

**A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN  
IN KERALA**

**Executive Summary**

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# **1. Title of Study: Situational Analysis of Domestic Violence Against Women in Kerala**

Over the last two decades, domestic violence has emerged as one of the most serious problem faced by women. They are experiencing physical and psychological violence not only from their in-laws but also often from their intimate partner. The study titled “Domestic Violence Against Women” was undertaken to gauge the extent of violence experienced by women at their marital home along with the Characteristics of the affected parties, Major causes leading to domestic violence and its Consequences on the family and the Society. The study also looks into the existing institutional and non-institutional arrangements for addressing domestic violence and its effectiveness in dealing the cases.

## **2. Objectives of the Study**

1. To study the socio-economic profile of women under study.
2. To find out the different types of Domestic Violence prevalent in the state
3. To analyze the existing types of violence in terms of:
  - Characteristics of the affected parties viz. Husband and in-laws
  - Nature of violence
  - Causative factors for violence
4. To find out the impact of violence on women in terms of personal, familial, social and cultural levels
5. To study the services which address domestic violence in terms of availability, and effectiveness and to suggest measures for improving them.
6. To suggest suitable measures for reducing the occurrence and prevalence of domestic violence.

### **3. Methodology**

#### *Universe and Geographical Area*

All women who are affected by Domestic Violence in the fourteen districts of the state of Kerala formed the universe and geographical area of the study.

#### *Sampling*

As a preliminary step an enlistment survey of the recorded cases were conducted to identify the various typologies of domestic violence. Women Cells, family courts, police stations, Counselling centers, NGO's working for women, Social workers, Women activists and members of the general public were contacted for this purpose.

Based on the enlistment survey 100 victimized women from each district were selected, considering the seriousness of the problem and interviewed for collecting the information. In addition, discussions with key persons numbering 10 each were also undertaken to draw more information regarding the subject. The key personnel were drawn from the following categories viz. Teachers (2), Elderly persons (2), religious persons (2), SHG representatives (2) and Representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions (2).

In toto, 1540 respondents (1400 respondents + 140 key persons) came under the purview of the study.

#### *Tools of Data Collection*

Interview schedules and guides were used to elicit data from the respondents. Discussions with the respondents were also made use of to draw maximum information about the scenario of violence.

## 4. FINDINGS

The findings derived from the data gathered from the women subjected to domestic violence in the 14 districts of Kerala are scripted below under the heads viz.: socio economic profile of the victims, characteristics of the affected parties causes for domestic violence, manifestation and frequency of Violence, consequences of victimization and organizations addressing domestic violence and their effectiveness resolving the cases.

### **Socio-Economic Profile**

#### ***Social Factors***

##### *Age*

- Almost 80% of the victims of Domestic Violence were in the age group between 20-40 yrs.
- Of these, 43.3% were between 31-40 yrs and 36.7% between 20-30 yrs.
- Among the rest, 14.9% were in the age category of 41-50 and the remaining above 50yrs.
- Data showed that Domestic Violence is more against women who are adults or middle aged.

##### *Education*

- 68% of the respondents had only secondary/higher secondary school education.
- The illiterates constituted 4.9% of the women under Domestic Violence.
- Graduates and post-graduates/professionals constituted 8.9% and 3.1%.

##### *Religion*

- Among the respondents 49.2% were Hindus and Christians with 34%
- The Muslims formed 16.8% of the total respondents.

## Community

- Majority of the victims (52%) were from the Other Eligible Caste Category (OEC).
- Other Backward Class (OBC) figured second with 32.6%
- Among the rest, 9.7% and 3.7% belonged to SC and ST categories.

## *Type of Family*

- 63.8% of the respondents were from nuclear families.
- The rest, 36.2% from joint families. (Here joint family refers to parents+ children+ either of the parents or married /unmarried brothers/sisters)

## ***Economic Factors***

### *Occupation*

- 78.1% of the victims were unemployed.
- Among the rest, 12.1% were daily wage labourers and 4.6% were employed in private firms.

