CHAPTER 4
PERSONAL SECURITY OF CALL CENTER EMPLOYEES

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4.1 INTRODUCTION
The Indian ITES and BPO sector has seen a phenomenal growth in the recent past. There has also been a rapid growth in the number of females being employed in these sectors. Ever since India has achieved its independence, there have never been so many opportunities galore for women in any sector of the Indian economy as much as the ITES and BPO sector.

Meeting a longstanding demand for gender parity in the workforce, the Government of India approved an amendment in the Factories Act to allow women employees to work night shifts. The amendment, allowing women to work between 10 pm and 6 am, is expected to benefit those working in Special Economic Zones (SEZs), textiles, garments, handicrafts, leather and IT sector (especially call centers). Garment units already employ 60% of women workforce; and with growth in this industry the number this will go up tremendously. Now India is at par, if opportunities availed, with her immediate competitors for the use of women workforce as most Asian countries, including China, Singapore, Malaysia, Korea and Taiwan, have huge women labour force.
The amendment suggests that night shift for women shall be allowed only if the employer ensures safety, adequate safeguards in the factory as regards occupational safety and health, equal opportunity for women workers, adequate protection of their dignity, honour and transportation from the factory premises to the nearest point of their residence. So far, the IT sector and SEZs were employing women for late-night work hours but had no legal obligation to provide these safety measures.

In 1919, the ILO decided to completely prohibit night work for women in Public and Private Industry. However, the Convention stated that the night work should be permitted in case of, force majeure, when in any undertaking there occurs an interruption of work which was impossible to foresee and which is not of a recurring nature or in case where the work has to do with raw materials or materials in the course of treatment, which are subject to rapid deterioration, when such night work is necessary to preserve such materials from certain losses.

This convention made it clear that women could be allowed to work at night in the greater national interest or in the economic interests of preventing loss of raw materials. To encourage greater number of countries to ratify the ILO Convention concerning the women non-employment in the nightshifts, the Convention was further made flexible as women holding responsible position of management, who were not ordinarily engaged in manual work, were exempted from provisions of ILO Convention. Subsequently women in higher posts of a managerial or technical character were exempted from its provision as also women employed in health and welfare services.
The Convention concerning night works for women employed in industry adopted in 1948 defined night hours in such a manner as to allow longer hours of work for women and provided sufficient flexibility to industry to permit a double shift system of work. The revised Convention of 1948 further permitted the ban on night work to be suspended by the government in the national interest, i.e., in case of serious emergency only after consultations with the employers and workers organizations concerned.

The General Conference of ILO\(^{30}\) in June 1990 had adopted a protocol known as Protocol of 1990 under those provisions the competent authority in a country under its national laws and regulations is authorized to rectify the duration of the nightshifts or to introduce exemptions from ban on night works for women for certain branches of activity or occupations. This required:

i. Agreement of said organizations in a specific branch of activity or occupation;

ii. Agreement between the employers and workers representatives in one or more specific establishments;

The Protocol adopted in 1990 to the night work (women) Convention (revised) stated that above-mentioned variations or exemptions could not apply to women workers during a period of at least 16 weeks, before or after child birth of which at least eight weeks should be before the expected date of child birth. The prohibition of night work by women shall apply to

\(^{30}\) www.ilo.org
additional periods if medical certificate is produced stating that this is necessary for the health of mother or child. It further stipulates that a woman worker should not be dismissed or given notice of dismissal because of pregnancy or childbirth only.

The Conventions, which were adopted by ILO in 1990, stated that workers of both sexes who perform a certain number of hours of nightshift are to be provided with sufficient rest periods, health assessment, medical advice and safety measures. It will not be applicable to those persons, who are employed in agriculture, stock raising, fishing, maritime transport and inland navigation. In case of women workers, the Convention requires that alternate works be made available before and after childbirth and if necessary, during pregnancy and a prolonged period after childbirth.

4.2 DEFINITION OF EMPLOYEE SAFETY & SECURITY
Wikipedia\(^{31}\) defines Safety as “the state of being "safe" (from French sauf), the condition of being protected against physical, social, spiritual, financial, political, emotional, occupational, psychological, educational or other types or consequences of failure, damage, error, accidents, harm or any other event which could be considered non-desirable. This can take the form of being protected from the event or from exposure to something that causes health or economical losses. It can include protection of people or of possessions. Safety is generally interpreted as implying a real and significant impact on risk of death, injury or damage to property.”

