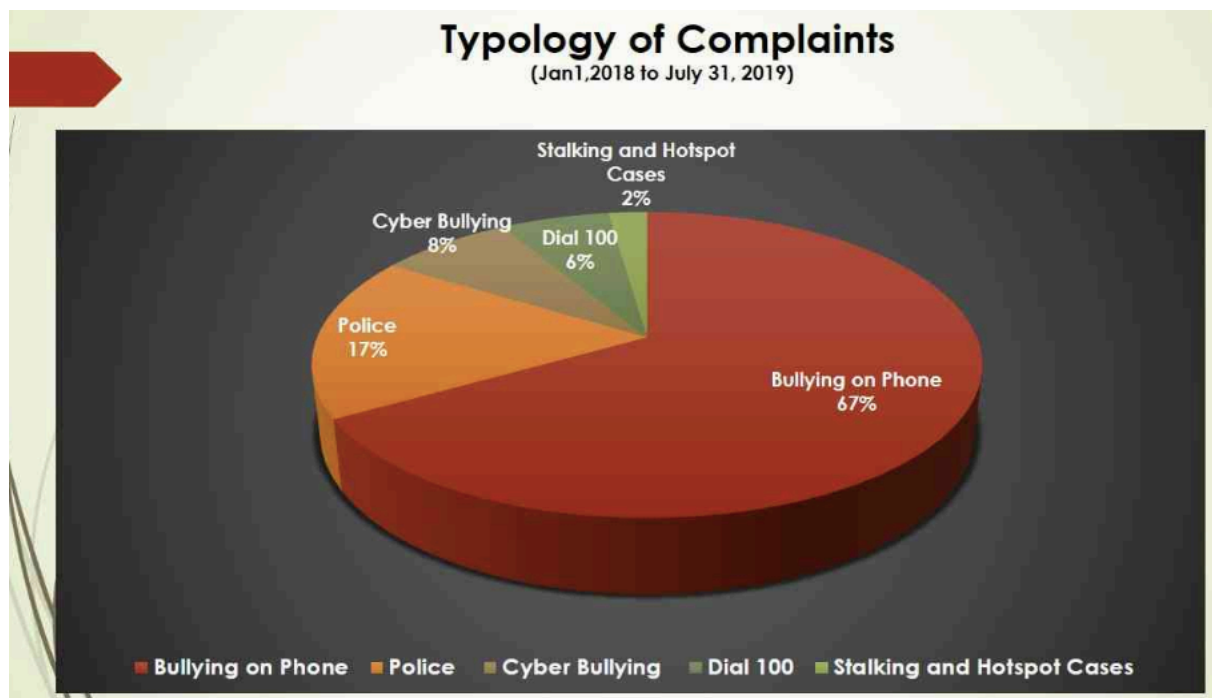


Exhibit 2A: Pie chart of different types of reported complaints during 01/01/2018 – 07/31/2019 in UP (11)