### *Source of Income*

- Salary/wages was the major source of income for 71.1% of the families.
- Among the rest, 10.2% & 6.9% of the families depended on Agriculture and Business respectively.

### *Housing*

#### Typology

- Most (85.2%) of the victims lived in individual houses.
- The rest, lived either in row houses (9.1%), or in slums (3.7%), or in flats (2%)

#### Tenure Status

- 92% of the victims lived in own houses while the rest 8% in rented accommodation.

### Housing Condition

- A good Majority (54.9%) of them lived in semi-pucca houses.
- Only 32.9% of the victims resided in pucca houses.
- 12.2% were living in kutchha houses.

### Area

- The house area of 40% of the victims was between 301-750 sq.feet.
- The rest had a house with above 750 sq.feet.

### Assets

- Most of the households had land though small in size.
- More than 70% of them had owned a TV.
- Refrigerators and ornaments were owned only by 30.9% & 40.1% of the victim's families.

### Savings

- Majority of the respondents (67.1%) did not have any savings
- Most of those who had savings deposited in LIC, Chit funds, Bank, Post Office.

### Loans

- 38.1% of the respondents had taken loans.
- Loans were taken for purposes like – house construction, Business, Agriculture, and Purchase of household assets.

### *Disparity in the Socio – economic status of the families of wives & Husbands*

- 34% of the respondents stated difference in Socio – economic status between the two families.

## **Characteristics of Affected Parties**

### *Person controlling family affairs*

- In majority of the household (57.9%) it was the husband who controlled the family affairs.
- In-laws controlled the affairs in the case of 18% of the households.
- Husbands and Wives jointly managed the home affairs of 12.6% of the households.
- Only 11.5% of the cases did the wife alone manage the family matters.

### *Characteristics of Husbands*

- 75.4% of the husbands were alcoholic
- 15.2% mentioned that their husbands were drug addicts.
- The husbands of 31.3% of the victims indulged in gambling.
- According to 14.9% of the victims their husbands were involved in criminal activities.
- Extra-marital affairs of the husbands were reported by 24.1% of the victims.

### *Characteristics of In-laws*

- 24.9% of the victims reported that their In-laws did not join for meals and prayers.
- Physical attacks by in-laws were mentioned by 13.6% of the victims.
- 30% of the respondents were psychologically hurt by their in-laws.
- According to 27.2% of the victims, their in-laws instigated the husbands to harass them.

## **Causes of Domestic Violence**

To have an in-depth understanding of the causes that lead to domestic violence, four Major causes had been considered.

### *First Cause (Most Common)*

- Almost half of the victims (48.7%) stated the Alcoholic Nature of the husband as the first cause for Domestic Violence.
- Extra-marital Affairs & dowry was reported by 12.1%, 10.2% respectively.
- Suspicion as the first cause was mentioned by 8.1%.
- 8.4% mentioned causes such as sterility of either of the spouse, employment of wife, mental disorders, job dissatisfaction of the husband, physical non-attractiveness and illness as the prime cause for domestic violence.

### *District level analysis of first cause,*

- More than 85% of the victims in Kollam opined Alcoholism as the major cause.
- Kollam district was followed by Wynad and Kottayam districts with 69% and 68% of the victims.
- Among extra-marital affairs, the districts of Trivandrum and Kannur outnumbered the others with 26% and 22% each.
- Alappuzha and Malappuram districts recorded a higher number of domestic violence due to dowry problem.

### *Second Cause*

- Probe into the second important cause that lead to Domestic Violence showed that financial constraints topped the list of causes with 27%, followed by Alcoholic nature of the husband with 17.5%.

- Suspicion and dowry were the second major causes according to 11.2% and 8.6% of the respondents.
- 6.1% each stated difference in the social status of the partners' families and extra marital affairs of the husbands as the reasons

#### *District level analysis of second cause*

- Kottayam district had comparatively higher number of victims (48%) who mentioned financial constraint as the leading cause of domestic violence.
- Kasargode and Kozhikode followed the above with 37% and 33% respectively.
- Among the Alcoholics, Malappuram and Ernakulam districts figured prominently with 29% and 28% of the victims.

