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City

## City women to take on moral brigade

Following a slew of recent attacks on women in the city for reasons as frivolous and primitive as 'wearing western clothes', they have decided to hit back with a campaign 'Karnataka without fear'

Aditi Soni

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It's open war now. The gloves are off and Bangalore's women are no longer willing to hold back their punches. Following a slew of recent attacks on women in the city for reasons as frivolous and primitive as 'wearing western clothes', they have decided to hit back with a campaign 'Karnataka without fear'. The campaign is right now unspooling on the blogosphere but will soon translate into action on the streets as well.

Savour these samples of outrage on blogs: Madhavi Latha fumes on Facebook: "It is atrocious and outrageous. We can't let these goondas take control of our lives in the name of any obnoxious reasons just because they want to be famous.

We will do everything that needs to counter them so that the next time they will think umpteen times before attempting something like this." Moksha Carambiah, on the same site, says, "It is shocking. I am missing Bangalore which used to be safe. No human deserves to live in fear. We need to speak up. I'm in."

Two city-based two organisations, Vimochana and Alternative Law Forum, have already organised debates on the issue and women have responded overwhelmingly. On March 7, the members will march to the DGP's office to submit their grievances. This would be followed by a 'Take Back the Night walk' on March 8, in an attempt by women to reclaim their right to be safe at night across the state.

"We can't just sit back and keep looking at the number of victims increasing. That's why we are holding a night walk, which has been a traditional affair abroad everytime people wanted to claim their rights back," said Nisha Susan, the brain behind the 'Pink Chaddi' campaign. Apart from these public protests, many different organisations are taking initiatives on their own. "A group of women and men entrepreneurs would be meeting up to discuss the safety of their women employees.

More than that everyone would be focusing on educating bystanders to take up a roactive role and not be just mute spectators whn an incident occurs," Nisha added.

Interestingly, its not just women but even men think that injustice is being meted out to female citizens. "We don't support those who take law into their hands in the name of moral policing. It's not Indian culture to treat women like second-rate citizens. If they want to propose their ideas, let them do it in a right way instead of targetting women. No individual has any right to interfere with a woman", said KN Jagadish, a resident of Virupakshapura.

### COMPLACENT COPS

The cops on their part don't seem to be too keen on investigating the recent cases in Bangalore. When this correspondent contacted High Grounds police, the 'Men in Khakhi' expressed doubts over the victim's statement. "We are not clear as to what the victim was doing at 9.30 pm. If a gang teases a woman and disappears, it is difficult to trace the culprits," High Grounds police officials told Bangalore Mirror. On the Indiranagar molestation case, DCP (East) B K Singh said it was difficult to nab the criminals as CCTV footage was not available. "However, we are trying to catch the criminals with the available information," he added.

### WOMEN NOT SO INNOCENT?

There are the usual quota of discordant voices. Kumar Jagirdhar, Member Save Indian Family Foundation, said, "Girls today are not all that innocent and they are also provoking the boys on the roads. This may be an isolated case but boys are also being harassed by girls and they are not able to complain for the fear that the law is pro-women. If a man complains of eve-teasing, then they will not even be taken seriously. Both sides of the story must be heard before assessing that all men are perverted".

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## ANGRY VOICES

**Nagma H Nadaf, State Convenor, Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan**

You tell me, where are women safe anymore. Let alone the roads, they are not safe anymore even in their houses at times. They are troubled by their in laws and in college, they are harassed by guys. There is no end to the harassment done to girls. Police too are not helping in any way.

**Madhavi Latha**

Coming to the practical aspects of it, we should form a committee or society which trains women physically, morally and also make them aware of all the legal proceedings. We should have phone numbers and contacts of people in high positions who can help immediately and who are willing to usher in the change, circulate them among all the women. We should identify sensible contacts in police department too to come to our rescue should such incidents occur.

**K S Vimla, Akhila Bharat Janvadi Mahila Sanghatan**

Fascist forces are targetting women. This is yet another way of cultural policing. Women are not safe anymore and we hold the state government responsible for this. They should not behave like Sangh Parivar and act responsibly like a Government should.

**Binu Bhaskar**

No amount of memoranda or petitions are going to change anything. I am a citizen with absolute pessimism talking. What we need are legalities and the courts to sort this out! The political class will not bat an eyelid. Better still let the army rule this country!!!

## RECENT INCIDENTS

**Indiranagar**

On February 17, in the afternoon at about 1.10 pm in Indiranagar a young woman was harassed by two men on bikes. The lady was coming back from her German classes in her car when two guys started following her. They spat on her car window and abused her in Kannada. The worst thing was that even though this entire drama unfolded in front of many people no one came to her aid.

**Koramangala**

On February 25, at 10 am a 28 year-old-woman was picked on by four men in a SUV. The men started pulling the lady's dress and when she said that she will call the police, one of them even offered his mobile to assist her. They went on to scratch her neck and punch her ear.

**High Grounds**

The same day at 9 pm, a woman filmmaker was attacked by four men near Mount Caramel College. The reason: She was wearing a sleeveless kurta and jeans. They abused her in Kannada and when she retorted in English, they were provoked even more. They punched her and said that she deserved it for walking in sleeveless at night. She went on to register a complaint with the High Grounds Police station.





**(Inputs from Shashwathi Bhanukumar, Gayatri Nair & Deepthi M R)**

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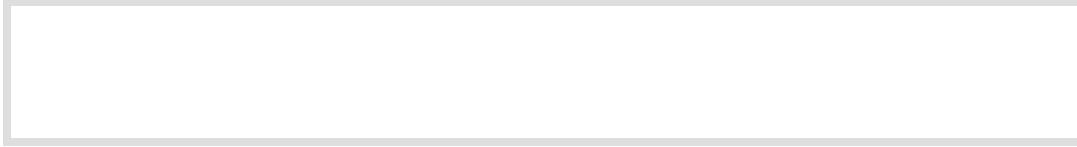
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