

Domestic Violence in India

A Summary Report of Three Studies

Preface

The International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), in collaboration with Indian researchers, is pleased to present the first in a series summarizing the research studies being undertaken in India on domestic violence against women. The summary reports presented in this volume have been prepared by the ICRW team --comprised of Barbara Burton, Nata Duvvury, Anuradha Rajan, and Nisha Varia -- in consultation with the individual research teams. The Introduction and Conclusions have been written by the ICRW team synthesizing findings across the three studies. The ICRW team takes full responsibility for any errors or omissions. The interpretations of findings in the full report do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the individual research teams.

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Nata Duvvury
Project Director

Introduction

The International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) is conducting a three-year research program, which began in 1997, on domestic violence in India in partnership with researchers from a range of Indian academic and activist organizations. A National Advisory Council, representing the different constituencies in India that address the issue, provides guidance for the program. The goal of the program is to provide reliable and sound information with which to identify, replicate, expand, and advocate for effective responses to domestic violence. The program has three components: first, assessing patterns and trends of domestic violence by identifying and analyzing existing data sets; second, conducting population-based surveys to estimate prevalence and to increase the understanding of determinants and outcomes of domestic violence; and third, distilling lessons learned from an analysis of on-going programmatic and policy

interventions. [All of the individual studies supported through this research program are briefly summarized in Box 1]. In this volume, we present summary reports of the first three studies to be completed. The first is a household study by Leela Visaria that enumerates and elucidates trends of domestic violence in rural Gujarat and provides a backdrop to the intervention studies. The other two studies, one by Nishi Mitra and the other by Veena Poonacha and Divya Pandey, document and analyze the range of organized responses to domestic violence against women being implemented by the state and non-governmental sectors in India and are hereafter referred to as the "response studies."

Domestic Violence: A Public Issue

According to available statistics from around the globe, one out of every three women has experienced violence in an intimate relationship at some point in her life. This is an average based on available national surveys across industrialized and developing countries (World Health Organization 1997). Statistical evidence on the actual prevalence of domestic violence in India is scant however. The few studies available indicate that physical abuse of Indian women is quite high, ranging from 22 percent to 60 percent of women surveyed (Rao 1996 and Mahajan 1990). Most of the available information consists of qualitative studies of very small sample size. The only large-scale indicator of violence against women is the data relating to crimes against women published by the National Crimes Record Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. The records of the bureau reveal a shocking 71.5 percent increase in cases of torture and dowry deaths during the period from 1991 to 1995 and may reflect increased reporting of violence. In 1995, torture of women constituted 29.2 percent of all reported crimes against women. In another study, 18 to 45 percent of married men in five districts of Uttar Pradesh, a large state in northern India, acknowledged that they physically abused their wives (Narayana 1996). And in a study by Ranjana Kumari (1989) of dowry abuse it was revealed that one out of every four dowry victims was driven to suicide.

Box 1: Program Descriptions

An Analysis of Primary Survey Data From Gujarat, Leela Visaria, Gujarat Institute of Development Studies, Ahmedabad.

This population-based study presents a picture of domestic violence as reported by 346 married women in rural Gujarat. Through both quantitative and qualitative methods, this project explores the magnitude and correlates of violence; forms and reasons given for violence; and women's options for support.

An Analysis of Hospital Records in Thane District, Maharashtra, SurinderJaswal, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai.

This study examines the records of hospitals and community health outposts in Thane District. The project studies the construction of the definition of violence by both the community and the providers of care as well as reconstructing specific incidents of violence through in-depth interviews.

An Analysis of Records of Special Cell for Women and Children Located in the Police Commissioner's Office in Mumbai, Anjali Dave and Gopika Solanki, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai.

This study analyzes the records of Mumbai's Special Cell, a collaboration between the police and the Tata Institute of Social Science. The project addresses how the language used in recording cases influences the investigative process and the final resolution of the case.

