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Measures For Prevention and Protection Against Domestic Violence in India: A Critical Legal Study

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Measures For Prevention and Protection Against Domestic Violence in India: A Critical Legal Study

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Abstract

Domestic violence remains one of the most deeply entrenched forms of human rights violations in India, affecting countless individuals—especially women—across social, economic, and cultural boundaries. Despite the progressive evolution of legal mechanisms intended to curb such violence, it continues to persist in various forms, often concealed within the private confines of familial life. Recognizing domestic violence as not only a private grievance but also a public issue that undermines the foundations of justice, equality, and dignity, this study seeks to explore and critically analyze the effectiveness of legal measures enacted for its prevention and redressal in India.

This dissertation is an endeavor to examine the legislative intent, operational dynamics, and judicial interpretation of laws such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, in the broader framework of constitutional rights and international human rights commitments. Through this critical legal study, the research aims to evaluate the adequacy of statutory provisions, the responsiveness of enforcement agencies, and the role of the judiciary in shaping a victim-centric approach.

In addition to the doctrinal analysis of relevant statutes and case law, this work delves into the practical realities of implementation—highlighting the gaps between law and practice, the societal stigmas that inhibit victims from seeking redress, and the structural reforms needed to strengthen institutional support mechanisms. Particular attention has also been paid to the intersectionality of gender, class, and access to justice, which continues to influence the lived experiences of domestic violence survivors in India.

This study would not have been possible without the guidance of my mentors, the support of my peers, and the courage of the countless individuals whose voices echo through the findings of this research. It is with great respect and hope that this work is offered—as a scholarly contribution to the legal discourse and as a step toward a more equitable and violence-free society.

Introduction

Women serve as the principal carers and emotional support inside families. Paradoxically, the family, which is ideally a sanctuary for care and protection, frequently transforms into a locus of tyranny, oppression, and violence against its members. Domestic abuse represents a particularly insidious manifestation of gender-based violence, impacting women regardless of age, educational attainment, social standing, employment status, familial composition, financial level, or geographic location. It manifests in various forms—physical, emotional, sexual, psychological, and economic—and occurs within the domestic domain, rendering it more challenging to identify, address, or prosecute.¹

Domestic violence is not a novel occurrence in India. Historical and theological writings, cultural practices, and societal conventions have consistently reinforced a patriarchal framework that endorses male supremacy and the subjugation of women. Practices like as dowry, child marriage, son preference, and limitations on women's mobility and autonomy exemplify this entrenched patriarchy.² These conventions, either implicitly or blatantly, rationalise or legitimise violence against women, especially within the domestic sphere. Consequently, numerous women endure their anguish in silence, apprehensive of societal disgrace, familial retribution, or financial ruin.

The definition of domestic abuse has expanded throughout the years, particularly with the implementation of legislative measures such the Protection of Women from Domestic Abuse Act, 2005. This regulation acknowledges physical abuse as well as sexual, verbal, emotional, and economic abuse as punishable offences. Nevertheless, despite the presence

¹ Dave, Anjali, Solanki Gopika, and Basu Pekham, "Journey from Violence to Crime: A Research Study on Domestic Violence," *The Indian Journal of Social Work*, Vol. Volume 62, Issue 3, July 2001, page 43

² National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, <http://222.ncadv.org>, accessed on March 12, 2025

of such legislation, execution remains problematic due to insufficient training of law enforcement personnel, societal biases, and the hesitance of victims to pursue assistance. Law enforcement personnel, judicial authorities, and protective agents frequently do not address domestic abuse with the requisite gravity, leading survivors to feel dissuaded from filing complaints.

Domestic violence typically exhibits a cyclical pattern of abuse, comprising an initial phase of tension escalation, succeeded by a severe incident of violence, and concluding with a period of reconciliation or tranquility. Over time, these cycles intensify and proliferate, complicating women's efforts to escape. The abuser's power and control alienate the victim from social connections, familial support, and financial autonomy. This solitude, exacerbated by diminished self-worth and psychological anguish, can ensnare the victim in a perpetual circle of abuse.