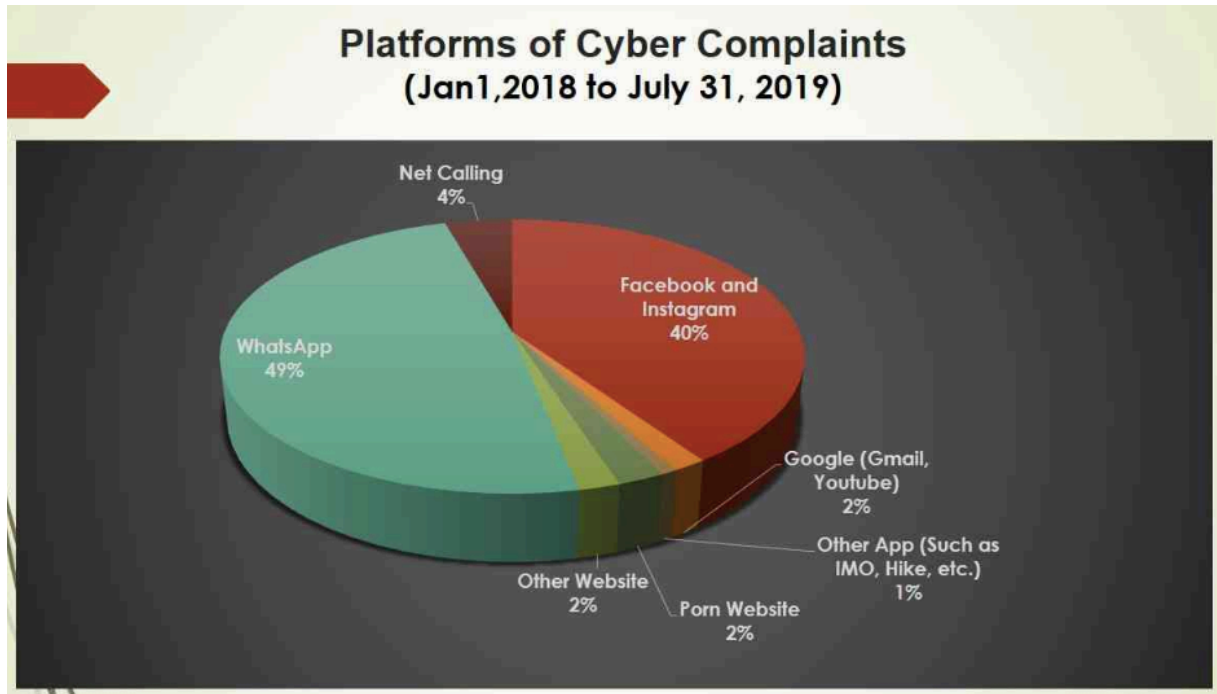


Exhibit 2B: Pie charts of platforms of cyber complaints during 01/01/2018 – 07/31/2019 in UP (11)

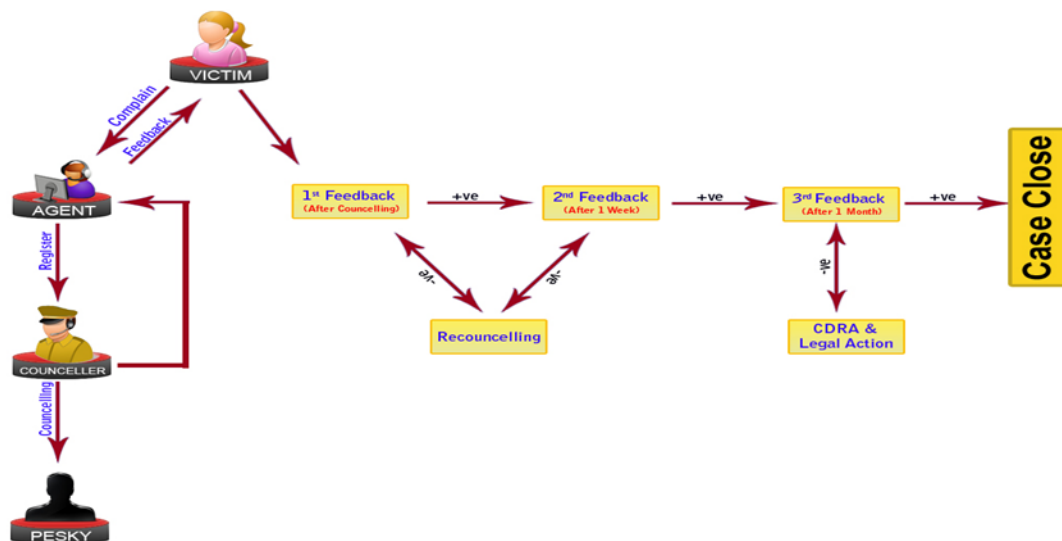


Exhibit 3: Reporting process of a case to WPL

Female harassment in three years

#	Crime	2019	2018	2017	Reduction (%)
1	Dowry Death	1,536	1,612	1,563	4.71
2	Rape	1,833	2,641	2,823	30.59
3	Molestation	7,217	8,038	7,960	10.21
4	Kidnapping	7,431	10,464	9,831	28.99
5	Action of eve-teasing	724	729	620	0.69
6	Domestic violence	10,822	9,948	9,283	8.79
	Total Crimes	29,563	33,432	32,080	11.57

Exhibit 4: Number of female harassment crimes of different types during 2017–2019 in UP
(19)

Country	2018	2016	2011
India	37	32	32
Brazil	29	19	20
United States	26	34	15
Belgium	25	13	12
South Africa	26	25	10
Malaysia	23	--	--
Sweden	23	20	14
Canada	20	17	18
Turkey	20	14	5
Saudi Arabia	19	17	18
Australia	19	20	13
Mexico	18	20	8
Great Britain	18	15	11
China	17	20	11
Serbia	16	--	--

Exhibit 5: Top 15 countries with the highest percentage of parents reporting their child has been a victim of cyberbullying during 2011-2018 (13)

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