An Analysis of Records of NGOs in Bangalore, Sandhya Rao, Hengasara Hakkina Sangha, Bangalore.

Using the records of non-governmental organizations in Bangalore, this study explores domestic violence as a human rights issue. Included in the sample are a feminist organization working on violence issues for the last twenty years and a shelter which was established in the 1920s.

An Analysis of Court Records in Bangalore District, V. S. Elizabeth, National Law School University of India, Bangalore.

This study examines the records of a family court in Bangalore, three district level courts, and the High Court. The project examines cases to understand the judicial interpretation of existing laws that have an impact on domestic violence and to identify the gaps in investigative procedures that result in non-conviction.

A Population-Based Survey of Domestic Violence, International Clinical Epidemiologists Network (INCLIN).

This multi-site study is being conducted by local researchers in seven sites: Lucknow, Bhopal, Delhi, Nagpur, Chennai, Vellore, and Thiruvananthapuram. The project explores the magnitude of violence, risk and protective factors, and health and economic outcomes. The methodology addresses ethical, safety, and

training issues involving survey respondents and interviewers.

Responses to Domestic Violence in the States of Gujarat and Karnataka, Divya Pandey and Veena Poonachana, SNDT Women's University, Mumbai.

This study examines state, collaborative, NGO, and community-based initiatives addressing domestic violence in Gujarat and Karnataka.

Responses to Domestic Violence in the States of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, Nishi Mitra, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai.

This study examines state, collaborative, NGO, and community-based initiatives addressing domestic violence in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

Globally, violence within the home is universal across culture, religion, class, and ethnicity. Despite this widespread prevalence, however, such violence is not customarily acknowledged and has remained invisible -- a problem thought unworthy of legal or political attention. The social construction of the divide between public and private underlies the hidden nature of domestic violence against women. Legal jurisprudence has historically considered the domain of the house to be within the control and unquestionable authority of the male head of household. Thus, acts of violence against members of the household, whether wife or child, were perceived as discipline, essential for maintaining the rule of authority within the family.

In the last two decades, the Indian women's movement has contributed to a growing public awareness of violence against women. Women activists have mobilized and pressed for significant changes in the criminal code and police procedures in order to address various acts of violence. For example, throughout the 1980s, Indian society witnessed numerous protests by women's organizations against dowry deaths, custodial rape, abductions of women, sati (the burning of a widow on the funeral pyre), amniocentesis used for sex selection of children, sexual harassment of young girls and women in public places, trafficking, and prostitution.

What is unmistakable about these campaigns is that they often have focused on those acts of violence that either occurred in or had impact upon the public space. Thus, while the subordination of women in the private sphere was the implicit theoretical framework for many of the activists, the public-private divide still continued in practice. State responses to violence such as passing the

amendment 498A to the Dowry Act of 1983 (discussed further in Nishi Mitra's report to follow), establishing All Women Police Stations, or setting up family counseling cells, marked the beginning of attempts to provide some options outside the family to women facing domestic violence. However, except for sensational cases, the insidious everyday violence experienced by huge numbers of women has remained hidden in the private domain.

In several international conventions, there has now been explicit acknowledgment of the state's responsibility for human rights violations by private actors in both the public and private spheres. The Vienna Accord of 1993 and the Beijing Platform of 1995 together crystallized the principle that women's rights are human rights. The frameworks that these conventions established have created a space in which once private issues like domestic violence can be understood as human rights violations of public concern. In this way, human rights discourse has begun to dissolve the public-private divide and has provided a moral momentum for direct response by national governments and non-governmental actors. It is this momentum which informs our research.