#### *Third Cause*

- The third major cause according to 28.8% with a distribution of 14.4% each was financial constraints and 'not attending to household chores'.
- Suspicion and not looking after the children were reported by 13.1% and 9% of the victims.
- Lack of property, Dowry and property dispute were stated by 6.8%, 5.9% and 5.3% of the victims respectively.
- 5.8% and 4.9% each mentioned Alcoholic nature and difference in the social status of partners as the reason for domestic violence.

#### *District level analysis of Third cause*

- Kasargode Thrissur and Palakkad districts had a higher number of victims mentioning financial constraints as the third leading cause for domestic violence with 29% and 24% each respectively.

#### *Fourth Cause*

- Not attending to household chores and lack of property were the 4<sup>th</sup> leading cause cited by 13.6% and 13.1% of the victims.
- 12.4%, 10.9% and 9.5% of the victims each reported ‘not looking after the Children, financial constraints, and suspicion respectively as the causes for domestic violence.
- Sexual maladjustment was reported by 7.9% of the victims.

#### *District wise analysis of Fourth Cause*

- 27%, 19% and 18% of the victims from Pathanamthitta, Palakkad, and Kannur mentioned ‘not attending to household chores’ as the fourth reason for domestic violence

#### *Inflictor of violence*

- In most cases (78.5%) it was the husbands who inflicted domestic violence
- The husbands and In - laws jointly inflicted violence according to 11.7% of the victims

### **Nature/Manifestation & Frequency of Domestic Violence**

The nature/manifestation and frequency of domestic violence was assessed at 2 levels 1) Physical and 2) psychological level. Furthermore, in each level three important modes viz. first mode (most common), second mode and third mode, of manifestation and their frequencies were assessed to have an in-depth understanding on the phenomenon of domestic violence.

#### ***Physical Violence***

- A total of 81.6% of the victims had to suffer physical violence.
- The remaining however did not face the physical brutality

### *First Mode*

#### *Nature/Manifestation*

- Beating figured prominently with 27% as the most common mode of physical attack
- 21% each however stated hitting and kicking as the frequent manifestation of domestic violence.
- Among the others 11% and 1.6% mentioned slapping and forced sex as the most frequent mode of violence they had to suffer.

#### *District level analysis of Nature/Manifestation*

- Kollam had a higher number of cases (58%) with beating as the manifestation of first mode
- Thrissur and Wynad districts followed the above with 37% each.
- Regarding kicking the districts of Wynad, Palakkad and Alappuzha figured prominently with 48%, 37% and 34% respectively.
- In hitting Pathanamthitta and Kollam districts had a greater number with 46% and 31% each

#### *First Mode- Frequency*

- As regards the frequency, 27% of the victims were physically attacked very frequently.
- 17.1% had to bear the physical brutality daily.
- Beating was experienced daily, frequently and occasionally by 14.2%, 42.7% and 31.7% of the victims respectively.
- Hitting, kicking, slapping, Threatening using weapon and forced sex was experienced on a daily basis by 40.9%, 25.1%, 7.7%, 1.3% and 2.6% respectively.
- 26.4% however, mentioned that they were attacked only occasionally

- Comparatively a higher number of Women in Wynad district (20%) had to bear the physical violence on a *daily* basis
- Frequent sufferers of physical violence was c higher in the Kottayam district with 12.1%.
- The districts of Trivandrum and Wyand followed it with 9.9% and 9.7% respectively
- Beating as the first mode was experienced *daily, frequently* and *occasionally* by 14.2%, 42.7% and 31.7% of the victims respectively

### *Second Mode*

#### *Nature/ Manifestation*

- Kicking emerged as the second manifestation form of violence according to 25.4% of the victims.
- 24.7%, 13.8% and 12.8% recorded beating, slapping and hitting as the second common mode of inflicting physical violence respectively.

