

Domestic Violence against Women: Threat to Her Survival

Dr. Renu Saini

Assistant Professor, Khalsa College of Law, Amritsar, 143001

ABSTRACT

Men and women were the two wheel of chariot without one, the chariot cannot be moved and both are the basis of concept of family. Family which was perceived as an arena of love, affection, gentleness and-center of solidarity and warmth has now become a center of exploitation, and violence ranging from slapping, hitting, homicidal assault by one member of the family, on the other side harassed for dowry, dowry death's, wife bettering, female abuse and abuse of elderly female in a family. Women were always considered vulnerable' section of society and be exploited. Violence against woman and specifically domestic violence is an accepted aspect, of life that has its origin in the cultural and religious heritage of India. The Domestic Violence Act is an act which provides for more effective protection of the rights of women guaranteed under the constitution who are victims of any sort of violence within the family and matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. To effectively curb domestic violence in India, a multifaceted approach is essential; one that combines legal reform, social change, education, support services, and enforcement mechanisms. Repeated acts of violence can push the woman to such extreme levels of poverty and hopelessness that she agrees to give up all her legal claims just to escape the abuse. Domestic violence laws aim to stop such situations and help women regain equality within marriage. These laws are designed to give women the necessary time and space to decide what they want for their future. Courts play a crucial role in protecting women's rights and promoting gender equality. They serve as a last line of support and fortunately, are actively working toward the welfare of women.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Multifaceted approach, Constitutional Protection, Service Providers, Protection orders, Monetary relief.

INTRODUCTION

Men and women were the two wheel of chariot without one, the chariot cannot be moved and both are the basis of concept of family. Family which was perceived as an arena of love, affection, gentleness and-center of solidarity and warmth has now become a center of exploitation, and violence ranging from slapping, hitting, homicidal assault by one member of the family, on the other side harassed for dowry, dowry death's, wife bettering, female abuse and abuse of elderly female in a family. Women were always considered vulnerable' section of society and be exploited. Violence against woman and specifically domestic violence is an accepted aspect, of life that has its origin in the cultural and religious heritage of India. Domestic violence is an old age phenomenon in Indian sub-continent more in northern India. Now in the era of human rights, the act of domestic violence is the grossest violation of human rights of women. Many ancient people buried or burnt a man's widow, horses and other cherished possession with his corpse. In order that he might have all he cherished and lives in the world. This was the objective of Sati earlier a ritual now a heinous crime against women.¹

The **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 1979**, serves as a key international framework for protecting women's rights. To date, 166 countries, including India, are signatories to this convention. Among other things, it acknowledges that discrimination against women in various sectors hinders economic development and negatively impacts society as a whole. Although earlier Indian laws granted women certain rights in specific areas, issues like cruelty, torture, and harassment have been primarily addressed through Sections 498-A and 304-B of the Indian Penal Code, along with the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961. However, these legal provisions have not been entirely effective in curbing such offenses, highlighting the need for more targeted legislation. Driven by both national concerns and international obligations, the Indian government enacted the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. This law was introduced to provide stronger and more specific legal safeguards against domestic abuse and to hold abusive family members accountable for their actions.

¹ Dr. Yogendra Kr. Verma, "Domestic Violence Against Women: Constitutional and Legislative Protection in India", Indian Bar Review, Vol. 46(3), 2019, p.235.