Women subjected to domestic violence frequently endure significant physical injuries, including contusions, fractures, internal trauma, and persistent agony. Nonetheless, the psychological repercussions are frequently more detrimental. These may encompass melancholy, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), suicide ideation, and enduring cognitive and emotional deficits. Children exposed to domestic violence experience detrimental effects, as research demonstrates heightened risks of behavioural issues, emotional instability, scholastic challenges, and the potential to perpetuate violence in adulthood.³

Meaning and Concept of the Term Domestic Violence

Domestic violence refers to acts of violence occurring within the private domain, typically between individuals connected by intimacy, kinship, or legal ties.⁴ In a more restricted definition, it pertains specifically to violence perpetrated by a male partner against a female partner, encompassing physical assaults and sexual violations, which may manifest as pushing, pinching, spitting, kicking, biting, punching, stabbing, scalding with boiling water or acid, and arson.

The term domestic violence encompasses unethical, immoral, or criminal acts perpetrated by a family member, involving physical harm, verbal threats, harassment, emotional abuse, or property destruction as methods of

³ Mitra Nishi, Community-Based Initiatives in the Struggle Against Domestic Violence, *The Indian Journal of Social Work*, Vol. 62, Issue 3, July 2001, p. 414.

⁴ Refer to note 4 above, page 199.

coercion, control, retribution, or punishment.⁵ Domestic violence encompasses any acts of violence occurring between individuals who share a personal relationship, whether currently or historically, within a familial context. It broadly includes various forms of abuse, such as physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, or economic, perpetrated among partners, household members, or relatives.⁶

Constitutional Perspective on Fundamental Human Rights of Women

The Constitution aims to guarantee justice, equality, and liberty, with the methods for achieving these goals delineated in Part II, which addresses fundamental rights, and Part IV, which pertains to the Directive Principles of State Policy. Fundamental rights are pivotal in constitutional jurisprudence, alongside the essential concept of basic features.⁷ Part IV of the Constitution comprises directive Principles of State Policy, which serve as enforceable aspirational guidelines for governmental actions. Indian women possess an extensive array of commendable and affirmative rights under the Constitution. Former Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi once stated, "our women have more rights than women of other countries." However, there are extensive regions where women are enduring hardship⁸. The researcher has endeavored in this chapter to examine and analyze the rights conferred to women as citizens of India and the protections afforded to them by the Constitution, the fundamental legislation of India.

Directive Principles of State Policy for the Protection of Women

Part IV of the Constitution encompasses the Directive Principles of State Policy. They represent the principles and goals established by the Constitution's framers to be realized by future administrations. It is important to note that these Directives do not Confer no rights upon women, which are unenforceable by a court of law. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of the state to implement these Directive Principles in the legislative process.

⁵ Bakshi, P. M., Legislative Measures Addressing Domestic Violence, The Lawyers, January 1994, p. 13.

⁶ Nagpal, Vijay and Singh, K. P., The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 - A Critique, CBI Bulletin, January - March 2007, p. 11

⁷ Martha C. Nussaboun, India, Sex Equality and Constitutional Law, p. 177

⁸ Souza, Alfred de, Women in Contemporary India and South Asia, (1975), p. 165

Advocate for Social Order

Article 38 embodies the principles articulated in the preamble. It mandates the state to formulate policies that foster a social order devoid of discrimination, ensuring equality between men and women. This Article endeavors to create a society characterized by the absence of income and status inequality.

Specific Policy Principles to be Adhered to by the State

Article 39 stipulates that "the state shall, in particular, orient its policy towards ensuring:

- a) Citizens, both men and women, has the right to a sufficient means of subsistence;
- b) There exists equitable remuneration for equivalent labor performed by both men and women.

Article 41 of the Constitution stipulates those men and woman shall receive equivalent compensation for labor of comparable worth.