Development and Violence

A parallel shift in the discourse on women in development has sought to move the perception of women as beneficiaries to active participants in development. This has involved redefining development to encompass a process that replaces constraints with choices. A factor clearly responsible for inhibiting the choices of women in development is domestic violence. Abuse has been observed to impede the public participation of women, undermine their economic efficiency, cause increased health burdens, and impose a drain on scarce national resources (Heise et al. 1994). For example, a World Bank study (1993) highlighted the cost of violence in terms of the health burden, estimating that rape and domestic violence "account for five percent of the healthy years of life lost to women of reproductive age in demographically developing countries." An Inter-American Development Bank study (1997) indicated that domestic violence resulted in a loss of U.S.\$1.56 billion in Chile (more than 2 percent of Chile's GDP in 1996), when considering only the loss of women's wages. Few studies have attempted to calculate the entire economic cost including the provision of all services by the state. But a study in New Wales, Australia, estimated that the overall cost was Aus\$1.5 billion a year (NCVAW 1993). This limited evidence suggests that the economic implications alone are serious enough to warrant special attention to violence as a development priority.

A reciprocal concern is whether and how development efforts can impact violence within the home. Limited evidence from studies on microcredit lending programs, for example, suggest that improved household income by women and

greater control over that income by them reduce the level of violence within the home (Schuler 1998; Kabeer 1998). It is equally possible, however, that development efforts can shift and intensify gender dynamics within the household and exacerbate incidents of violence. To determine the impact of development interventions on violence against women requires an analysis of specific factors and behaviors thought to trigger violence in individual households (the focus of Leela Visaria's study to follow) and the ways in which the gender dynamics of power within the household as well as the community are affected by development efforts. Even without unraveling these complex interconnections, it is clear that violence, and even the threat of violence, is a crucial factor that inhibits women's participation in development and is, therefore, a central constraint for realizing their full potential.

Research Issues

The formulation of effective and sustainable intervention strategies to address domestic violence against women requires a comprehensive understanding of all dimensions of the problem. This includes identifying the victims and perpetrators, the evident risk and protective factors, the common outcomes of violence, and the real needs of survivors. Equally important is research to document the responses implemented so far to identify gaps in existing strategies and to distill possible lessons for future strategies. Such research on domestic violence, however, must first attend to a series of methodological issues concerning ethics and safety, the determination of an appropriate mix of research methods, and the definition of domestic violence.

Definition of Domestic Violence

Definitions of domestic violence can be broad or focused, amorphous or targeted. The reason that the definition of violence is important is because it shapes the response. For example, a community response, whether it be legal reform or the provision of support services, is shaped by a particular understanding of what constitutes domestic violence and whether it is to be conceptualized as an intra-family conflict, or a criminal violation of rights. The definition implied by the law is especially critical as it defines standards and thus impacts broader social perceptions of the problem. Elements of the definition that need to be considered then are the boundaries of the relationship between the perpetrator and the abused, the norms of acceptable behavior, and the specific acts that constitute violence.

A frequent perception of domestic violence against women is that it is limited to physical harm perpetrated on adult women within a marital relationship. While this understanding may capture a large universe of the experience of women, it

is predicated on the assumption that women primarily live in nuclear families. Across cultures, there are a variety of living arrangements ranging from joint families to nuclear families to single parent families. Moreover, women may be in an established relationship or in the process of separation or divorce. Violence is often not restricted to the current husband but may extend to boyfriends, former husbands, and other family members such as parents, siblings, and in-laws. A definition that acknowledges these multiple possibilities would lead to interventions that are more inclusive of the experiences of all women.

Definitions of domestic violence rest upon not only the nature of the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim but also upon norms of acceptable behavior. There is considerable difference of opinion regarding which behaviors or manifestations should be considered violent, as well as the level of intensity and frequency required to label a relationship as violent. Another contentious issue is how to evaluate the intent of the act, why the act was initiated, and whose view should determine this. For instance, Indian field experience indicates that significant numbers of women do not perceive acts as violence if they perceive them to be justified. The social construct surrounding the ideal "good woman" clearly sets the limits for acceptable norms beyond which verbal and physical assaults translate into a notion of violence. Thus, wife beating is not seen as an excessive reaction if the woman gives cause for jealousy or does not perform her "wifely" duties adequately, such as having meals ready on time or adequately caring for children. This is further complicated by a common belief that violent acts are an expression of love and merely a desire to help the subject be a "better" person.