Domestic violence is the most prevalent crime and remains largely invisible. It is the least reported crime due to the feelings of guilt and shame, fear of future beating and due to social compulsions. Though domestic violence in the modern times has been recognized as a violation of human rights, yet the extent of it is difficult to measure because many assaults go unreported. Many women so are tortured every day but these violent acts have failed to capture the required attention because we have been socialized to accept violence against women as common place routine and less than horrific. Domestic violence is national health hazard of epidemic proportion. Females who are dependent upon their husbands and in-laws are subjected to mental torture. They are emotionally coerced by way of day today nagging, constant verbal abuse and degrading either alone or in public. Ours being a male dominated and patriarchal society we smash the dreams of adult girl in choosing her life partner followed by selected pregnancy, feticide and infanticide. A woman both in her maidenhood and during her marital life is vulnerable to the charge of illicit relation and adultery. A married woman has to take permission of her husband and in-laws for each visit to her parents. If the woman happens to be a working lady, she has to explain an account for any late return from the workplace. Man has always enjoyed absolute and exclusive power over her and now looks upon her as a challenger to his hegemony. In our society, which is tradition bound and male dominated, woman is still a second- class citizen. She is confined to domestic servitude, her moments are restricted, she is given no freedom to choose her career and husband, and she merges her identity with that of her husband and consequently perceives herself as a subordinate person. The social conditioning determines different perspective for men and women.²

TYPES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence isn't limited to physical harm; it can appear in many different ways. At its core, it involves repeated behaviours used by one person to dominate, control, or intimidate another within a close relationship. Below are the primary types of domestic abuse:

1. Physical Abuse

This includes any deliberate act that causes physical injury or pain, such as:

- Slapping, hitting, kicking, punching, choking, or shaking
- Using weapons or objects to inflict harm
- Withholding medical attention or forcing drug/alcohol use
- Physically restraining, locking up, or confining the individual

2. Emotional or Psychological Abuse

This form of abuse undermines a person's mental well-being through tactics like:

- Constant put-downs, name-calling, or ridicule
- Manipulation, fear tactics, or public embarrassment
- Gaslighting, or making the victim question their own thoughts and memories
- Threats of harm toward the victim, loved ones, or pets

3. Verbal Abuse

Abusers may use speech as a weapon, including:

- Shouting, insults, and hurtful language
- Threatening or mocking the victim
- Using tone, volume, or words to instill fear
- Diminishing the victim's self-worth through criticism

4. Sexual Abuse

Any sexual activity that is forced, unwanted, or non-consensual, including:

- Sexual assault or coercion
- Pressuring someone into sex or unwanted sexual acts
- Forcing participation in degrading acts
- Interfering with birth control or refusing safe sex

5. Financial or Economic Abuse

This involves exerting control by limiting access to money or resources:

- Controlling finances or giving a restrictive allowance
- Preventing the victim from earning income or pursuing education
- Stealing, fraud, or incurring debt in the victim's name
- Monitoring or restricting how money is spent

² Dr, Arshi Pal Kaur, "Domestic Violence Against Women in India: An Empirical Study on the Existing Socio- Legal Framework", Indian Bar Review, Vol. 46(3), 2019, p.255-256.

6. Digital or Technological Abuse

Abusers may use technology to harass or control, such as:

- Tracking online activity or controlling device usage
- Sending abusive messages or threats via text, email, or social media
- Demanding access to private passwords or accounts
- Using GPS or spyware to monitor movements

7. Social Abuse (Isolation)

This form of abuse isolates the victim from support systems:

- Stopping them from seeing or contacting friends and family
- Dictating who they can talk to or where they can go
- Spreading rumours to damage their relationships
- Creating a sense of abandonment or social exclusion

8. Spiritual or Cultural Abuse

Here, the abuser uses religious or cultural beliefs to exert control:

- Disrespecting or blocking religious practices
- Forcing religious or cultural norms upon the victim
- Using religious texts to justify abuse
- Preventing involvement in spiritual or cultural events

9. Reproductive Coercion

This type involves controlling a person's reproductive choices:

- Pressuring or forcing pregnancy
- Tampering with or denying birth control
- Forcing decisions about abortion or childbirth

International Perspective

Domestic Violence is undoubtedly a human rights issue which was not purely taken care of in this country even though the Vienna Accord 1994 and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995 had acknowledged that domestic violence was undoubtedly a human rights issue. UN Committee on Convention: on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in its general recommendations had also exhorted the member countries to take steps to protect women against violence of any kind, especially that occurring within the family, a phenomenon widely prevalent in India. The Criminal Laws have provision to tackle the issue of domestic violence but. Civil Law did not address this event in its entirety. Consequently, our parliament empowered under Article 253 of the Constitution of India? took initiative to protect the rights of women guaranteed under Articles 14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution of India and enacted "The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005" (PWDVA).³