The principle of equal pay for equal work asserts that when men and women perform identical tasks both qualitatively and quantitatively, they should get equivalent compensation. This stipulation of Article 37 of the Constitution of India asserts that "the provisions in this Part shall not be enforceable by any court; however, the principles articulated are fundamental to the governance of the nation, and it is the State's obligation to implement these principles in legislative processes. The Payment of Equal Remuneration Act 1976 facilitates the enforcement of this principle. Consequently, the aforementioned statute grants women the right to equal remuneration. Nonetheless, certain compensation differentials depending on skill, vocation, and other factors are valid and advantageous. However, distinctions made on the basis of sex are unwarranted and irregular. When subjected to wage discrimination, people may seek redress under any of the aforementioned laws.

Article 39(f) imposes an additional obligation on the state. It imposes an obligation on the government to ensure a conducive environment for children's development. The state must ensure that children are not subjected to any form of exploitation. The state is obligated to prevent the exploitation of minor girls from immoral acts.

Entitlement to Employment, Education, and Public Assistance

Article 41 of the Indian Constitution mandates the state to ensure the right to labour, education, and public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, illness, and disability, contingent upon the state's economic capabilities. This directive principle emphasises the significance of social welfare in a democratic society. While it lacks legal enforceability, it offers essential assistance for the development of welfare policy. The judiciary has actively interpreted these principles to broaden the scope of fundamental rights. In the seminal case of **Unnikrishnan J.P. v. State of Andhra Pradesh**⁹, the Supreme Court determined that the right to education until the age of 14 is inherent in the right to life as stipulated in Article 21. The acknowledgement resulted in the inclusion of Article 21A via the 86th Constitutional Amendment in 2002, establishing the right to free and compulsory education as a basic right for children aged 6 to 14. A multitude of employment guarantee and public assistance programs, including the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), and social security pensions, have been implemented to realise the principles of Article 41.

Maternity Assistance

Article 42 stipulates that the state shall guarantee equitable and humane working conditions, as well as maternity benefits. This constitutional mandate asserts the state's duty to safeguard the health and dignity of employed women. To advance this goal, the Maternity Benefit Act of 1961 was adopted, offering paid leave and employment safeguards to pregnant women. This legislation pertains to all entities employing ten or more individuals and grants qualified women maternity leave of up to 26 weeks, in addition to medical benefits and safeguards against termination during pregnancy. The Act has been amended to broaden its scope and improve advantages, including the requirement for crèche facilities at larger workplaces. Notwithstanding these provisions, the implementation of Article 42 poses a challenge due to its non-justiciable character, as stipulated in Article 37 of the Constitution. Nonetheless, the Directive Principles persist in shaping judicial reasoning and policy development, fostering a more humane and equal work environment for women across both official and informal sectors.

⁹ AIR 1993 Supreme Court 2178

Advancement of Education and Economic Interests of Underprivileged Groups

Article 46 mandates the state to advance the educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other marginalised groups, while safeguarding them against social injustice and various forms of exploitation. The term 'weaker sections' is not explicitly defined in the Constitution, although it is often interpreted to encompass women, children, and economically disadvantaged groups. The Supreme Court, in the **Indira Sawhney v. Union of India**¹⁰ case, underscored that the categorisation of disadvantaged groups may encompass those impacted by poverty, social disadvantage, or physical disability. In accordance with Article 46, the Indian government has established an extensive system of reservations in education and employment for historically disadvantaged populations, alongside scholarship programs, specialised dormitories, vocational training initiatives, and financial support. Numerous empowerment efforts for women, like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, self-help group assistance, and female entrepreneurial programs, further the principles of this Article. These initiatives seek to mitigate fundamental inequalities and foster inclusive development.