#### *District level analysis of Nature/Manifestation*

- Kicking was comparatively higher in the district of Wynad with 45%.
- Pathanamthitta and Palakkad districts followed the above with 38% and 36% each.
- Beating was reported greatly in Kollam and Kottayam with a distribution of 47% and 41% each.
- Hitting and slapping was higher in the districts of Thrissur and Ernakulam with 37% and 38%.

#### *Second Mode - Frequency*

- Occasional and frequent attacks in this regard were recorded by 28.8% and 24.3% of the victims.

- Kicking as the second mode was experienced daily, frequently and occasionally by 4.1%, 32.% and 31.4% of the victims respectively
- 4.9% had to bear the physical attack daily.
- Infliction of physical violence on a *daily basis* was comparatively higher in the districts of Idukki, and Alppuzha with 23.1%, each
- Pathanamthitta and Kollam districts had a higher number of frequent sufferers with 12.3% and 11.4% each
- Occasional sufferers were greater in Kottayam and Wyand with 15.2% and 12.7% each
- *Kicking* as the second mode was experienced *daily, frequently and occasionally* by 4.1%, 32.% and 31.4% of the victims respectively

### *Third Mode*

#### *Nature/Manifestation*

- Beating again emerged as the third mode of attack faced by 29.9% of the respondents.
- Kicking and slapping were the manifestations that followed beating with 22.8% and 19.2% respectively.
- Among the rest, 4.8%, 2.9% and 1.8% each had to suffer hitting, threatening and forced sex respectively.

#### *District level analysis of Nature/ Manifestation*

- Beating as manifestation was greater in the districts of Kottayam and Kollam and Kozhikkode districts with 48%, 46% and 43%.
- Pathanamthitta and Kasargode districts figured prominently with 40% and 44% regarding Kicking and Slapping as manifestation of domestic violence.

### *Third Mode - Frequency*

- 32.1% and 29.4% of the victims experienced Rare and Occasional attacks.
- Beating was reported as the third mode of physical attack experienced by many not only daily (37.8%) but also frequently (41.9%), occasionally (31.6%) and rarely (36.4%)
- Slapping and kicking was frequent in case of 27.1% and 24.9% each.
- 16.5% and 3.4% had to suffer the attacks frequently and daily too.
- physical violence as the third mode was experienced on a *daily* basis by 17.8% of the victims each in Palakkad and Kottayam districts
- Those who suffered the violence frequently were comparatively higher in the districts of Thrissur, Palakkad and Iddukki districts with 14.8%, 11.8% and 10.% each
- Wynad and Kottayam had higher number of occasional sufferers with 14.1% and 13.9% respectively
- beating as the third mode of physical attack experienced daily by 37.8%, frequently by 41.9%, and occasionally by 31.6%.

### *Psychological Violence*

- Excluding a minor percentage of 2.9%, all others had suffered mental strain of one form or the other.

### *First Mode (most common)*

#### *Nature/Manifestation*

- 38.6% of women stated demeaning as the most common mode of hurting them.
- 28% and 15.9% mentioned threatening and abandoning as the commonest mode of psychological torture.

### *District level analysis of Nature/ Manifestation*

- *Demeaning* as a manifestation of Psychological violence was occurring greatly (more than 50% each) in the districts of Kannur Palakkad, Wynad, Alappuzha, and Trivandrum
- *Threatening* was comparatively higher in the districts of Kozhikkode and Pathanamthitta with 48% and 47% respectively
- *Abandoning* was common in Kollam and Thrissur districts with 46% and 38% respectively.
- *Infidelity* was found to be 35% and 34% in Kasargodu and Ernakulam districts.

#### *First Mode - Frequency*

- 40.4% and 20.1% had to suffer the psychological strain on a frequent and occasional basis.
- Another one fourth of the victims (25.7%) stated daily infliction of psychological strain on them.
- Demeaning, was experienced daily and frequently by 26.5% and 47% of the victims respectively
- Threatening, abandoning, and faithlessness was suffered on a daily basis by 16.3%, 20.2% and 52.% respectively.
- 17.5% of the respondents of the Wyanad district cited the existence of psychological violence on a daily basis
- Districts of Ernakulam and Idukki followed with 15.3% and 11.1% respectively
- Kottaym that figured prominently with 11.7% of the frequent sufferers seconded by Trivandrum with 11.5%.
- Pathanamthitta district had the highest number of Occasional sufferers(16.9%)

## *Second Mode*

### *Nature/Manifestation*

- Threatening dominated the second form psychological strain with 35.8% mentioning the same.
- Abandoning and demeaning followed the above with 26.6% and 21.1% respectively.
- Infidelity was reported by 13% of the victims.