Constitutional Protection

The Constitution of India talks about equal treatment of women and empowers the State and centre to take the measures of positive discrimination in favour of women for neutralizing the cumulative 'Socio-economic, political and educational disadvantages. The principle of gender equality enshrined in Preamble of the Indian Constitution, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. Article 14 of the Constitution of India guarantees equality before Law whereas Article 15 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex. Article 16 states about equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment. Article 21 guarantees right to life and personal liberty which has received widest possible interpretation. Article 39(a) provides that State shall direct its policy towards securing that all citizens, men and women an adequate means of livelihood. Further Article 51 A (e) imposes the duty on every citizen in India to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.⁴

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT, 2005

The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence (or the Domestic Violence Act in India) is a laudable piece of legislation that was enacted in 2005 to tackle this problem. The Act in theory goes a long way towards protection of women in the domestic setup. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 is a parliamentary act which was enacted to protect the women from domestic violence. The law on domestic violence was made in this year which came into force by 26 October 2006. This act provides for the first time definition of 'domestic violence' making the purview of violence broad by including not only the physical but also emotional, verbal, sexual and economic abuse. This is a civil law for protection orders and not meant to be applied criminally. The Domestic Violence Act is an

³ Supra 1 at p. 238.

⁴ Id. p. 239-240.

act which provides for more effective protection of the rights of women guaranteed under the constitution who are victims of any sort of violence within the family and matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Definition of domestic violence law in India is provided under section 3 of the act as “any act, omission or commission or conduct of the respondent shall constitute domestic violence in case it:

1. harms or injures or endangers the health, safety, life, limb or well-being, whether mental or physical, of the aggrieved person or tends to do so and includes causing physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal and emotional abuse and economic abuse; or
2. harasses, harms, injures or endangers the aggrieved person to coerce her or any other person related to her to meet any unlawful demand for any dowry or other property or valuable security; or
3. has the effect of threatening the aggrieved person or any person related to her by any conduct mentioned in clause (a) or clause (b); or
4. otherwise injures or causes harm, whether physical or mental, to the aggrieved person.”

For the purpose of the explanation of the Act, ‘the Act’ also defines “physical abuse”, “sexual abuse”, “verbal and emotional abuse” and “economic abuse”.⁵

The main objective of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, is to make the relationship within a marriage more equal. The police, judiciary, the service provider, government department and victims of domestic violence are identified as main stakeholders under the Act. Violence at home is no more invisible now and every effort is made to bring it in focus through its provisions.⁶

OBJECTIVES OF THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT, 2005

The objectives of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 is to serve the following purposes:

1. To identify and determine that every act of domestic violence is unlawful and punishable by law.
2. To provide protection to victims of domestic violence in the cases such acts occur.
3. To serve justice in a timely, cost-effective, and convenient manner to the aggrieved person.
4. To prevent the commission of domestic violence and to take adequate steps if such violence occurs.
5. To implement sufficient programs and agendas for the victims of domestic violence and to guarantee the recovery of such victims.
6. To create awareness among the people about domestic violence.
7. To enforce harsh punishment and must hold the culprits accountable for committing such heinous acts of violence.

To lay down the law and govern it in accordance with the international standards for the prevention of domestic violence.⁷

SALIENT FEATURES OF THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT, 2005

1. Appointment of Protection Officers

Protection Officers are appointed by the State Government. The number of Protection Officers may vary from district to district depending on the size and necessity. The powers and duties which are to be exercised by the Protection Officers are laid down in confirmation with the Act. The Protection Officers must be women as far as possible and shall possess requisite qualifications and experience as may be prescribed under the Act.