\(^{31}\) www.wikipedia.org
ILO through its Global Programme on Safety and Health at Work (SAFEWORK)\(^{32}\) defines employee safety and security:

SAFEWORK promotes an integrated multi-disciplinary approach which takes into account the physical, mental and social well-being of men and women workers. Conceiving the working conditions and the working environment as a whole, the prevention and control of work-related factors and their multiple and cumulative effects are taken into account including psycho-social and organizational aspects.

The main objective of the Programme is to increase the capacity of Member States to protect workers' health, to prevent and reduce occupational accidents, injuries, occupational and work-related diseases, through the improvement of their working conditions and working environment. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) mentions that employers are responsible for providing a safe and healthful workplace for their employees. OSHA’s role is to assure the safety and health of working men and women by setting and enforcing standards; providing training, outreach and education; establishing partnerships; and encouraging continual improvement in workplace safety and health.

\(^{32}\) www.ilo.org/safework/lang--en/index.htm
4.3 ISSUES REGARDING PERSONAL SAFETY & SECURITY OF CALL CENTER EMPLOYEES

Women around the world have moved into industry and the service sector in increasing numbers. In the past 15 years, they have become almost 50% of the workforce in many countries. While women are entering occupations previously closed to them, the labour force is still highly segregated on the basis of gender. A significant proportion of women are found in certain types of occupations in the services sector, in the informal sector and particularly in agriculture. In industry, they predominate in micro-electronics, food production, textile and footwear, chemical and pharmaceutical industries and handicraft workshops. In the service sector they are mainly engaged in teaching, office work, hospitals, banks, commerce, hotels, and domestic work.

In India, labour laws come in the concurrent list of Indian Constitution. Both Indian Parliament and State Legislatures have the right to make laws. Therefore, we have in relation to labour laws, The Factories Act, 1948 and various State Shops and Establishments Acts. The Factories Act 1948, under Section 66, banned working of women in night shifts by stating that no women shall be required or allowed to work in any factory except between the hours of 6 AM and 7 PM.

The Central Government keeping in view the suggestions of Supreme Court of India, judgments of various High Courts, proposals of Women’s Organizations, Trade Unions and National Commission on Labour, recommendations of Standing Committee on Labour and Welfare and he present economic scenario, satisfied the ILO Protocol of 1990 and amended
the Factories Act 1948 including Section 66 there so that women could work in night shifts in factories between 7 PM and 6 AM in India.

For the purpose of amending the Factories Act, 1948 so as to allow women to work in the nightshifts, the Factories (Amendment) Bill, 2005 was introduced by Union Government in Lok Sabha on 10th August 2005, which envisages that the employer ensures occupational safety and adequate protections to the women employed. The owner of the factory has to ensure occupational health, equal opportunity for women workers, adequate protection to their dignity, honour and safety and their transportation from factory to the nearest point of their residence.

Recently there was news on Hindu Newsline., on 30th January 2008 the Supreme Court dismissed the plea of Mr Som Mittal (former head of Hewlett Packard Global Soft Ltd), seeking quashing of an FIR lodged by police accusing his company of allegedly violating a 2002 order of the Karnataka Government that prohibited night shift for women. He now faces prosecution for allegedly failing to provide adequate security and transport to one of the firm’s employees who was raped and killed by the driver of the pick-up car in December 2005.

In a statement issued through Nasscom, Mr Mittal - who took charge as the software association’s new President in January this year - said, “I have not yet seen the judgment of the Supreme Court on the case regarding the unfortunate murder of an employee of HP Global Soft in 2005 and,
therefore, cannot comment on it. We have full faith in the Indian judicial system, which is acknowledged to be fair and independent.”

Meanwhile, Nasscom said it was making all efforts to continuously review and further strengthen the processes that ensure the safety of all employees in the industry. “While the number of unfortunate incidents involving IT-BPO employees have been proportionately far less than those affecting other citizens, for us, even a single incident is one too many,” Nasscom said.

According to Mr Raman Roy, Chairman and Managing Director of Quatrro, “Employee safety has been paramount for us. Quatrro vehicles have GPS installed in them and we monitor their movement at all points of time. We also test our drivers to ensure they are not drunk and if any driver is found in an inebriated condition, we will not hesitate to cancel the entire contract.”

The Associated Chambers of Commerce & Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) had undertaken a study titled “Night Shift for Women: A Research Study” which was sponsored by National Commission for Women (NCW) recently. This research work has brought to the foreground the following facts as mentioned in the statistical table below.

The following table shows the percentage of women employee’s response to the problems facing them during their night shift working.