Enhance Nutritional Standards and Quality of Life

Article 47 underscores the obligation of the state to elevate nutritional standards, better living conditions, and promote public health. This article establishes the basis for a welfare-centric government paradigm. To achieve these aims, the Indian government has instituted various flagship projects. The Mid-Day Meal Scheme offers complimentary lunches to children in government and government-aided schools, enhancing nutrition and school attendance. The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program provides food assistance, health assessments, and early childhood education to children and expectant mothers. Furthermore, initiatives such as Janani Suraksha Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana prioritise maternal health and secure deliveries. Health education efforts and family planning initiatives at the village level have enhanced understanding of women's health issues. Notwithstanding these considerable endeavours, issues like as hunger, maternal mortality, and inadequate healthcare infrastructure endure. Successful execution, augmented financing, and community engagement are crucial to fully achieve the objectives outlined in Article 47.

¹⁰ AIR 1993 Supreme Court 477

Legal Provisions Pertaining to Domestic Violence in Criminal Law

a) Bhartiya Nyay Sahita of 2023

The c includes several laws that assist women in distress. Numerous sections therein address offenses against a woman, her psyche, or her physical being. The regulations addressing the offense of domestic abuse against women are outlined as follows:

b) Dowry-related Homicide

Dowry comprises the gifts and presents bestowed upon a girl by her parents, family, and friends at the time of her marriage. However, throughout the years, this practice has taken on a grotesque form. During the marriage, the boy or his parents present specific demands that are expected to be met in cash or kind by the girl's parents. If the girl's parents fail to meet such expectations, she faces harassment from her husband and in-laws, and in some tragic instances, she may lose her life. This is referred to as dowry death. Section 80 Section of the Bhartiya Nyay sahita addresses dowry death cases. When a woman's death results from any burns or bodily injury, or occurs under abnormal circumstances within seven years of her marriage, and it is demonstrated that she was subjected to cruelty or harassment by her husband in relation to any dowry demand shortly before her death, such a death shall be classified as dowry death, and the husband or relative shall be considered responsible for her demise. The Bhartiya Nyay Sahita prescribes severe penalties for individuals convicted under Section 80s. Any person found guilty of dowry death shall face imprisonment for a specified term.

c) Coercive Abortion

Female infanticide and coercing a wife to terminate her pregnancy are recognized as acts of domestic abuse under the Bhartiya Nyay Sahita. Sections 88 to 92 of the Bhartiya Nyay Sahita stipulate enhanced penalties in instances of the aggravating character of the offense of miscarriage¹¹ is addressed in Section 88, which penalizes the cause of miscarriage with the woman's consent, while Section 89 penalizes the causing of miscarriage without her consent. Under Section 89 of the BNS, only the individual procuring the abortion is subject to penalty, but under Section 88 of the BNS, the woman is also responsible for punishment. Section 91 of the BNS imposes penalties for the imprisonment of life of a woman resulting from an act intended to induce miscarriage without her consent, stipulating a

¹¹ Miscarriage is synonymous with abortion and refers to the ejection of an immature fetus at any point prior to its full development.

more severe punishment.¹² Section 92 renders any act aimed at preventing a child from being born alive or causing its death post-birth punishable. The act of infanticide of a female child is subject to penalties under sections 91 and 92 of the BNS. The offenses delineated in sections 91 to 92 are cognizable, non-bailable, non-compoundable, and may be adjudicated by the Court of Session.

d) Incitement to Suicide

The regulations regarding abetment of suicide are in place due to domestic abuse, particularly affecting brides who endure harassment for dowry demands and are coerced into suicide. The courts have recognized persistent dowry demands, torture, cruel treatment, and ridicule regarding a woman bearing an illegitimate child as constitutive of abetment of suicide. Section 108 of the Bhartiya Nyay Sahita addresses abetment of suicide. In straightforward terms, when one individual compels another to a man causes the death of a woman during a miscarriage, he is subject to imprisonment for up to 10 years, whether simple or rigorous, and a fine. If the act is performed without the woman's agreement, he faces life imprisonment or up to ten years, along with a fine.