2. Powers and functions of Protection Officers

The powers and functions of Protection Officers include the following:

1. To assist the Magistrate in order to discharge their duties in accordance with the Act.
2. To make a domestic violence incident report to the Magistrate after receiving any such incident of domestic violence and must also forward the copies to the police officer in charge of the police station having jurisdiction over the incident.
3. To make the application in the prescribed order to the Magistrate if the aggrieved person claims relief for issuance of the protective order.

⁵ Tushar Vashi, “Domestic Violence Laws in India: Penalty & Punishment” retrieved from <https://www.lawyered.in/legal-disrupt/articles/laws-domestic-violence-india-advocate-tushar-vashi/>, visited on September 10, 2025.

⁶ The Tribune, December 20, 2009, at 13.

⁷ Abanti Bose, “The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005”, retrieved from https://blog.ipleaders.in/the-protection-of-women-from-domestic-violence-act-2005/#Objectives_of_the_Domestic_Violence_Act_2005, visited on September 10, 2005.

4. To make sure that the aggrieved person is provided free legal aid under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.
5. To maintain a detailed list of all the service providers providing legal aid or counselling, shelter homes and medical facilities in a local area within the jurisdiction of the Magistrate.
6. To get the victim medically examined, if she has sustained any bodily injuries and forward such a report in the prescribed manner to the Magistrate and the police station having jurisdiction.
7. To find a safe available shelter home for the victim if she requires and send the details of her lodging in the prescribed manner to the Magistrate and the police station having jurisdiction.
8. To ensure that the order of monetary relief to the victims is complied with under this Act.

3. Powers and functions of service providers

Section 10 of the Act, lays down the functions and duties of service providers. Service providers are defined under the Act as any voluntary association registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 or a company that is registered under the Companies Act, 1956 which aims to protect the rights of the women lawfully by providing legal aid, medical, financial or other assistance. The powers and duties of service providers are mentioned below.

1. A service provider has the authority to record any incident of domestic violence and forward it to the Magistrate or Protection Officer having jurisdiction where the incident of domestic violence took place.
2. The service provider must get the aggrieved person medically examined and forward such a report to the Protection Officer, Magistrate and the police station within the local limits where the domestic violence took place.
3. It is also the responsibility of the service providers to provide a shelter home to the victim if they require one and forward the report of lodging of the victim to the police station having jurisdiction.

4. Duties and functions of police officers and Magistrate

Section 5 of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 lays down the duties and functions of police officers and Magistrate. It states that when a police officer, service provider or Magistrate receives a complaint of domestic violence, an incident of domestic violence is reported to him or he is present at the scene of occurrence of domestic violence then they should take the following steps:

1. They are required to inform the victim about her rights to make an application for receiving relief by way of protection order, order for monetary relief, custody order, residence order, compensation order, etc.
2. They should inform the victim of the accessibility of services of the service providers.
3. The victim should be informed about the services and duties of the Protection Officers.
4. They should also inform the victim about her right to free legal services under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 and her right to file a complaint under Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code, 1860.

5. Duties of shelter homes and medical facilities

If any victim of domestic violence requires a shelter home, then under Section 6 of the Act, the person in charge of a shelter home will provide suitable shelter to the victims of domestic violence in the shelter home.

Further Section 7 of the Act lays down that if an aggrieved person requires medical assistance, then the person in charge of the medical facility will be providing such assistance to the aggrieved person.

6. Duties of the Government

The Act further lays down certain provisions stating the duties and functions of the Government. Such duties include;

1. The provisions of this Act must be given wide publicity through public media so that the citizens of our country are well aware of such provisions.
2. Both the Central and State Governments officers such as the police officers and the members of the judicial services must be given periodic sensitization and awareness training regarding the provisions of the Act.
3. Both the Central and State Governments must also ensure that the protocols for the various Ministries concerned with the delivery of services to women under this Act are diligently followed.

7. Application to the Magistrate

The aggrieved person, the Protection Officer of that locality or any other person on behalf of the aggrieved person shall make an application to the Magistrate claiming one or more reliefs under this Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. The application must contain all the necessary details as prescribed by the Act.