The core of a definition of domestic violence consists of all the acts that constitute violence. Some definitions are narrow and focus on a specific act of violence and others are broader and incorporate the full range of acts. In India, public discourse and the media equate domestic violence with dowry violence. This incomplete representation undermines awareness of the widespread, daily psychological, physical, and sexual abuse women confront that is often unrelated to dowry. As a result, newspapers may fail to report the less sensational stories that do not involve bride-burning and unnatural death. Indian legislation on marital violence perpetuates this narrow definition. For example, both Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code and the Dowry Prohibition Act emphasize violence within the context of dowry harassment. However, informal discussions with women by researchers and activists have underlined the need for greater study of other factors and characteristics associated with abuse.

A further critical element in the definition of violence is whether it is framed as an exclusively interpersonal act or seen more broadly as an expression of power that perpetuates the subordination of women. If it is the former, the definition

would only include those acts which might be seen as crimes and thus focus only on acts which result in physical evidence. If it is the latter, the definition of violence would include all acts of "physical, verbal, visual or sexual abuse that are experienced by women or girls as threats, invasion or assaults and that have the effect of hurting her, or degrading her and/or taking away her ability to control contact (intimate or otherwise) with another individual" (Koss et al. 1994). Such a definition more fully captures all the different processes by which women undergo subordination within intimate relations and fits more directly into a human rights perspective.

In this research program, the underlying framework for any of the operational definitions of domestic violence adopted by specific studies resembles this latter view: that the process of subordination becomes manifest in a wide range of violent acts. The definition in each study attempts to be as broad as possible. For instance, the study by Leela Visaria has explicitly considered psychological, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse in her analysis of forms of abuse. Similarly, both the studies on responses to violence against women examined herein explicitly state an operational definition of domestic violence that includes mental, emotional, and financial abuse of a woman. These acts of intimidation and cruelty led women or their family members to seek the support of agencies other than the family.

Issues of Methodology

Given the complexity and sensitivity of domestic violence, it was essential to use a mix of qualitative and quantitative methodologies and tools for analysis in the research. All three studies rely on a mix of methods such as focus groups, in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, participant observation, and review of secondary sources along with survey formats. Both response studies made an attempt to ensure the participation of the women and organizations from whom data was gathered. One way to ensure participation was through conducting workshops that brought together various organizations involved in response efforts to elicit a wider information base of ongoing efforts. These workshops were essential as there are no currently existing compilations of responses or of the organizations involved in these issues. Another positive outcome of these workshops was that the sharing of information resulted in better networking among the organizations working on violence against women. Further, the researchers shared the progress of the analysis with the participant organizations and incorporated feedback from the agencies surveyed into the reports. In addition, each research team will hold final workshops with key stakeholders to report the findings and facilitate networking between organizations to develop advocacy efforts.

A methodological dilemma that emerged while designing the response studies was whether the existing knowledge base was sufficient to evaluate the effectiveness of responses. One concern centered on whose perception was primary – that of the woman experiencing violence, the NGO, the state or some outside "objective" entity. Second was the determination of what constitutes a successful outcome: an immediate resolution to the specific incident, a legal resolution that enables the woman to leave if she so chooses, or a court prosecution and police investigation. A third concern was how to decide which indicators should be used to gauge the impact of responses and whether the data exist to assess impact. The perspectives of the women experiencing violence are crucial for evaluating effectiveness of responses. The researchers consciously decided, however, that as these studies were an early effort to document and understand the response efforts, the more immediate goal would be an initial survey and brief assessment of the range of community and state responses. From this outcome there would then be an attempt to distill lessons from field experiences and to generate criteria for evaluation.