### *District level Analysis of Nature/ Manifestation*

- 50% of those who mentioned *threatening* as psychological violence were from the district of Kottayam
- Kannur district followed the above with 49%.
- 44% each was reported from Pathanamthitta and Wynad districts
- *Abandoning* figured prominently in the districts of Alappuzha and Palakkad with 41% each

### *Second Mode - Frequency*

- Occasional and Frequent inflictors of psychological violence in the form of Demeaning, threatening, abandoning and infidelity constituted more than seventy percent of the victims.
- 7.6% experienced the pain of psychological strain on a daily basis.
- Malappuram and Iddukki districts had a higher number of perpetrators of psychological violence on daily basis with 22%each
- Frequent sufferers were comparatively higher in the districts of Kasargode and Kannur with 47% and 46% each
- *Occasional* experiences were reported comparatively higher from Kottayam and Trivandrum with 65% and 54%

### *Third Mode*

#### *Nature/Manifestation*

- Abandoning topped the list of third mode of psychological strain with 40.3%.
- Threatening and infidelity to wives was mentioned by 28.3% and 21.5% of the women under stress due to domestic violence.

#### *District level Analysis of Nature/ Manifestation*

- *Abandoning* was prominent in the district of Kottayam with 11.7%.
- Wynad and Kozhikkode followed it with 10.6% and 10.1%
- *Unfaithfulness* was reported comparatively higher in the districts of Thrissur, Alappuzha and Kannur with 15.6%, 14.6% and 11% each

#### *Third Mode - Frequency*

- Majority of the victims (55.9%) had to bear the pain of psychological strain either frequently or occasionally.
- 5.1% suffered on a daily basis and others (36.2%) only rarely.
- 20% and 14% of the victims in Malappuram district had to bear the Psychological violence on a daily and frequent basis
- Kannur and Pathanamthitta districts had 13% & 12% of the women who experienced the violence on a daily basis
- Threatening as the third mode of psychological violence was experienced daily by 38%

### **Consequences of Victimization**

The consequences of victimization were considered under 4 heads viz., personal, familial, cultural and societal level.

## ***Consequences at the personal level***

### *Physical injury*

- 74.6% of the respondents were physically injured by the attacks on them
- Out of the above, 26.7% & 31.7% respectively were very seriously injured

### *Denial of basic needs*

- More than three fourth (76.5%) of the respondents were deprived of basic needs like food, shelter, cloths etc.
- 46.8% of the victims were denied of one meal
- Two meals were denied for 16.1% victims
- 7.6%, 3.2% & 2.8% of the respondents were denied of basic needs for 1 day, 2 day & more than 2 days respectively.

### *Mental depression*

- Almost cent percent (98%) of the victims had experienced mental depression due to domestic violence.
- In 23% of the cases, the mental depression caused had prompted them to commit suicide.
- In the case of 22% they lost faith in friends & relatives.

### *Reaction to domestic violence*

- 40.9% reacted to domestic violence by going to their parent's home.
- 35.1% reacted by using abusive language to the perpetrator.

### *Change in Physical appearance*

- 55.9% of the respondents stated a change in their appearance in terms of shabby dressing, lack/ excess use of the cosmetics etc.
- Of the above shabby dressing was reported by 27.7% of the respondents

### *Attitude of suicide*

- 27.4% of the respondents occasionally thought of ending their lives
- 35% of the victims always thought of ending their lives.

### *Consequences at the Family Level*

- Relationship of 43.6% of the victims had been very badly affected due to domestic violence.
- 36.9% opined that the relationship had been moderately affected.
- 27.3% of the respondents were trying to get a divorce.
- 24% had lost interest in leading a life with their husbands.