The Magistrate will fix the date of hearing which shall not extend more than three days from the date of receiving the application. Furthermore, the Magistrate must also aim to dispose of all the applications made under Section 12 of the Act within a period of sixty days from the date of its first hearing. Moreover, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 authorizes the Magistrate to grant the following orders and reliefs.

8. Monetary reliefs

While disposing of the application the Magistrate may ask the respondent to pay monetary relief to meet the expenses incurred and the losses suffered by the aggrieved person and any child of the aggrieved person as a result of the domestic violence and such relief may include the loss of earnings of the victim, medical expenses, the loss caused due

to damage or destruction of any property, the maintenance of the aggrieved person and her children as required under Section of the Criminal Procedure Code.

1. The monetary relief granted must be fair and adequate and must be in accordance with the standard of living of the aggrieved person.
2. The Act authorizes the Magistrate to grant a fitting lump sum payment or monthly payments of maintenance as required by the aggrieved person.
3. The Magistrate shall direct the copy of the order for the monetary relief to the in charge of the police station having jurisdiction.

The respondent must pay the monetary compensation to the victim within the stipulated and if they fail to do so then the Magistrate may direct the employer or a debtor of the respondent, to directly pay to the victim or deposit with the court a portion of wages, salaries, or debt due to the respondent and the amount could be adjusted at the end of the completion of monetary relief.

Section 22 of the Act also stipulates that the respondent will be liable to pay compensation to the victim for causing any damage or injury including mental torture and emotional distress as directed by the Magistrate.

9. Custody orders

Under Section 21 of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 when the Magistrate receives an application concerning domestic violence, he has the authority to direct the custody of any child or children to the victim or the person making the application on behalf of the victim.

10. Protection orders

If the Magistrate is satisfied that domestic violence has taken place then they may pass a protection order in favour of the aggrieved person to prevent the respondent from committing any acts of domestic violence or abetting any acts of domestic violence. The Magistrate may also prevent the respondent from contacting the aggrieved person, entering the place of employment of the aggrieved person or causing violence to the dependents or relatives of the aggrieved person.

11. Residence order

Under Section 19 of the Act if the Magistrate is satisfied that domestic violence has occurred then the Magistrate may pass a residence order restraining the respondent from disturbing the possession of the aggrieved person from the shared household, or to withdraw himself from the shared household restraining the respondent or any of his relatives from entering the shared household and prohibiting the respondent from repudiating his rights in the shared household.

12. Jurisdiction and procedure

The court of Judicial Magistrate of the first class or the Metropolitan Magistrate of the area has the jurisdiction to hear cases under this Act. However, Section 27 of the Act states the following factors;

1. The aggrieved person permanently or temporarily resides or carries out business in that area.
2. The respondent resides, carries on business or is employed within the local limits of the area.
3. The competent court will be liable to grant protection orders or any other orders as the case may be.

Section 23 of the Act states that all the proceedings arising under this Act shall be governed by the provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.⁸

JUDICIAL PRONOUNCEMENT

The judiciary is considered next to God. In the criminal justice system, courts occupy a position of primary importance. Though plethora of Legislation exists; due to ineffective enforcement, women are exploited by the male dominated society. Male dominated society has found ways to circumvent the provisions of the Act and acts as a blockade against women empowerment. Due to failure of legislations to protect women, judiciary has come forward to protects women. The judiciary has encouraged widest possible coverage of the legislations by, liberally interpreting the terms. The judiciary has shifted from doctrine approach to the pragmatic approach, which' was conducive to all interests in the society. The judiciary played a positive role by, passing various judgments promoting general quality.⁹

In the case of *K. Ramaraju v. K. Lakshmi Pratima*¹⁰ Section 1(3) of the Act made the statute come into force from the appointed date as per Gazette Notification, which notification brought the Act into force from 26.10.2006. It was also noted that neither Section 1 nor any other provision directly or indirectly indicates any retrospective effect to the provisions of the statute. However,' without going into the question whether provisions of the Act can be retroactive in relation to any continuing events amounting to domestic violence as defined under Section 3 of the Act, it was opined

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Dr. Babita Devi Pathania, "Law relating to Domestic Violence, New Era Law Publications, Faridabad, 2013, p. 205.