33 http://ncw.nic.in
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Considered</th>
<th>Delhi</th>
<th>Mumbai</th>
<th>Chennai</th>
<th>Kolkata</th>
<th>Hyderabad</th>
<th>Bangalore</th>
<th>Ludhiana</th>
<th>Ahmadabad</th>
<th>Pune</th>
<th>Avg.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insecurity</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duration of night shift</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commuting problems</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child care facility</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provided</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied from employer</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>85.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental harassment</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In house trainings</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better pay package</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demand by nature of job</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>92.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social problem</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate no. of women</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>96.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Published report of National Commission for Women’s sponsored ASSOCHAM research study on “Night Shift for Women – Growth and Opportunities”
Women’s perception

Responses from women employees (see above table) shows that 28.9% respondents feel insecure in the night shift work, the rest 71.1% do not feel insecure during night shift work. It is observed that despite the high rate of crime in metropolitan cities insecurity felt is quite low among night shift women employees. Bangalore and Ludhiana are found to be in highly insecure zones, showing 44% and 45% insecurity perception respectively.

Out of the employees surveyed 13% of the respondents face difficulties during commuting whereas 87% are satisfied about the arrangements made by their employers. Problems of 13% are qualitative in nature in the way that employers may sometimes accommodate passengers of two cabs in one, attitude of drivers is rude or that drivers drink and drive during nightshift, etc. that provide an uncomfortable environment for women. Where transportation is totally free and employees belong to unskilled strata like textile and leather industries, women labor force face more problems. BPO employees are satisfied in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Hyderabad, in Bangalore situation is fearful because of recent rape and murder case of Pratibha. Commuting problems are being faced more by women of Kolkata, Mumbai and Pune i.e. 18%, 17% and 17%, respectively. Delhi, Hyderabad and Ludhiana employees face less commuting problems i.e. 14%, 13% and 10%, respectively. Chennai and Bangalore are facing the least commuting problems (8%). Social Problems – The survey observed that 13.5% nightshift working women face social problems. They are unable to devote time to evening parties and small get-togethers in their neighborhoods and among relations. The company that children also need in the evenings is not met. Women felt that it becomes really hard to spend quality time with
children and to attend their school functions and meetings. Unfortunately women working in night shift are blamed for breaking up the institution called family system and for poor childcare accorded even though they may be working harder than men. It was further concluded in the survey that women working night shifts continually for prolonged periods suffered various ailments as shown in the table below:

Table 4.2

Physical problems faced by women workers during nightshifts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Problems during Nightshift</th>
<th>(Perception of respondents in %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Backaches</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continual Tiredness</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digestive Disorders</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger &amp; Irritation</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep Difficulty</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sprains &amp; Strains</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent Cold &amp; Headache</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Blood Pressure</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menstrual Problems</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory Illness</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnancy related problems</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General illness</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Published report of National Commission for Women’s sponsored ASSOCHAM research study on “Night Shift for Women – Growth and Opportunities”
The above chart shows the various physical ailments that a female worker faces while she is employed on night working on a regular basis. Almost 50% of the respondents mentioned that they suffer from menstrual problems. For any women the regularity of her menstrual cycle is the indicator of good health. This leads to reproduction problems as well as all other physical ailment as listed above. This is due to irregular sleeping habits due to night shifts combined with the stress levels due to their job profiles.

During the survey doctors felt that night shift employees face physiological, emotional and biological problems, based on disturbed rhythmic pattern of sleeping and waking.

