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WHITE BLACK LEGAL is an open access, peer-reviewed and refereed journal providededicated to express views on topical legal issues, thereby generating a cross current of ideas on emerging matters. This platform shall also ignite the initiative and desire of young law students to contribute in the field of law. The erudite response of legal luminaries shall be solicited to enable readers to explore challenges that lie before law makers, lawyers and the society at large, in the event of the ever changing social, economic and technological scenario.

With this thought, we hereby present to you

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN INDIA-A SOCIO LEGAL STUDY

AUTHORED BY - AAISH ALI

ABSTRACT

Violence against women continues to be a pervasive and deeply entrenched issue within Indian society. It is not limited by geographical, economic, or social barriers; rather, it affects women from all walks of life and all areas of life. Not only does this widespread violence cause its victims to suffer bodily and psychological pain, but it also places a significant barrier in the way of India's efforts to achieve its goals of inclusive growth, prosperity, and the actualization of social justice. It is a violation of the society's own fundamental principles of equality, dignity, and human rights for a society to allow or accept violence against women.

The prevalence of violence against women continues to be frighteningly high, despite the fact that there are several constitutional guarantees and legal safeguards and protections. In addition to sexual harassment, trafficking, and honor-based crimes, the forms of cruelty are diverse and frequently interconnected with larger concerns like as patriarchy, cultural norms, a lack of education, and poor law enforcement. Domestic violence and violence tied to dowries are two examples of the types of cruelty that are prevalent.

Because of the magnitude and complexity of the issue, there is an immediate requirement for extensive research and public discourse that is guided by relevant information. In addition to being crucial for academic study, it is also essential for creating effective legal, social, and governmental responses to violence. Understanding the underlying causes, patterns, and effects of violence is very important. The purpose of this research paper is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the many facets of violence against women, including the reasons that contribute to it, the responses of society and the legal system to it, and the effects that it has on victims and communities. By acting in this manner, we intend to make a contribution to the ongoing efforts to eliminate violence based on gender and to foster a society that is safer and more equitable for everyone.

KEYWORDS

Violence against women, Gender-based violence, Patriarchy, Women's rights, Domestic violence, Sexual harassment, Human rights, Dowry-related violence, Honor-based crimes, Gender inequality

INTRODUCTION

The issue of violence against women (VAW) is not a recent development—it is deeply embedded in the history of human civilization. There have been many different manifestations of the subjugation and abuse of women throughout history, even from ancient times to the present day. There are references to gender-based injustices that can be found in Indian mythology and epics such as the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. These references mirror the persistent presence of violence and discrimination against women despite the passage of time. Although these narratives are representative of the time period in which they were written, they also highlight the ways in which deeply ingrained patriarchal structures have traditionally influenced the attitudes of society toward women.¹

On a global scale, there has been a continuous effort to combat violence against women, notably in the contemporary era with the advent of human rights rhetoric. In 1993, the United Nations adopted a declaration on the elimination of violence against women, which was a significant occasion in the ongoing campaign against violence against women. The Declaration acknowledges that violence against women (VAW) is a symptom of historically unequal power relations between men and women. These power relations have led to the systematic dominance, discrimination, and marginalization of women. The document places an emphasis on the fact that violence is one of the primary societal tactics that is utilized to keep women in a submissive position that is prevalent all over the world.²

Conventions, declarations, and frameworks have been developed by the United Nations and other international entities in order to eradicate violence and promote the full empowerment of women. These organizations have continually advocated for gender equality and have produced a variety of them to achieve their goals. The purpose of these activities is to bring attention to the necessity of global cooperation and cultural shifts, and to encourage all governments to adopt and put into practice policies that defend the rights and dignity of women.³

A wide variety of harmful actions that are predominantly or entirely directed toward women and girls are included in the category of violence against women (VAW), which is also known

¹ United Nations, "Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women", available at: <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm> (last visited on- April 13, 2025).

² Russo, Nancy Felipe; Pirlott, Angela "Gender-based violence: concepts, methods, and findings", (November 2006).