### *Procurement of Basic Needs*

- The ability to procure basic needs had been very badly affected for 4.6%.
- For 47.6%, the procurement of basic needs had been moderately affected.
- 27.5% never consumed food when upset due to violence.
- 20.2% said that they faced financial constraints for procuring basic needs.

### *Interaction between Family Members*

- Interaction between family members was *very badly* affected due to domestic violence in 26.4% of the households.
- 29.6% mentioned that the interaction was *moderately* affected.
- 25.4% of the victims were afraid to talk to their family members leading to lesser interaction among the family members. (Husband's home)
- 14.7% reported absence of interaction between family members.
- The family members of 9.3% of the victims were suspicious of them resulting in low level of interaction.

### *Decision Making*

- For 10% of the victims, their ability to make decisions had been *very badly* affected due to *domestic violence*.
- Ability to take decision was *moderately* affected in 72.6% of the cases.

### ***Consequences at the Cultural Level***

- Value system of 61.4% of the victims had affected due to domestic violence.
- Out of the above, for 9.7%, it had affected greatly while for others (51.7%) the impact was on a moderate scale.
- 21.7% stated that they had lost faith in family life.
- Domestic violence made 17.7% of the respondents to turn to God greatly.
- 15.4% had lost faith in relationships.

### ***Attitude to Family life***

- The attitude towards family life had been negatively affected for 45.5% of the victims to a great extent and partially for 31.1%.
- 30% of the victims were not interested in staying with their in-laws.
- 24.8% of them had been abandoned by their husbands.
- Loss of interest in family life was stated by 21.9% of the victims.

### ***Belief in God***

- 39.6% of the victims reported an increase in their belief in god.
- Decrease in the same had been stated by 25.1% of them.

### ***Visits to Temples/Churches***

- 43.4% of the victims visited places of worship frequently while 42% visited only occasionally.

### ***Violation of Family Customs***

- Family customs of 63.1% of the households were violated as a result of domestic violence.
- Family customs were *frequently and occasionally* violated by 28.3% & 26.9% of the households.

## ***Consequences at the Societal Level***

### *Relationship with Neighbours*

- 34.2% of the victims stated that their relationship with the neighbours had been affected due to domestic violence.
- Of this, the relationship had been *moderately and very badly affected* for 25.1% & 9.1% respectively.
- Absence/lack of contact with their neighbours was reported by 16.6% of the victims.
- Neighbours of 4.6% blamed the victims themselves for their present state.
- For 4.5%, the relationship with the neighbours had been adversely affected by the harsh behaviour of their husbands.

### *Relationship with Friends*

- For 25.7% of the victims, their relationship with friends had been *moderately affected*.
- The relationship of 4.7% of the victims had been *very badly affected*
- 24.3% of the victims stated the Absence of contact with their friends as the reason for the above variations in relationship with friends.
- 3% cited harsh behaviour of their husbands towards their friends as the reason that lead to adverse relationship with their friends.

### *Relationship with other Residents in the area*

- According to 6.6% of the victims their relationship with other residents of the area was affected very badly.
- Relationship with other residents of the area was affected *moderately and very badly* for 24.3% & 6.6% respectively.
- Lack of contact with other residents of the area was a leading cause for the strained relationship with the residents for 13%.
- For 7.8%, the nearby residents did not care about their plight.

### *Behaviour of General Society towards Victims*

- 4.8% of the women who suffered domestic violence mentioned about the negative attitude of the society, which affected their life very badly.
- For 18.5% the behaviour had been *moderately* affected.
- According to 8.6% the society did not care about their plight.
- While 6.6% said that the society viewed them with sympathy, 5.1% mentioned that the society looked at them with suspicion.
- 55.9% of the victims had stayed away from their husbands due to victimization
- Out of the above, 43.2% of the victims had stayed at their parent's home after leaving their husbands.
- 6.5% stayed at their relatives home, 2.8% at short stay homes & 2.1% with their friends.

