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A Critical Study of Domestic Violence Legislation in Haryana: Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract

Domestic violence is a serious social and legal concern that affects the physical, psychological, emotional, and economic well-being of individuals, particularly women. India has established a comprehensive legal framework to address domestic violence, most notably through the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. This study critically examines the implementation of domestic violence legislation in Haryana, focusing on its effectiveness, institutional mechanisms, challenges, and emerging opportunities for strengthening victim protection and access to justice. The study analyzes the legal provisions relating to protection orders, residence rights, monetary relief, custody, compensation, and the responsibilities of Protection Officers, police authorities, service providers, and courts. It further examines socio-cultural factors such as patriarchal attitudes, economic dependence, social stigma, lack of awareness, family pressure, and reluctance to report abuse that may limit the effective utilization of legal remedies. Institutional challenges, including delays in judicial proceedings, inadequate support services, limited resources, and gaps in coordination among relevant agencies, are also considered. At the same time, increased legal awareness, women's education, digital access to information, legal aid services, counselling facilities, and stronger community-based support systems offer significant opportunities for improving implementation. The study argues that the effectiveness of domestic violence legislation depends not only on the existence of statutory provisions but also on their timely, accessible, and sensitive enforcement. Strengthening institutional capacity, improving victim-centred support mechanisms, enhancing awareness of legal rights, and promoting gender-sensitive approaches can contribute to more effective protection. The study provides a critical framework for understanding the challenges and opportunities associated with combating domestic violence in Haryana.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Haryana, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, Women's Rights, Legal Protection, Access to Justice, Gender Justice, Victim Support, Legal Awareness.

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