³ Krantz, Gunilla; Garcia-Moreno, Claudia, "Violence against women", Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, (October 2005).

as gender-based violence (GBV) or sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Not only are males or boys more likely to do these behaviors, but they do so not merely because of psychological dispositions such as misogyny, superiority, or entitlement, but also because of deeply internalized patriarchal norms. A significant number of these acts of violence are examples of hate crimes, which are committed against persons solely on the basis of their gender identification.⁴

Violence can take many forms, including physical and sexual assault, psychological abuse, economic control, trafficking, and destructive traditional practices. These are only few of the forms of violence that can occur. Despite the fact that the nature and prevalence of such violence differ from culture to culture and from historical period to historical time, the fundamental objective of such violence remains shockingly consistent: to establish power and to sustain hierarchical gender arrangements.

FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN:

1. Domestic violence

Domestic violence, frequently regarded as a personal issue, persists as a widespread problem in numerous nations. It emerges in multiple forms, including physical, emotional, psychological, and economic abuse.

Physical Abuse: This encompasses any manifestation of physical aggression, including hitting, slapping, kicking, or other types of corporeal injury. The victims frequently endure not just physical injuries but also enduring psychological trauma.

Emotional and psychological abuse: This can be equally detrimental, if more challenging to recognize. It encompasses actions intended to dominate, coerce, or influence the victim's emotions. This may encompass verbal abuse, persistent belittlement, social isolation from friends and family, and threats of violence. This gradually undermines the victim's self-esteem and independence.

Economic abuse: albeit less frequently addressed, is of comparable importance. It encompasses obstructing the victim's employment or exerting control over all household finances. This constrains the victim's capacity to extricate themselves from the abusive relationship or express autonomy, perpetuating a cycle of reliance on the abuser.

⁴ Angelari, Marguerite (1997). "Hate crime statutes: a promising tool for fighting violence against women".

Domestic abuse: is often normalized and concealed due to societal stigmas, familial pressure, and cultural expectations, particularly in conservative or traditional environments. The victims are predominantly women, however men and children may also be impacted.⁵

2. Dowry-Related Violence

Notwithstanding the implementation of the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961, dowry-related violence persists as a prevalent concern, especially in India. This type of violence is profoundly embedded in cultural traditions, wherein the groom's family requires substantial gifts, monetary contributions, or property from the bride's family as a condition of the marriage agreement.

Harassment and Torture: Inability to fulfill dowry demands may result in harassment, physical assault, and psychological distress. In severe instances, this may lead to the bride experiencing heinous acts such as dowry deaths, wherein women are either killed or compelled to commit suicide owing to their inability to fulfill dowry expectations. Bride burning, a particularly gruesome manifestation of dowry-related violence, occurs when a bride is ignited, frequently stemming from discontent with the dowry. This brutal manifestation of violence underscores the gravity of the issue.

Notwithstanding legislative advancements, dowry violence persists due to ingrained cultural norms and inadequate law enforcement. Victims frequently refrain from reporting such acts owing to apprehension of social ostracism, familial honor, or retribution from the groom's family.⁶

3. Sexual Violence

Sexual violence encompasses a wide range of offenses, from molestation to rape, and includes harassment both in public and private spaces.

Rape: One of the most severe forms of sexual violence, rape is a crime that violates a person's physical integrity and autonomy. Many rape victims face secondary victimization from society, such as stigmatization or victim-blaming.

Molestation and Sexual Harassment: Molestation refers to inappropriate or unwanted physical contact, while sexual harassment involves unwelcome advances, comments, or behavior in public or workplace settings. These forms of sexual violence violate a person's

⁵ Martin R. Huecker, Kevin C. King, "Domestic Violence", 2023.

⁶ Pranshul Pathak, "The dowry prohibition ACT in India: A critical analysis", 2024.

dignity and often go underreported due to the victim's fear of not being believed or facing backlash.

Workplace Harassment: This type of sexual violence has gained attention in recent years, particularly in the context of the #MeToo movement. Women in various professional settings may experience unwanted sexual attention, exploitation, or coercion, often facing challenges when seeking justice due to power imbalances in workplaces.⁷

Sexual violence has a profound impact on the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of the victim, and while there are laws against it, enforcement remains inconsistent.

4. Honor-Based Crimes

Honor-based violence is particularly prevalent in conservative or patriarchal societies where the concept of "honor" is deeply tied to family and community reputation. These crimes often target women and girls who are perceived to have dishonored their family or community through behaviors such as marrying outside their caste or community, engaging in premarital sex, or defying traditional gender roles.