### *Duration of Staying Away*

- Of those who stayed away from their husbands, the duration was more than 6 months & 2-6 months for 11.4% & 9.4% respectively.
- 10.6% had stayed away for 2 weeks, 10% for one week & 6.9% for two days.

### *Dealing with Domestic Violence*

- 90.7% of the victims cited that efforts to solve the problems of domestic violence were taken within the family itself.
- Of this, 49.1% of the cases, the victim herself took the initiative to solve the problem. The relatives tried to solve the problems for 29.3% of the victims. The husbands had tried to solve the problems in 6.6% cases.

## **Availability and Effectiveness of Organizations Addressing Violence**

### *Person/Agency approached*

- 36.7% of the victims usually approached their relatives for help.
- Among the others, 15% and 13.5% approached Family Counseling Centres and police stations respectively.

### *Effectiveness of the Assistance*

- In majority of the cases (52.4%), the assistance provided by the organizations or individuals did not prove effective.
- For 30.2% cases, the service was effective in solving the problem
- The rest had not approached any person/agency for assistance.

### *Awareness about Organizations addressing Domestic Violence*

- Majority of the victims (53.1%) were unaware of organizations/individuals addressing domestic violence.
- Among the rest, 26.6% and 4.5% each were aware of counselling centers and organizations that provide legal help.
- 9.8% of the victims were aware of the existence of rehabilitation centres.

### *Effectiveness of the Services of the Organizations*

- Only 28.2% were satisfied with the effectiveness of the services provided by the individuals/organizations addressing domestic violence.
- 16.7% had no faith in their services.
- 10% cited the lack of commitment and time on the part of the organization members to address the problem of domestic violence..

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

With the prevailing status of the domestic violence against women in Kerala at the backdrop, the following recommendations have been drawn, based on the interaction with the victims and key personnel through interviews and discussions. The recommendations highlighting the roles/services of various sections for reducing the occurrence and prevalence of domestic violence are scripted below under the major heads: Judiciary, Government, Police, NGOs, Health care support, Counselling, networking, Awareness Generation & Sensitization, and media.

### *Judiciary*

- ‘Domestic Violence Bill’ should be passed by the Parliament at the earliest.
- The proposed ‘Domestic Violence Bill’ should also include gender sensitive interpretation and enforcement
- Strict enforcement of the laws regarding Drug addiction and Dowry should be made for reducing the occurrence of domestic violence.
- Measures should be taken to deal severely with the Alcoholics who perpetuate domestic violence.
- Procedural reforms must be made by the judiciary to avoid harassment of women and children by the enforcement institutions.
- Special courts must be set up for cases of violence against women and children with up-to-date technological support like video graphing of statements of rape and child abuse victims.
- To handle domestic violence cases the services of women magistrates should be made use of.

- Domestic Violence cases should be taken up promptly and completed without delay avoiding unnecessary imposition of strains and stress on them.
- Mobile courts should be introduced as an effective strategy for reaching out to more and more victims in the rural/ urban areas.
- Women's commission should be given more penal powers beyond referral powers. It should be expanded with more members and provided with adequate resources and personnel.
- There should be co-ordinated efforts of police, administration and judiciary for enforcing measures against atrocities on women.
- A congenial atmosphere should be provided in the family courts for the women to present their cases and arrive at conciliation.

### ***Government***

- Efforts should be made for the proper and effective enforcement of existing laws related to women.
- Government Agencies/department should made use of the assistance of NGOs to create awareness on Domestic violence among the public.
- All police stations should be equipped with special legal aid cells to provide assistance to victims of domestic violence.

### ***Police***

- Police need to be sensitized to treat domestic violence cases as seriously as any other crime.
- Special training to handle domestic violence cases should be imparted to police force.
- They should be provided with information regarding support network of judiciary, Govt. agencies/departments, and NGOs handling domestic violence, to make their work more effective and efficient.

- Gender training should be made mandatory in the trainings of the police officers.
- There should be a separate wing of police dealing with women's issues, attached to all police stations and should be excluded from any other duty.
- Women police officials should handle all crimes against women.
- Many violence against women especially dowry deaths are suppressed and registered as unnatural death cases. Hence in such cases, even before the launch of investigations, police should associate with the NGOs.