Ethical Issues

A study of domestic violence also generates diverse ethical issues. First, a household survey asking women if they have been beaten is often considered inappropriate to implement given the widespread acknowledgment of the ethical and safety concerns involved. Qualitative methods are better suited and require significant rapport to gather high quality data. In Leela Visaria's study close rapport was built with the women of the community over a period of two and a half years. Her study is unique in that the issue of domestic violence emerged from the women themselves as an important element to consider if their status and autonomy were being researched. Given this self-identification of the problem and the rapport that was established between the surveyed women and the interviewers, the detailed survey of their experience of domestic violence had a very low non-response rate (1.2 percent). Concern for the immediate safety of women interviewed and for the responsibilities of the researcher in discovering these dangers constitutes two other significant ethical dilemmas among those involved with this issue.

A Description of the Studies

The three studies together provide an understanding of the degree of domestic violence being experienced by Indian women in a rural setting, the possible protective factors and the existing options available to women outside of family and friends. They also point to new directions for strategies to reduce, and hopefully eliminate, domestic violence in India.

Violence against Women in India: Evidence from Rural Gujarat

Leela Visaria's study on five villages in Kheda district is a preliminary exploration of the prevalence of domestic violence against women, the correlates of violence, the forms of abuse and the reasons given for abuse. The findings of the study dramatically underscore the universality of the experience within the home across age, community, and education. It also points to several interesting dimensions such as the lower incidence of violence among joint families, the difference in impact of higher educational status of men compared to that of women on levels of violence, and the complex linkages between correlates of violence, forms of abuse, and reasons given for abuse. Her study also indicates some of the possible links between the gender division of labor within the household and incidents of violence. The study highlights the lack of options for women in rural communities to address domestic violence. Yet her analysis makes evident the possible points of entry for intervention strategies that would strengthen family and community responses.

Visaria's study provides an important backdrop to the SNTD University and TISS response studies. These two studies provide a critical look at the ongoing programmatic efforts by both the government and the non-governmental sectors. Both studies have focused in particular upon the issue of partnership between civil society and the state, which has emerged as a central element in the implementation and monitoring of human rights obligations. The range of responses that have been considered include: 1) judicial and police responses, 2) state welfare policies, 3) sensitization programs conducted within the community and in specific sectors such as the judiciary, 4) enabling actions undertaken by the voluntary organizations for economic and social empowerment of women, and 5) support to the individual woman to fight for rights and rebuild her life. A critical outcome from both studies is the development of a typology of this range of responses that is analytically rich and provides a tool to develop criteria for evaluating effectiveness.

Best Practices among Responses to Domestic Violence in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra

The second study, by Nishi Mitra of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), focuses specifically on the governmental and non-governmental interventions and responses being implemented in the states of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. This study undertakes a non-random, cross-sectional survey of various actors involved in interventions. A qualitative analysis of purposively selected samples of state and NGO responses was also undertaken. Counseling oriented towards preserving family inviolability is found to be a predominant response in the state sector. The non-governmental sector does attempt to extend the range of

services provided by offering an array of rehabilitative programs. An issue that Mitra probes is the extent to which the government interventions are contradictory in nature, and in particular whether the efforts at family counseling undermine legal and judicial responses.

Responses to Domestic Violence in Karnataka and Gujarat

The focus of the SNTD University study by Veena Poonacha and Divya Pandey is on the interventions and responses being implemented in the states of Gujarat and Karnataka. The study provides a comprehensive examination of the range of responses through in-depth case studies of organizations. Some of the factors that are considered critical to the content and implementation of the responses are: a) the philosophy of the organization with regard to social change and gender relationships; b) the organizational history; c) decision-making processes within the organization; d) the organizational structure; e) the quality of services and f) staff morale. A finding of the study is that the prevailing types of response or intervention strategies, among both state and non-governmental sectors, are in essence reactive to individual complaints and are, therefore, short-term in their impact. The study, however, also points to the emergence of a variety of innovative, grassroots efforts to address domestic violence more proactively.