Honor Killings: These are the most extreme form of honor-based violence, where women are killed by their family members or relatives for allegedly bringing dishonor to the family. **Forced Marriages and Punishments:** Women who defy traditional norms may be forced into marriage or subjected to physical violence as punishment for their perceived transgressions. Such crimes occur most frequently in rural or tribal areas, where traditional values hold more sway over individuals' actions.

These crimes are often shrouded in silence, as they are considered a "family matter" or a way to uphold community honor, which can make it difficult for victims to seek justice.⁸

5. Trafficking and Forced Prostitution

Human trafficking, especially the trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation, is a pervasive problem. Women are frequently deceived or compelled into circumstances that lead to their involvement in prostitution or other sexually exploitative sectors.

Sex Trafficking: Women and girls are frequently enticed by assurances of job or an improved existence, only to find themselves in brothels or on the streets, where they are subjected to coercion, manipulation, or assault.

⁷ Gurvinder Kalra, Dinesh Bhugra, "Sexual violence against women: Understanding cross-cultural intersections", 2013.

⁸ Raghu N. Singh, J. Douglas Dailey, "Honor killing".

Coerced Prostitution: In certain instances, women and girls are compelled into prostitution, lacking autonomy and being subjected to sexual exploitation as a means of survival or via extreme abuse and violence.

Trafficking networks function both domestically and internationally, and victims frequently encounter significant obstacles in extricating themselves from these circumstances. The absence of awareness and the shame associated with prostitution hinder victims from seeking assistance.⁹

6. Cyber Violence

With the growing integration of the digital realm into daily existence, the incidence of cyber violence, especially targeting women, has also escalated. The anonymity and extensive reach of the internet enable offenders to harass, threaten, and exploit women in previously inconceivable manners.

Online Harassment: This encompasses abusive communications, trolling, or bullying on social media platforms, wherein offenders specifically target women based on their gender, viewpoints, or physical attractiveness.

Doxxing: is the malevolent act of disclosing private or personal information about a someone online, typically with the goal to inflict harm. Women are often the subjects of these campaigns, resulting in threats, humiliation, and actual assault.

Sexual Exploitation: The proliferation of pornography and other exploitative platforms may compel women into producing explicit content or result in the unauthorized theft and distribution of their photographs. The absence of regulation and accountability for online information hinders the protection of women against exploitation.

Cyber violence is especially detrimental due of its capacity to surpass physical limitations, impacting the victim in all facets of life, including personal relationships and career opportunities.¹⁰

⁹ National Human Rights Commission (Nhrc) India, Trafficking Of WomenAnd Children: Challenges And Remedies, *available at:* https://nhrc.nic.in/sites/default/files/Trafficking_WomenChildrenChallengesRemedieNHRC.pdf

¹⁰ United Nations, Cyberviolence Against Women and Girls: The Growing Threat of the Digital Age”, *available at:* <https://unric.org/en/cyberviolence-against-women-and-girls-the-growing-threat-of-the-digital-age/> (last visited on- April 17, 2025).

7. Marital Rape

According to Indian law, rape that occurs within a marriage is not subject to criminal prosecution, making it one of the most contentious topics. This has resulted in broad discussions about the necessity of change in the law to address the issue of sexual violence between spouses.¹¹

By virtue of the fact that these types of violence are intricately intertwined with social, cultural, and economic systems, it is difficult to confront them only through the mechanisms of legislation. To protect and empower women and other vulnerable groups, it is necessary to take a multi-pronged strategy to combating such violence. This approach should include law reform, education, and societal change.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN INDIA

India has implemented various laws to combat violence against women; nevertheless, the efficacy of these laws is inconsistent.

1. Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) (2023)

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, a proposed substitute for the Indian Penal Code, aims to enhance the criminal justice system in India, focusing specifically on gender-based violence. The principal stipulations of the BNS pertinent to violence against women encompass:

The BNS broadens the definition of sexual offenses to encompass not only conventional rape but also stalking, harassment, voyeurism, and cybercrimes. It seeks to enhance clarity and establish a more comprehensive framework for the prosecution of sexual violence. The BNS enhances punishments for sexual violence offenses, imposing more severe terms for recidivists. It implements more severe penalties for offenses such as rape and gang rape, in addition to crimes like acid attacks, which are frequently employed to suppress women.¹²

Victim-Centric Provisions: The BNS emphasizes the safeguarding of women during the legal process, implementing provisions such as victim protection orders to prevent

¹¹ Raveena Rao Kallakuru & Pradyumna Soni, "Criminalisation Of Marital Rape In India: Understanding Its Constitutional, Cultural And Legal Impact", 2018.