While hormones and chemicals are produced when a person is awake, body organs rest and are at their lowest during sleep. They feel that a change in the working schedule affects all this balance and leads to sleep deprivation disturbing the rhythm of the body and negatively affecting the concentration, job performance, social interactions and general health. So to overcome these problems women must get at least 7-8 hours undisturbed sleep by simulating night-like conditions using heavy drapes to block the sunlight. It is also suggested that women in night shift should try to restrict the use of caffeine, alcohol, cigarettes and chocolates. Yoga and meditation will prove beneficial for them. Doctors agree that if they can do that, most of their health problems would be over. In fact, they may end up saving a couple of more working hours for themselves and their families. It is suggested that proper rest and alternate employment in daytime should be given to women during illness and menstruation period and a period of at least three months before and two months after the child birth. This time period should be
extended in case a medical certificate is produced to the effect that it is necessary for the health of the mother or child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>During the survey employees felt that sacrifices toward social life should be compensated by more additional benefits with the effective implementation of mandatory benefits. Another thing felt by them was that there are no childcare facilities for their little ones.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employers</td>
<td>Employers perceived a safe environment being provided to their female employees. They also felt length of nightshifts as satisfactory; commuting facilities are being provided to their women employees at night. Employers felt that the childcare facilities are being provided and that the employees working in nightshifts earn a better pay package.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women Organizations/NGOs</td>
<td>Women organizations are in favour of women working nightshifts but on the condition that employers take full responsibility to provide security. Companies should provide food and healthcare services within the campus. Employer must provide for women employees separate work sheds; canteen facilities, medical facilities and at least twelve hours rest between two shifts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors</td>
<td>During the survey doctors felt that night shift employees face physiological, emotional and biological problems. A change in the working schedule affects balance of the body, sleep and has a negative consequence on one's concentration, job performance, social interactions and general health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges/Advocates/Lawyers</td>
<td>Judges/Advocates/lawyers are of the opinion that representatives of women employees should be equipped with adequate powers and linkage with police and law enforcing organizations in factories that have nightshifts for women. Stringent penal provisions should be made against an erring employer in case of non-implementation of the conditions for nightshift work of women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>Police authorities are of the opinion that companies should provide escorts for female employees from their homes to their workplace and also keep record of photographs and work histories of their drivers that they hire for commuting purposes of their employees. Factories should adopt a proper grievance handling mechanism and women should head it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In conclusion, it was observed that night shift working of the women, across the sectors surveyed, seriously hampered the social life of women. Night shift jobs consume the daytime at home, devoting at least 5 to 6 hours to sleep in the daytime create lot of problems for performing social obligations up to the expectations of family and society. Women tend to feel lethargic and lifeless during the day. It is very important for the peace of the family that a woman should get her proper sleep. For the married women when children are extremely demanding, it's not possible to sleep during the daytime. In any case, naps during the day can never make up for a full night's sleep. Because of the time differences, the natural order of things gets reversed and that plays havoc with mind.

However, survey has found favorable conditions of work for women in night shift work, in terms of security, monetary compensation and provision of fringe benefits. During the survey employees felt that sacrifices toward social life should be compensated by more additional benefits with the effective implementation of mandatory benefits. Working women felt that Instead of holiday swap or compensatory day offs mandatory benefits such as premium pay and holiday pay should be given. With respect to work hours, survey results revealed that although work schedules adopted by employers deviate from the usual shifts, employees are satisfied because their job desires this. It is found that a considerable percentage of the
workers render more than 8 hours of work in the night shift, and sometimes are required to work on holidays also.

The National Commission for Women (NCW) has taken up itself the task of holding a roundtable discussion on this issue by involving police, women activists and senior officers from the Ministry of Information Technology. On 17th January, 2006, a round table discussion titled “Interaction and consultation on the issue of protection to the women employees of the call centers.” was held at Delhi.

The Commission evolved a set of guidelines and sent then to the Call Centre Association of India and BPOs for adherence. These include measures to ensure safety of women employees while commuting, additional checks, good in-house practices and other gender friendly measures. The guidelines are as follows:

**4.3.1 MEASURES TO ENSURE SAFETY IN TRANSPORT**

a) Call centers should ensure that a security guard escorts a woman in the office transport.

b) Call Centre management should ensure that women employees are not the first to be picked up from their homes and the last to be dropped back home by the drivers.

c) All call centre owners must provide the police a complete record of the antecedents of drivers as most of them depend on taxi operators for day-to-day transport arrangements.
d) Police verification of drivers should be done on the lines of verification for domestic servants.

e) Provision of radio talkie should be a pre condition while outsourcing taxis.

f) A black box should be installed in vehicles hired for call centre employees.

g) The BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) sector ought to install a Global Positioning System (GPS) for tracking the position of its vehicles.

h) A breath analyzer test for taxi drivers is imperative.

i) It should be compulsory for all taxi drivers to carry identity cards issued by the company and wear a uniform.

j) Drivers of call centers should show up at the area police station from time to time for verification.

k) The logistics team should conduct surprise checks of the taxis at random locations on the route of the office transport to monitor if the taxi drivers are adhering to their brief.

l) A pool of drivers having established credentials should be created to provide reliable substitutes in case the need arises.

m) Installation of speed governors in office cars and taxis is essential to check rash and negligent driving.

n) Call centre owners should check permission of the police before deciding upon a location for setting up a call centre.

o) If all call centers are concentrated in one area, police patrolling and vigilance can be strengthened.
4.3.2 GOOD PRACTICES TO BE FOLLOWED IN-HOUSE

a) A thorough induction process that spells out to the employees the work hours, transport arrangements and familiarity with organization rules.

b) It would be worthwhile if the employees are given a laminated card that lists numbers of the transport help desk along with those of senior persons who can be approached in case of an emergency. Some call centers have claimed that they provide such a laminated card along with the identity to each employee.

c) Self defense training programmes for women employees should be organized by the call centers from time to time.

d) Monetary incentives should be given every month to drivers who have done a good job.