### *NGOs*

- NGOs working in different fields should be made proactive to the issues of Domestic Violence so that prompt assistance could be rendered to the victims.
- Non- Governmental agencies and private institutions need to be a part of any initiative that seeks to address the issue of Domestic Violence.
- Information regarding all agencies dealing with domestic violence should be made available to all health care institutions for their reference resulting in the provision of services as and when required.
- Facilities like telephone hotlines, legal assistance, counseling services, psychological care, income generation programme for the survivors, long term rehabilitation and child care services are needed to effectively address the concerns of the survivors of the domestic violence.
- Facilities like short stay homes for women in distress should be provided and emphasis should be laid on vocational training to rehabilitate them.
- Children of affected women should be given special care and attention to enhance their education and social functioning.
- People's Planning Programmes through Self Help Groups and Neighbourhood Groups should be encouraged to facilitate mutual sharing between women.

- Measures should be adopted for empowering women to make use of the various services addressed to domestic violence.

### ***Health Care Support***

- Authorities should take steps to recognize Domestic Violence as a public health issue.
- A crisis support cell must be established in all major Government and Private hospitals with a trained medical social worker to provide appropriate services and referral.
- Existing mental health facilities and programmes including mental health programme should be reoriented to provide appropriate care for the survivors of domestic violence.
- Special Care should be provided to women seeking medical help following an episode of violence.
- The health care providers should be gentle in examining the victims of violence.
- Training programmes are to be organized for health professionals in order to develop their skills to provide basic support for abused women including formal counseling and provide them with information on sources for help and suitable referral to other local services
- Gender based violence; its impact on health and care of abused women should be integrated into the medical and nursing curriculum.
- Documentation on the prevalence and the health consequences of domestic violence should be undertaken by the concerned Government departments, Health care institutions, NGOs, Counselling Centres.
- A nodal agency should be set up for the annual consolidation of the documented work and publish the same for wider publicity among the masses.

### ***Counselling***

- More counseling centers with professionally qualified counselors should be started at the rural/urban areas focusing more on domestic violence victims.
- Vulnerable communities should be identified and services like counselling, legal aid etc. should be made easily accessible and free of charge.
- Pre-marital and post marital counselling should be made compulsory resulting in the minimization of the breaking down of families.
- Mobile counselling should be introduced as an effective strategy to provide consolation to the victims of domestic violence.

### ***Networking***

- A co-ordination committee of officials from various govt. departments/agencies viz., health, police, judiciary, social welfare etc. should be established to deal with domestic violence cases.
- District level domestic violence review committees should be set up to review the various measures taken by the govt. departments and agencies.
- The role of each govt. department/agency in addressing domestic violence cases should be spelt out clearly.
- Efforts should be made to improve the services of the various departments/agencies facilitating better access and availability of services by the victims/survivors.

### ***Awareness Generation and Sensitization***

- Gender sensitization and awareness generation programmes on domestic violence should become a part of the school and university curriculum. This would help to bring about a change in the mindset of the coming generations.

- Stigma attached to the victims should be removed by conscientising the community through various outreach programmes viz., street plays, padayatras, rallies etc.
- List of NGOs and other governmental organisations dealing with women's issues should be made known to the public.
- Sensitization programmes should be organized for the policy makers judiciary and enforcement: personnel in order to make them responsive in their handling cases of violence against women.
- Frequent legal awareness camps for women empowerment and spreading social awareness about women's status & rights should be organized in rural /urban areas.
- Massive campaigns against Alcoholism, Dowry, drug addiction etc. should be organized to minimize the occurrence of domestic violence.

### ***Media***

- A general outline on the depiction of Gender based violence in the media should be formulated and implemented.
- Media should be given a appropriate training in highlighting and presenting the impact of domestic violence on the victims and their families.
- Due recognition should be given to media by instituting incentives /awards to encourage their contributions in disseminating valid information and generating public empathy.

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