¹² Yeshwant Naik, "The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS): A Critical Examination of India's New Penal Code", 2024.

intimidation and harassment during trials. It advocates for the delicate treatment of victims, guaranteeing that female cops manage situations of sexual abuse.

Time-Bound Trials: To mitigate the delays frequently associated with sexual violence prosecutions, the BNS mandates expedited trials for these offenses. This will expedite the legal proceedings and guarantee prompt justice for victims.

Special Provisions for Victims of Trafficking and Exploitation: The BNS includes more rigorous legislation pertaining to human trafficking, encompassing a thorough framework for punishing traffickers and offering rehabilitation and assistance to victims.

2. Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) (2023)

The Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita is a proposed legislation designed to establish a more robust framework for safeguarding people's rights, particularly those of women. The BNSS tackles violence against women, emphasizing protection and assistance for victims. The BNSS implements specific safeguards for women, mandating that law enforcement and relevant authorities prioritize cases of violence against women. It underscores the creation of women's safety cells at police stations, guaranteeing that women possess a specialized support system while engaging with law enforcement.

State Accountability: A fundamental component of the BNSS is ensuring the state is responsible for safeguarding its citizens, especially at-risk women. It requires law enforcement to respond swiftly to reports of violence and guarantee the safety of victims. Provisions exist to provide consistent supervision of law enforcement activities, ensuring that complaints are addressed seriously and promptly.

The BNSS advocates for a collaborative strategy among many agencies to assist women who have experienced violence. This includes the provision of medical, psychological, and legal assistance to guarantee that women have access to essential resources for recovering from the trauma of violence. The legislation emphasizes rehabilitation initiatives to prevent the re-victimization or marginalization of abuse survivors.¹³

The BNSS requires the establishment of shelters and safe spaces for women who have experienced violence, offering them sanctuary and safety from their abusers. The BNSS prioritizes community-oriented strategies to tackle violence against women, concentrating on awareness initiatives and educational efforts to challenge the societal norms that sustain

¹³ How Does the Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023 Impact Women's Safety?, available at: <https://law4u.in/top-answer/7345/how-does-the-bharatiya-nagarik-suraksha-sanhita-bnss-2023-impact-womens-safety> (last visited on- April 17, 2025).

violence. It seeks to transform perceptions on gender-based violence and confront the societal norms that permit its unrestrained perpetuation.

3. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005)

The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (PWDVA) is a landmark piece of legislation in India, enacted with the objective of providing effective protection to women who are victims of domestic violence within the family structure. This Act employs a complete civil law approach, contrasting with previous legal remedies that were limited to the criminal provisions of Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code, focusing on both penalizing offenders and providing prompt, holistic relief to survivors.

The PWDVA expands the definition of domestic violence to encompass physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, and economic abuse. This comprehensive definition recognizes the diverse and frequently unacknowledged kinds of abuse that women may encounter in the domestic environment. The Act pertains to women in domestic relationships, encompassing marriages, consanguinity, adoption, and cohabitation, thus broadening protection beyond legally recognized marriages.¹⁴

The Act encompasses essential provisions such as:

Protection Orders- These prohibit the abuser from perpetrating more acts of violence, communicating with the victim, or accessing her apartment or workplace.

Residence Orders- These guarantee that the woman cannot be expelled from her shared domicile, and in some instances, the court may mandate the abuser to vacate the premises. The Act stipulates financial compensation to address expenses and losses resulting from the abuse, encompassing medical expenses, lost wages, and maintenance costs. **Custody Orders-** Courts may award temporary custody of children to the affected woman, prioritizing the child's safety and welfare. The Act mandates the state to furnish shelter homes and complimentary medical assistance to women experiencing domestic violence. The Act appoints Protection Officers to act as intermediaries between victims and the judicial system, facilitating women's access to legal remedies, shelters, and medical care. Notwithstanding its progressive architecture, the execution of the Act encounters numerous problems. Social shame, patriarchal conventions, and insufficient awareness persist in dissuading numerous women from pursuing remedy.¹⁵ In rural regions and vulnerable

¹⁴ Sri M.Chandrasekhara Reddy, Civil Judge (Junior Division), Pulivendula, "Domestic Violence Act, 2005".