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Conclusion

The three studies summarized in this volume together provide a broad picture of the degree of violence experienced by individual women and the level and reach of services offered by state and non-governmental organizations. A strong conclusion emerging from the three studies is that domestic violence is a pervasive phenomenon in India. The Gujarat study emphasizes that violence cuts across caste, class, religion, age, and education. While a greater proportion of low caste and less educated women report violence, even highly educated women report violence in large numbers. The survey results suggest that in spite of economic prosperity and high literacy rates, two out of every five women experience physical abuse at the hands of their husbands. Development

strategies, therefore, need to address not only individual women's needs, but also general patterns of gender subordination.

In addition to depicting the prevalence of violence, the Gujarat study highlights women's lack of access to formal and informal mechanisms for redress in situations of abuse. The majority of women experiencing abuse do not access any form of medical care for either psychological or physical injuries. Two out of every five women in abusive relationships stay silent about their suffering because of shame and family honor. The lack of viable options keeps women trapped in violent situations. Nearly one third of the women experiencing abuse had thought about running away, but most said that they feared leaving their young children and had no place to go. Social and economic constraints further compound their sense of isolation. Lack of awareness about their rights and how to seek help renders these women more vulnerable to continued and escalating abuse by their husbands.

Analysis of Responses to Domestic Violence

To address women's isolation, the NGO and state sectors have initiated a wide range of public intervention strategies. These efforts concentrate on different dimensions of domestic violence. Some focus on immediate needs such as short stay homes to provide relief from abuse. Others are directed toward long-term or preventive measures such as the monitoring of existing cases, creating opportunities for economic self-reliance, consciousness-raising, and mobilizing the community to stop domestic violence.

The results from the two studies that examined responses to domestic violence suggest the following typology of responses: ameliorative services, reconstructive programs, and preventive strategies. Chart A (Chart A is missing) shows a diagram listing existing ameliorative services in the state and non-governmental sectors. This category of responses describes the services a woman encounters when she first seeks outside assistance. It includes a range of short-term services catering to the immediate and practical needs of a woman, such as shelter, legal aid, medical aid, and remedial counseling. To sustain the impact, a smaller range of programs is oriented toward rebuilding the well-being of the woman and the family (see Chart B) (Chart B is missing). These reconstructive programs improve livelihoods, self-esteem, and empowerment. A crucial third category of responses consists of measures designed to prevent and eliminate the conditions responsible for domestic violence (see Chart C) (Chart C is missing). Preventive strategies contribute both to empowering individual women and to raising community awareness.

Criteria for Effective Response

The two "response" studies have highlighted the range of interventions that currently exist in India and suggest criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions. The findings underscore that there are two critical elements of an effective strategy: the availability of a wide range of accessible quality services together with interventions that seek to challenge the broader social and economic context that exacerbates the imbalance in power between men and women. The research also highlights the value of involving the community in the design and implementation of interventions. In fact, the data suggest that interventions involving the community are more likely to be effective and sustainable.

Table 3: Criteria for Evaluating Effectiveness of Responses

<p>Quality of Responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range and choice of options • Culturally and regionally specific approaches • Women's participation in design • Attention to batterers • Accessibility • Technical competence of service providers • Adequate remuneration of practitioners • Ongoing training • Infrastructure and facilities • Follow-up and monitoring • Involvement of community • Collaborative nature of intervention 	<p>Impact of Responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in violence • Women's greater access to and control over resources • Shift in underlying dynamic of subordination • Policy changes • Influence on community norms • Inclusiveness and scope of reach to women and families in need • Integration of responses into legal, social, educational, health, and cultural institutions
	<p>Sustainability of Responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial autonomy and sustainability • Level of community support • Replicability • Transparency and flexibility in organization structure • Leadership style, staff morale, and overall accountability

Three primary criteria for evaluating effectiveness that emerge from the studies are the quality, impact, and sustainability of responses. Several key indicators are central to assessing each of these criteria (see table 3).