To commit suicide with a discernible motive, thereafter inciting someone to take their own life, constitutes abetment of suicide. Abetment of suicide is a crime punishable by death or imprisonment for a term of up to 10 years, as stipulated in section 108 of the Bhartiya Nyay Sahita.

A person can incur liability for abetment in three distinct manners:

- i)** Inciting a someone to engage in suicide, or
- ii)** Participating in a scheme to induce an individual to commit suicide,
- iii)** Deliberately assisting an individual in committing suicide through an action or by failing to perform an obligation.

If a woman endures harassment and mental cruelty, leading to her suicide, the perpetrator of the harassment is culpable for abetment of suicide.

e) Injury and Profound Injury

Inflicting injury and severe injury are prevalent manifestations of domestic abuse. Section 112 of the BNS delineates the term "hurt" as inflicting bodily pain, injury, disease, or disability upon any individual. An injury may be severe if it leads to significant harm, such as fractures, loss of hearing or

¹² Gurbachan Singh v. Satpal Singh, (1990) 1 SCC 445; Pawan Kumar v. State of Haryana, (1998) 3 SCC 309; State of Punjab v. Iqbal Singh, (1991) 3 SCC 1; Naresh Kumar v. State of Haryana, 1994 SCC (Cri) 402

vision, or damage to any limb or joint. Section 115 of the *Bhartiya Nyay Sahita* pertains to grievous bodily harm. A person who inflicts harm or serious injury can be penalized only if the conduct was committed with the aim to harm or cause serious injury, or if it can be established that the individual acted with knowledge that it would result in harm or serious injury.

f) Unlawful Detention

Unlawfully detaining the wife within the married residence may incur penalties under statutes addressing wrongful restraint and wrongful imprisonment. Section 139 of the BNS stipulates that any individual who willfully impedes another person, thereby preventing that individual from moving in a direction to which they are entitled, is deemed to have wrongfully restrained that person and shall be subject to punishment¹³ of simple imprisonment for a duration not exceeding one month, or a fine not exceeding 1000, or both.

If a husband prohibits his wife from accessing a specific region or her workplace, he is obstructing her from pursuing a path to which she is entitled under Section. Section 339 may be applicable in such circumstances.¹⁴ Any individual who unlawfully restrains another person in a manner that inhibits their ability to move beyond specified boundaries is committing wrongful confinement¹⁵ and shall be subject to jail.

Penalties may include a term of imprisonment not exceeding one year, a fine not exceeding one thousand rupees, or both. If a woman is confined or threatened with violence should she leave her residence, her husband may be penalized for wrongful confinement. The duration of a woman's confinement is inconsequential.

Measures For Prevention of Domestic Violence

Awareness and Education

Enhancing awareness and education at all societal levels is a crucial step in preventing domestic violence. Inadequate understanding of the elements of

¹³ Id., Sec. 341 states as follows:

Any individual who unlawfully restrains another shall be subject to simple imprisonment for a duration not exceeding one month, a fine not exceeding five hundred rupees, or both penalties.

¹⁴ Refer to the aforementioned note 44 on page 319.

¹⁵ Section 340 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 states the following:

Any individual who unlawfully restricts another person in a way that inhibits their ability to move beyond specified boundaries is said to "wrongfully confine" that individual.

domestic violence, victims' rights, and accessible support systems frequently undermines preventative efforts. Awareness and education constitute the fundamental basis for effective preventative methods. They enable individuals to identify indicators of abuse, comprehend the dynamics of power and control intrinsic to violent relationships, and pursue assistance without stigma or apprehension.¹⁶ Awareness programs target not only victims but also the wider community, promoting circumstances that denounce violence instead of passively permitting it. When effectively executed, educational initiatives can interrupt the intergenerational perpetuation of violence by instructing youth on healthy relationships, consent, and emotional intelligence from an early age.¹⁷

Function of NGOs and Civil Society in Promoting Awareness

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and civil society entities have been instrumental in enhancing awareness of domestic violence, frequently addressing deficiencies in governmental initiatives. Non-governmental organizations function at both grassroots and national tiers, actively interacting with communities to promote transformation. They frequently act as first responders in instances of domestic violence, offering urgent assistance to survivors while promoting comprehensive institutional improvements. Their initiatives to raise awareness have contributed to the destigmatization of discourse around domestic abuse, therefore motivating victims to seek assistance.