¹⁰ K. Ramaraju v. K. Lakshmi Pratima, 2008 (2) ALD (Cri) 1 (AP).

that irrespective of any retrospective or retroactive effect to the provisions of the Act, the continuing state of affairs since the date of the Act coming into force, *ex facie*, make the petitioner have the required cause of action for pursuing a remedy under Section 12 of the Act for obtaining necessary order or reliefs. The reliefs claimed were opined to be in present time and not past.

Mohit Yadav v. State of Andhra Pradesh¹¹ the object of the Act is to provide for effective protection of the rights guaranteed under the Constitution of women, who are victims of violence of any kind occurring within the family.

Milan Kumar Singh & Anr. v. State of U.P. & Anr¹². (Decided by: R.N. Misra, J.) case, the petition for challenging the application filed by his wife under the Act, 2005 was filed before the High Court of Allahabad by the husband on the grounds that such an application could not be filed directly before a Magistrate without first approaching the Protection Officer and a Domestic Incident Report (DIR). The husband also argued that the application was not in the prescribed format as provided in Form II.

In **Neetu Singh v. Sunil Singh**¹³, (Decided by: L.C. Bhadoo, J) case, the appeal was before the High Court of Chhattisgarh where the aggrieved woman challenged the order of a Family Court dismissing her application filed under Section 12 of the PWDVA, (2005) in a pending proceeding. The question that arose for determination was whether the Family Court was correct in dismissing her application; given the statutory mandate provided under Section 26(1) of the Act, whereby, "any relief available -under Sections 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22 may also be sought in any legal proceeding, before a Civil Court, Family Court or a Criminal Court, affecting the aggrieved person and the respondent whether such proceeding was initiated before or after the commencement of this Act.

In the case of **Satish Chander Ahuja vs. Sneha Ahuja**¹⁴, the Supreme Court held that in civil suits (e.g. for injunction, possession) courts cannot ignore claims under the Domestic Violence Act. Under Section 26, civil proceedings and Domestic Violence proceedings can run simultaneously, and courts must take into account the rights under the Domestic Violence Act while adjudicating civil suits.

On **20 May 2025**, the Supreme Court directed all states and Union Territories to identify and designate Protection Officers (POs) to ensure proper implementation of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (PWDVA). A Bench of Justices B.V. Nagarathna and S.C. Sharma was hearing **We The Women of India v Union of India**¹⁵. The petition brings to the limelight the uneven implementation of the PWDVA across the country. The court directed that the relevant departments must empanel service providers per Section 10 of the Act and work through them to provide shelter homes for aggrieved women. States and UTs must identify and officially notify such shelter homes at both the District and Taluka levels within ten weeks. The Bench has issued these directions as initial steps to "ensure ultimate implementation of the Act in all respects."

SUGGESTIONS TO CURB DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Equality, partnership between women and men and respect for human dignity must permeate at all stages of socialization process. Educational system should promote self-respect, mutual respect and cooperation between women and men.¹⁶ To effectively curb domestic violence in India, a multifaceted approach is essential; one that combines legal reform, social change, education, support services, and enforcement mechanisms. Below are key suggestions:

1. Strengthen Legal Enforcement

- Fast-track courts for domestic violence cases to ensure timely justice.
- Stricter implementation of existing laws like:
 - Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005)
 - Dowry Prohibition Act (1961)
 - IPC Sections 498A, 304B
- Improve police sensitivity and accountability in handling complaints.

2. Mandatory Gender Sensitization Training

- For police, judiciary, and medical personnel, to handle cases empathetically and without bias.
- Include community leaders and panchayat members in rural areas.