The quality of a given response may be determined by the type and variety of services available, the degree of cultural and regional sensitivity, the technical competence of personnel, and the involvement of the community. High-quality services offer a wide range of choices that are responsive to the diverse needs of women and their families, are accessible to all women, provide complete information, and include programs directed towards abusers. The competence, training, and commitment of staff are also significant elements of a quality response. Such personnel are recruited and retained by appropriate remuneration for their skills, provision of adequate facilities, and opportunities for professional growth. Women's participation and community involvement in the design and implementation of responses, as well as mechanisms designed to follow-up and monitor service-users, help ensure the long-term quality of responses.

A second criterion for evaluating the effectiveness of a response is the impact of interventions on the individual and the community. Indicators of impact include an evident decrease in the number of women experiencing violence; the inclusiveness, scope, and accessibility of services; and women's greater access to and control over resources. Indicators of impact upon the community include a shift in underlying dynamics of gender subordination, change in community norms, and influence on policy.

A final criterion for evaluating the effectiveness of a response is its sustainability. Assessing sustainability demands examination of financial viability and the level of community support. In addition, the leadership style, staff morale, transparency, and flexibility of the organization play significant roles in sustaining quality service. Personal rapport among and between staff and service-users, as well as the agency's accountability to women experiencing violence, are integral to the impact, quality, and sustainability of responses.

The studies have highlighted two examples of effective responses in India. One is the introduction of Section 498A by the state. This has provided a powerful legal tool with which to set a normative standard that does not condone violence against women within the home. The second is the formation of self-help collectives by the non-governmental sector. Self-help collectives such as the Mahila Samkhya program in Karnataka address violence uniquely through promoting women's empowerment: women's participation in panchayat elections, training in healthcare practices utilizing traditional remedies,

development of economic activities, and the challenging of caste-based practices. These programs exemplify the integration of all three categories of responses.

The analysis has also highlighted two characteristics critical to the success of programs: partnership, and regional and cultural sensitivity. Collaborations between state and voluntary organizations such as family counseling cells within police stations show the value of partnerships between sectors with different strengths. The voluntary sector's strength lies in progressive ideologies, dedication to women's rights, and an innovative and often community-based mechanism for outreach. The state sector's financial and physical resources can support these response efforts and the authority and investigative power of the police helps to force the accountability of abusers. Further, among all response types there are examples of many innovative and culturally sensitive measures that have been effective. These initiatives derive from culturally and regionally specific practices, such as stamp paper agreements which are commonly employed for ratifying promises; mock community funeral processions that draw attention to the fatal consequences of domestic violence; village elders welcoming new brides to offer support to young women who are new to the community; and the use of street theatre and folk songs for awareness building.

A holistic response to domestic violence entails linking all short- and long-term support services, reconstructive interventions, and prevention strategies into a coordinated public response. Women who approach any one service should be made aware of the entire spectrum of programs, interventions, and strategies available. For example, a woman who seeks help from a health care provider, a family counseling cell, or a police station, should be provided with access or referrals to a whole range of longer term services and programs.

Within this holistic framework, several key recommendations emerge from the studies:

Introduce a Comprehensive Law against Domestic Violence: There should be a comprehensive law that incorporates a broader definition of domestic violence. The definition should encompass all acts of physical, psychological, emotional, sexual, and financial abuse that, in effect, hurt or degrade the woman or take away her ability to control contact with another individual. The legislation should address women of all ages, irrespective of marital status.

Improve Women's Economic Capacities: Improve women's access to and control of income and assets, recognize her shared right to the family home and matrimonial property, and incorporate the principle of division of community property into divorce laws. Productive assets and property are critical to

strengthening the economic and social status of women, providing income opportunities and improved respect for women outside marriage and family.