¹⁵ Understanding Section 19 of the Domestic Violence Act: Legal Provisions and Case Studies, available at: <https://amlegal.in/section-19-of-domestic-violence-act/> (last visited on- April 17, 2025).

groups, restricted access to legal assistance and insufficient awareness among law enforcement and the judiciary exacerbate the issue. Furthermore, the implementation of protection and residency orders frequently fails due to bureaucratic inefficiency or insufficient political will.

4. The Dowry Prohibition Act (1961)

The Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 is a significant legislative measure in India aimed at addressing the entrenched and discriminatory custom of dowry. This Act prohibits the giving, receiving, or soliciting of dowry, which is defined as any property or valuable security provided or promised in relation to a marriage. The legislation pertains to all religious communities in India and encompasses both the pre-marital and post-marital stages.

Notwithstanding its explicit purpose, the Act has encountered difficulties in effectively mitigating the practice. A significant difficulty resides in the enduring cultural and societal endorsement of dowry, frequently masked as "gifts" or "voluntary contributions." These entrenched beliefs tend to normalize dowry transactions, complicating enforcement and frequently rendering the law ineffective in practical terms.¹⁶

The Act mandates severe penalties, encompassing incarceration and monetary fines, for both the donor and recipient of dowry. Nonetheless, enforcement is fundamentally ineffective owing to numerous variables. Victims and their families frequently refrain from reporting dowry-related offenses owing to apprehension of social ostracism, financial dependency, or the shame linked to legal actions. Moreover, ignorance of legal requirements and procedural delays within the judicial system deter victims from pursuing justice.

Dowry remains a primary catalyst for domestic abuse, harassment, and fatalities among women in India. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) constantly documents a significant number of cases under Section 304B¹⁷ of the Indian Penal Code, pertaining to dowry deaths—a stark indication of the severe repercussions of this unlawful yet widespread practice.

Amendments have been implemented over the years to enhance the legal framework of the Dowry Prohibition Act, with corresponding sections included in the Indian Penal Code and

¹⁶ Sushavan Das, The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, <https://www.jusscriptumlaw.com/post/the-dowry-prohibition-act-1961> (last visited on- April 17, 2025)

¹⁷ The Indian Penal Code, S.304B.

the Criminal Procedure Code. Section 498A¹⁸ of the IPC penalizes cruelty inflicted by the husband or his relatives in relation to dowry demands. Nonetheless, the disparity between legislation and execution persists significantly.

Combating the dowry issue necessitates more than mere legal measures; it requires a transformation in society attitudes, extensive legal awareness, and the empowering of women via education and financial autonomy. Public awareness initiatives, community involvement, and the education of law enforcement officials are essential in combating a practice that persistently undermines the dignity and rights of women.

In conclusion, although the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 functions as a fundamental legislative instrument against the dowry system, its efficacy is significantly compromised by socio-cultural norms, inadequate enforcement, and a hesitance to report violations. A comprehensive approach encompassing legal reform, public education, and institutional accountability is crucial to eradicate this widespread type of gender-based violence.¹⁹

5. The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (1956)

The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (ITPA)²⁰, initially established as the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act, serves as the primary legislation in India designed to combat human trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation. The Act, established in accordance with India's commitments under the United Nations International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons, signifies an official acknowledgment of the necessity to address trafficking, especially of women and children, for prostitution.²¹

The ITPA prohibits practices associated with trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, including operating brothels, soliciting or coercing women and children into prostitution, and confining individuals in locations where prostitution occurs. The law does not prohibit prostitution itself; instead, it focuses on third parties who exploit individuals through prostitution, including pimps, brothel owners, and traffickers. The Act mandates the rescue and rehabilitation of victims and authorizes the state to establish protective and corrective institutions to facilitate their recovery and reintegration.

¹⁸ The Indian Penal Code, S.498A.

¹⁹ Shalu Nigam, *"Dowry is a serious economic violence: Rethinking Dowry Law in India"*, 2023.

