

'Report Abuse to Stop the Offender from Repeating the Crime'

Posted on Mar 28, 2015 in Chennai

Express News service



CHENNAI:After the enforcement of The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO Act), the number of reported rape cases has increased, thanks to the awareness about the law, said R Nataraj, former Director General of Police. "POCSO Act 2012, which was enacted by the Tamil Nadu Government as per a direction from the Supreme Court, really sensitised people about reporting the rape cases," he said.

In 2012, 19 cases were reported under POCSO, but the number increased to 1,055 in 2014. This year, a total of 183 cases have been reported till date. Various institutions and the media played a major role in sensitising the people. "Rape cases should be reported, otherwise the chance of the perpetrators repeating the offence is more," added Nataraj.

Speaking after inaugurating the Centre for Inclusive Development, which coincided with the one-day symposium on Gender, Violence and Mental Illness-Focus on Inclusive Development at The Banyan Academy of

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Leadership in Mental Health (BALM) on Wednesday, Nataraj added that in 95 per cent of rape cases, the rapist was a person known to the victim. The Banyan also entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with three global universities for research activities. The MoU was signed by Balraj Vasudevan, managing trustee, The Banyan, Dr Jaap Winter, vice-chancellor, Vrije University, Amsterdam (VU), Dr David Henderson, director, Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health, and Dr S Parasuraman, director, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS).

Vandana Gopikumar, co-founder of The Banyan and BALM, said that the MoU was a stepping stone for global collaboration for research in mental health, which will help in practice and policy advocacy. New ideas, strategies and solutions can be shared among these partners, which can be implemented and practiced here, she added.

Dr K V Kishore Kumar, director, The Banyan and BALM, also spoke on the occasion.