Strengthen and Expand Training and Sensitization Programs:

Programs designed to train, sensitize, and interlink those working at critical entry points to identify and treat abused women should be a priority, with one aim being increased accountability across institutions. Such programs should be organized for medical personnel, legal and enforcement personnel, the judiciary, counseling and other support service providers. Among these, programs designed to sensitize health practitioners to the identification and appropriate treatment of abused women are of immediate necessity, given the crucial role this group plays and the current absence of such programs.

Use Media to Build Public Awareness: Mobilizations of communities around campaigns such as that for "Zero Tolerance of Violence" requires NGOs and advocates to work effectively with all forms of media. This requires improved skills and capacity among NGOs to enter new forms of dialogue with journalists and media personnel to heighten awareness of human rights and their significance for addressing domestic violence.

Address Domestic Violence through Education: Prevention of domestic violence ultimately depends upon changing the norms of society regarding violence as a means of conflict resolution and regarding traditional attitudes about gender. To achieve this, the concept of gender and human rights must be introduced in the curricula of schools, universities, professional colleges, and other training settings. Along with this, there must be recognition and commitment to the principle of free compulsory primary and secondary education for girls.

Implement Programs for Batterer: Programs designed for the batterer must be introduced in both the state and voluntary sector. Apart from addressing male violence through the criminal justice system, it is imperative to design and implement counseling programs that would raise the gender sensitivity of men, explore norms of violent behavior, and provide therapeutic counseling as needed. In order to promote a holistic approach to prevention as well as intervention, the deficiency in programs designed for men needs to be addressed.

Provide Comprehensive Medical and Psychological Services:

Programs must integrate the provision of comprehensive medical and psychological care and support services for survivors of abuse. Immediate

medical care is provided to some extent by different organizations but little attention has been paid to mental health services, such as therapeutic counseling, support groups, and family therapy. These are critical in rebuilding and sustaining the well being of the woman and her family.

Integrate Child Support Services with Protection Services for Women:

All intervention programs need to better address the needs of children affected by violence. This is a critical area of intervention that forms the basis of prevention in a future generation of adults. In addition, shelter homes must be made more accessible to women with children in both principle and practice; for example, through providing childcare facilities. Although some shelters have a provision for allowing children, it is not encouraged.

Expand Involvement of the Corporate Sector: An increase of financial resources is an urgent need for sustaining the existing interventions, improving the quality of such services, and implementing new innovations. Quality of services critically depends on better infrastructure as well as improved terms and conditions of those engaged in the provision of services. The corporate sector is an unaddressed stakeholder that should be encouraged to financially support preventive and supportive services to readdress domestic violence. Financial incentives in the form of tax breaks and/or subsidies should be introduced to encourage corporate sector funding of activities.

Increase Collaboration: Because the range of services that need to be offered are extensive, it is not practical for a single agency to deliver all of them. Greater collaboration among state agencies, NGOs, and the corporate sector is essential. There are only a few examples of coordinated voluntary and government efforts, such as counseling cells located within police stations. Effective networking to build a coordinated public response can result in an expansion of the range of services and a better utilization of existing resources.

Increase Outreach to Rural Areas: Coverage of services and programs needs to be expanded to rural areas. Apart from interventions such as lok adalats and parivarik mahila lok adalats, grievance redressal mechanisms for women facing domestic violence in rural areas are few or simply absent. In addition, All Women Police Stations are primarily located in urban areas. The voluntary sector has attempted interventions in rural areas successfully but their efforts are hampered by the non-availability or limited access to referral, health, and police services.

Strengthen Follow-Up and Monitoring: Few service providers consistently monitor clients or maintain long-term records. Both the state and non-

governmental sectors need to develop and prioritize follow-up and tracking mechanisms. Building and managing a systematic database is critical to regularly assessing and improving the impact of services.

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