²⁰ The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (No. 104 of 1956)

²¹ Social Action Forum for Manvaadhikar, *"Research Study on Human Right Violation of Victims of Trafficking"*.

The Act has faced significant criticism on multiple fronts, notwithstanding its intended purpose. A primary criticism is that it frequently penalizes sex workers, particularly when law enforcement conflates consensual sex work with trafficking. Raids on brothels, although aimed at rescuing trafficking individuals, often lead to the indiscriminate arrest and custody of sex workers, many of whom may be participating in the trade voluntarily. These women are frequently confined in "rehabilitation" facilities involuntarily, lacking adequate legal redress and disregard for their autonomy and consent.

Furthermore, the Act has inadequately addressed the fundamental causes of trafficking, including poverty, insufficient education, gender disparity, and lack of economic prospects. Victim support mechanisms—such as shelters, legal assistance, counseling, and vocational training—are frequently underfunded, inadequately managed, or completely absent, rendering rescued persons susceptible to re-trafficking.²²

A further issue is the insufficient coordination between enforcement agencies and rehabilitation providers, which compromises the victim-centered approach intended by the statute. Moreover, trafficking rings frequently function beyond state and international boundaries, and the ITPA's restricted reach and antiquated rules have struggled to adapt to the changing dynamics of trafficking networks.

Recent years have witnessed demands for extensive legal reform, encompassing a clearer differentiation between trafficking and consensual sex work, enhanced protections for victims' rights, and a more sophisticated, rights-oriented approach to rehabilitation. Numerous judicial decisions and advisories from human rights groups have underscored the necessity of honoring the autonomy of adult sex workers while amplifying initiatives to eradicate coerced and underage prostitution.²³

In summary, the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956²⁴ constitutes a notable legislative initiative to combat human trafficking and exploitation; yet, its efficacy is compromised by antiquated provisions, inadequate enforcement, and an absence of victim-centric mechanisms. For the law to effectively fulfill its function, it must progress with human rights concepts and modern interpretations of trafficking and sex labor.

²² Dipika Jain & Kimberly Rhoten, "*Sex Work And The Law In India: Perspectives*".

²³ UNHRC, "*Human Rights and Human Trafficking*".

²⁴ *Supra* note 20.

CONCLUSION

Violence against women in India is a complex and entrenched issue that infringes upon individual rights and erodes the fundamental ideals of equality, decency, and justice established in the Indian Constitution. Notwithstanding a strong legal framework and various constitutional protections for women, the prevalence of gender-based violence remains shockingly elevated. This ongoing dilemma is founded on deep-seated patriarchal systems, cultural conditioning, and socio-economic disparities that persistently marginalize women and expose them to vulnerability in both private and public domains.

This study has examined multiple forms of violence—such as domestic abuse, dowry-related offenses, sexual assault, trafficking, honor-based crimes, and cyber violence—uncovering a pattern of systemic inadequacy in prevention, protection, and reparation systems. Legislation such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act²⁵, the Dowry Prohibition Act²⁶, and the Criminal Law (Amendment) Acts has undeniably signified legal advancement. Nonetheless, its execution is obstructed by indifference, insufficient awareness, procedural delays, and the socio-cultural normalization of violence.

To effectively combat violence against women, India must transcend superficial legislative measures. The difficulty extends beyond legal dimensions; it encompasses social, cultural, and institutional aspects. There is an urgent necessity for comprehensive and intersectional initiatives that include legal reform, judicial accountability, public education, community engagement, and the empowerment of women at all levels. Law enforcement authorities and the judiciary must be educated and taught to address gender-based violence in a victim-centered and trauma-informed approach.

The changing of society views through education, awareness, and sustained activism is equally significant. Patriarchal attitudes that rationalize or condone violence must be systematically eradicated, and gender equality should be advocated not merely as a constitutional right but as a cultural standard. Civil society, the media, and educational institutions must assume a pivotal role in influencing public discourse around gender justice.

In conclusion, eliminating violence against women necessitates collaborative and enduring efforts from all societal sectors. India can only aspire to a future where women exist free from

²⁵ The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (No.43 of 2005).

²⁶ The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 (No.28 of 1961).

fear and discrimination with a comprehensive strategy that emphasizes women's safety, autonomy, and equality. A society that protects the dignity and rights of its women is not only more equitable but also inherently stronger, more inclusive, and more compassionate.

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