¹¹ Mohit Yadav v. State of Andhra Pradesh, 2010 Cri LJ 3751 (AP).

¹² Milan Kumar Singh & Anr. v. State of U.P. & Anr., 2007 Cri LJ 4742.

¹³ Neetu Singh v. Sunil Singh, AIR 2008 Chh 1.

¹⁴ Satish Chander Ahuja vs. Sneha Ahuja, Civil Appeal No. 2483 of 2020.

¹⁵ We The Women of India v Union of India W.P. (C) No. 1224 of 2017.

¹⁶ Prof. (Dr.) Rattan Singh, Dr. Varinder Singh, "Socio Economic Offences (Laws & Principles), Allahabad Law Agency, Faridabad, 2021, p. 192

3. Community Awareness and Education

- Launch nationwide campaigns (especially in rural areas) to challenge gender norms, patriarchy, and normalize speaking out.
- Integrate domestic violence awareness in school and college curricula to build respectful attitudes from a young age.

4. Strengthen Support Systems

- Increase number and accessibility of:
 - Women's shelters
 - Helplines (like 181 or 1091)
 - Legal aid centers
 - Crisis intervention services
- Set up One-Stop Centers (OSCs) in every district with integrated services: legal, medical, psychological, and police assistance.

5. Economic Empowerment of Women

- Promote vocational training, employment opportunities, and financial independence.
- Provide microloans or incentives for women entrepreneurs or survivors of abuse.

6. Encourage Reporting Without Fear

- Make the complaint process simpler, confidential, and less traumatic.
- Introduce anonymous complaint mechanisms and mobile-based reporting tools.

7. Engage Men and Boys

- Promote positive masculinity and challenge harmful gender roles.
- Encourage male allies and involve them in advocacy and awareness programs.

8. Use Technology

- Develop mobile apps and SMS services for:
 - Emergency SOS alerts
 - Legal information
 - Real-time support
- Monitor abusers using GPS-based restraining order enforcement in extreme cases.

9. Involve Local Governance and NGOs

- Empower Gram Panchayats, urban local bodies, and NGOs to identify abuse early and intervene.
- Provide training to Anganwadi and ASHA workers to recognize signs of abuse.

10. Regular Monitoring and Policy Updates

- Establish national and state-level commissions to monitor domestic violence trends.
- Collect real-time data and feedback to adapt laws and programs as needed.

CONCLUSION

After a divorce, women are often placed at a disadvantage and lose the rights and status they held during the marriage. Abusers may use violence to pressure women into surrendering their rights to property, assets, and even custody of their children, which are typically controlled by the man. Repeated acts of violence can push the woman to such extreme levels of poverty and hopelessness that she agrees to give up all her legal claims just to escape the abuse. Domestic violence laws aim to stop such situations and help women regain equality within marriage. These laws are designed to give women the necessary time and space to decide what they want for their future. Courts play a crucial role in protecting women's rights and promoting gender equality. They serve as a last line of support and fortunately, are actively working toward the welfare of women.

The Act plays a critical role in the Indian legal system vis-a-vis protecting the rights of the women, so that they can feel protected and safe within the comfort of their own house. It is an exhaustive piece of legislation as it lays down the powers and duties of the various authorities, reliefs available to the victims, steps to filing a complaint regarding domestic violence, assistance provided to the victims of domestic violence, power and extent of the Indian Judiciary and the power of the Central Government to make rules. The Act provides civil remedies to the victims of domestic

violence. And prior to the enactment of the Act, the victims of domestic violence sought civil remedies such as divorce, custody of children, injunctions in any form or maintenance only by taking recourse to civil courts. Therefore, the Act brought about necessary changes in the Indian legislature. Although the Act has incorporated essential steps to safeguard women from domestic violence it fails to provide any remedies for the male members of the family and it also fails to recognize the cohabiting and marital relationship between the members of the LGBTQ+ community. Hence, these must be included in the Act to totally eradicate domestic violence as a necessary evil from Indian society.