NGOs have significantly contributed by establishing hotlines and crisis centers that provide victims with rapid and discreet assistance. These centers offer not only physical refuge but also function as educational institutions where women, men, and children can acquire knowledge about their rights, the characteristics of abuse, and pathways for remedy. Organizations such as Women's Aid in the United Kingdom and Breakthrough in India have initiated multimedia campaigns to emphasize the frequency of domestic abuse and to educate the public on identifying its indicators.

Instructional Initiatives and Advocacy Efforts

Educational programs and campaigns are essential tools for the long-term prevention of domestic violence. In contrast to reactive interventions

¹⁶ C. M. Black et al., "The Role of Awareness in Domestic Violence Prevention," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, vol. 33, no. 4, pp. 532-556, 2018.

¹⁷ A. Gupta and M. Sinha, "Understanding the Impact of Awareness on Domestic Violence Reporting," *Indian Journal of Social Work*, vol. 77, no. 3, pp. 354-370, 2016.

implemented post-violence, education emphasizes the proactive cultivation of attitudes and behaviors to avert abuse prior to its onset. Comprehensive educational tactics encompass school programs, workplace efforts, community seminars, and mass media campaigns, each designed to address specific demographics and socioeconomic groupings.¹⁸

Economic Empowerment of Women

The economic empowerment of women is a vital component in the prevention of domestic abuse. Financial reliance has long been acknowledged as a critical component that ensnares women in violent relationships. Many women, lacking the resources to sustain themselves and their children, are compelled to tolerate abusive situations, devoid of the autonomy to depart and begin again. Economic empowerment dramatically alters this dynamic. Financial independence in women confers increased negotiating power in relationships, improved decision-making abilities, and the capacity to resist and extricate themselves from abusive circumstances.¹⁹

Importance of Financial Independence in Preventing Domestic Violence

Financial independence profoundly transforms the power dynamics in relationships, frequently shifting the equilibrium from coercive control to mutual respect and collaboration. In the realm of domestic abuse, financial independence serves as both a deterrent and a remedial strategy. Women who manage their own financial resources are more equipped to withstand coercive control, negotiate relationship terms, and, if needed, leave violent situations.²⁰

The correlation between economic dependency and domestic violence is extensively documented. Women who depend exclusively on their partners for financial sustenance frequently encounter several forms of abuse—physical, mental, and economic. Economic abuse can show in several ways, including obstructing a partner's employment, limiting access to financial accounts, withholding funds, or undermining job prospects.

¹⁸ R. Edwards, "Prevention of Domestic Violence Through Educational Programs," *Violence Against Women*, vol. 23, no. 5, pp. 563-582, 2011

¹⁹ M. Anderson and J. Saunders, "The Impact of Economic Empowerment on Domestic Violence," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, vol. 25, no. 1, pp. 161-180, 2011.

²⁰ L. Heise, "What Works to Prevent Partner Violence? An Evidence Overview," STRIVE Research Consortium, 2011

Financial independence undermines these control mechanisms by granting women autonomy over their lives.²¹

Government Schemes and Initiatives for Women's Empowerment

Acknowledging the crucial significance of economic empowerment in mitigating domestic abuse, governments across have implemented various programs and initiatives designed to improve women's financial independence. These programs generally emphasize access to education, skill enhancement, loan provision, entrepreneurial opportunities, and job creation.

The Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra (PMMSK) project in India seeks to empower rural women via community engagement. PMMSK aims to foster women's socio-economic development by offering skill development training, financial literacy initiatives, and access to government support schemes.²² The Stand-Up India Scheme similarly promotes bank loans ranging from ₹10 lakh to ₹1 crore for women entrepreneurs, hence enhancing their involvement in business and industry areas formerly controlled by men.

Community and Institutional Support

Community and institutional assistance is essential in the prevention of domestic abuse. Although individual empowerment and legal reforms are essential, the overarching social context profoundly influences women's experiences and opportunities. An effective community framework, supported by responsive institutions, can prevent domestic abuse, aid survivors in obtaining justice, and foster societal transformation.²³

Communities function as the immediate social ecosystems in which individuals reside. Cultural norms, societal expectations, and communal attitudes regarding gender and violence affect both the incidence of domestic violence and the reactions to it. In societies where violence against women is condoned or trivialized, survivors frequently encounter stigma, isolation, and culpability, deterring them from seeking assistance. In communities that emphasize gender equality and human rights, there is

²¹ A. Adams et al., "Economic Abuse in the Lives of Women Abused by an Intimate Partner," *Violence Against Women*, vol. 14, no. 5, pp. 563-588, 2008

²² Ministry of Women and Child Development, "Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme Guidelines," Government of India, 2017

²³ L. Heise, "Violence Against Women: An Integrated, Ecological Framework," *Violence Against Women*, vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 262-290, 1998

heightened denunciation of abuse and more robust support systems for survivors.²⁴

Role of Family, Community, and State in Preventing Domestic Violence

The family unit, usually viewed as the essential foundation of society, assumes a paradoxical function concerning domestic violence. Families can serve as sanctuaries of safety, affection, and support; conversely, they may also perpetuate patterns of abuse through silence, denial, or collaboration. To effectively mitigate domestic violence, families must assume proactive roles—educating younger generations about respectful relationships, supporting victims, and ensuring accountability for perpetrators.²⁵

Parental impact is very significant. Research indicates that children subjected to domestic violence are more prone to emulate aggressive actions or accept abuse in their adult relationships, a phenomenon referred to as the "cycle of violence".²⁶ Consequently, parents and caregivers should exemplify non-violent dispute resolution, equitable gender standards, and constructive emotional expression. Educational institutions can strengthen these teachings through curriculum that impart emotional intelligence, consent, and respect for diversity from a young age.²⁷

Strengthening Institutional Responses (e.g., Police, Hospitals, and Legal Aid)

Robust institutional responses are crucial for preventing domestic abuse and safeguarding survivors. The initial encounter a survivor has with an institution—be it a police officer, a nurse, or a legal advocate—can significantly influence their readiness to seek additional assistance and pursue justice. Consequently, institutions must be well prepared, both structurally and culturally, to address domestic violence with sensitivity, efficiency, and a survivor-centered methodology.

²⁴ R. Jewkes et al., "Norms and Domestic Violence: Evidence from South Africa," *Social Science & Medicine*, vol. 55, no. 9, pp. 1603-1617, 2002

²⁵ M. Jaffe, D. Wolfe, and S. Wilson, "Children of Battered Women," *Sage Publications*, 1990

²⁶ C. Widom, "The Cycle of Violence," *Science*, vol. 244, no. 4901, pp. 160-166, 1989

²⁷ UNESCO, "International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education," UNESCO, Paris, 2018

Police Departments: Law enforcement personnel frequently serve as the initial responders in instances of domestic abuse. Their function is essential not only in guaranteeing immediate safety but also in establishing the foundation for legal action against offenders. Optimal protocols for police response encompass the implementation of zero-tolerance policies for domestic abuse, guaranteeing prompt and respectful reactions to survivors' calls, and executing comprehensive investigations that do not depend exclusively on victim testimony.²⁸

²⁸ A. Jordan, "Efforts to Combat Domestic Violence in the United States: Domestic Violence Shelters and the Law," *Gender Issues*, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 43-50, 2000

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