4.3.3 GENDER FRIENDLY MEASURES

Call centers need to ensure third party representation in committees set up to deal with cases of sexual harassment in compliance with the Supreme Court guidelines in the Vishakha case. As per the Supreme Court order, it is necessary and expedient for employers as well as other responsible persons and institutions to observe certain guidelines to ensure prevention of sexual harassment of women. The guidelines suggest creation of a complaint mechanism for redressing complaints of sexual harassment. According to the guidelines, the complaints committee should be headed by a woman and half of its members should be women. To prevent the possibility of any undue pressure or influence from senior levels, such a Complaints Committee
should involve a third party, either an NGO or anybody who is familiar with the issue of sexual harassment.

Call centers should not depend entirely on police patrolling. As a business organisation, they ought to take adequate measures to guarantee the safety of women as mandated by the amendment to the Factories Act. The amendment to the Act which allows women to work between 10 pm and 6 am in Information Technology (IT) among other sectors clearly puts the onus of ensuring safety of women employees on the employer.

The Times News Network article on “Call alert: Security concerns cut down flow of women staff into BPOs” published on 20 Nov, 2007 reported that the security concerns in call centers and other BPOs across India is making female employees re-consider their decision to be part of this fast growth, high-pay profession. A recent study by Dataquest-IDC employee satisfaction survey of the Indian BPO firms points to slow but steady decrease in the number of women working in the BPO segment. The percentage of female employees has steadily come down to 32% in 2007 from 34% in 2006 and 36% in 2005.

While a 2% decline in the number of female employees has not affected companies’ current activities, it sure is a concern for BPO industry which is already facing problems of high attrition. One out of every three employee working in BPOs is a woman and going by the study, it indicates that this number is likely to further go down in coming years. “This is a serious issue for BPOs as they want more women to join since women tend to stick longer with company, if the environment is comfortable,” says Shailendra Gupta Sr.
Manager - User Research IDC (India) Limited. “Unless BPOs get their security in place, have better HR systems, the number of women joining is likely to continue to reduce.”

Employee attrition level in most companies averages at 20%; while in some companies it is as high as 24%, according to IDC. More and more employees are now looking at alternative options in banking, finance and retail segments.

According to Shantanu Bannerjee, director, HR, Xansa, women now have more options in the services industry. “Besides BPO, there is opportunity in retail, insurance, BFSI,” he says. “Starting with the telecomm industry, all this has added to their basket of options in the recent years.” While some BPOs have a policy to attract women with a fixed target of hiring a particular percentage into the workforce, it is an issue of job fit for the others.

The Hindu article on 8th November 2007 on “Hotline Services to be launched for BPO Staff” reported that for the safety of its employees, the business process outsourcing (BPO) industry has decided to set up 24x7 hotline wireless networks and create security patrol units to keep a check on movement of cabs. It has also decided to create and share a centrally fixed wireless radio frequency hotline between the BPO transport team and local police. This was decided at a meeting called by the Business Process Industry Association of India (BPIAI) and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) to review the security measures being taken by the industry in view of the murder of a female BPO executive by a cab driver in Pune.
The “BPIAI 24x7 Hotline Wireless Network” and security patrol units will come up in other cities also, including Bangalore, Pune, Chandigarh, Jaipur, Kolkata, Chennai, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Mysore within a month.

Similarly, all BPIAI security patrol vehicles will work closely with the local police to check rash driving. Senior management of leading BPO units, including Genpact, WNS, Dell, Quatrro and Teletech, took part in the meeting.

It was unanimously agreed to take long-term measures such as mandatory pre-employment screening of all cab drivers by police and transporters, sharing of blacklisted drivers’ list among the BPO units, procedure to check on the female employee picked first and dropped last and security patrolling cabs to escort such female employees. To check rash and drunken driving, the BPO management has suggested imposing stringent penalty on cab operators and promoting use of breath analyzer to penalize guilty drivers.

The companies have also decided to share “best practices” available in terms of employee security guidelines that exist within the association and modify them if needed. BPO managements have decided to adopt some “orthopedic measures” such as yoga classes to de-stress drivers.