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A Study on Intersectional Feminism Vis-À-Vis Domestic Violence against Dalit women in India

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Women worldwide irrespective of the country that they belong to are victims of different forms of violence, be it in public places, or even within their own homes. However, not all women face the same kind of abuse as various factors determine the extent and the kind of abuse that a woman is subjected to. The condition of Dalit women in India is horrifying as they become victims of triple subjugation because of their sex, caste, and class. The violence arising due to the intersection of different political and social factors is often not considered while making laws. Violence, both explicit and implicit, not only is detrimental to the physical health of the person but also hampers the mental health, dignity, and self-esteem of the victims. There are various laws and statutes that have been enacted to protect women, especially Dalit women from any harassment or abuse in public places. However, there is no special law that protects Dalit women from getting abused within their own homes by their family members. The current legal provisions are inadequate to protect Dalit women from domestic abuse and the majority of the cases remain unreported because of the socio-economic conditions of the victims, which further results in the offenders escaping punishment, while the victims are denied justice. Dalit women in an inter-caste marriage would suffer violence due to the ill-treatment or harassment due to the caste and the sex of the Dalit woman. Dalit women are suppressed and oppressed from a very young age, which results in illiteracy and unemployment, which further results in women from the Dalit community becoming very vulnerable and dependent both emotionally and financially on male family members, which makes them easy targets for violence. It also prevents them from leaving the abusive relationship as they do not have the necessary education or work experience to take care of themselves and their children if there are any. Through this study, the author aims to study the existing legal position of Dalit women in India who are subjected to domestic violence.

Keywords: *domestic violence, dalit women, violence against women, intersection.*

INTRODUCTION

Violence, no matter how strange a phenomenon it is, has been prevalent in society since its inception. The idea of violence is mostly to assert your superiority over people or communities which in your opinion are inferior to you. Despite the fact that we as a society have evolved to understand that violence for any purpose is unacceptable, we still see instances where violence is used to suppress others, everywhere around the world. Violent actions depend on the changing norms, values, and cultures of the society, and therefore the severity and the forms of abuse too differ from place to place. Violence is defined as behavior that can be either actual or a threat that results in the destruction and damage of property and also may result in causing pain to the victim. It has been observed that violence results from power imbalance where the superior or the dominant party inflicts pain on the inferior party. Since gender-based violence also stems from the idea of power imbalance in the patriarchal society, many crimes like rape, murder, domestic violence, female foeticide, etc., take place against women. Women don't need to step outside their homes to suffer abuse and discrimination, as gender-based discrimination and violence start from the domestic environment itself.

Violence in a domestic relationship affects the dignity and self-esteem of women and the main cause of this is the financial and emotional dependency on the male members which makes them very vulnerable. Therefore, even though men can be victims of domestic violence, there are more cases where the women are victims as not very often does one see men being economically dependent on women, especially in the rural parts of India. Women have been victims of abuse because they have been socially and economically handicapped for decades, and this vulnerable position of women is due to the absence of rights and the non-implementation of the laws made for women. This results in women being deprived of their basic human right to live with dignity and to feel safe within their homes. The discrimination based on the sex of the person starts from childhood when male children are allowed to be educated and to work, but girl children are denied the right to be educated and are expected to

work in the home by doing household chores. International treaties and conventions like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women specifically point out the various kinds of gender-based abuse, violence, and discrimination and how it is the responsibility of the State to prevent such abuse as these are a violation of basic human rights.

INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH

Intersectionality is a theoretical framework for understanding how aspects of one's social and political identities, for example, the religion, caste, and sex of a person might combine to create unique modes of discrimination. Kimberle Crenshaw coined the term intersection in her essay where she pointed out the difficulties faced by black women as opposed to white women, especially during the slavery period. She explains intersectional feminism by explaining how black women are victims of crimes not merely because they're women but also because they are from another marginalized group, therefore the race and sex of the person make them more vulnerable to crimes.

Women are often viewed as mere objects of lust and therefore are seen as inferior objects. This becomes worse when the woman belongs to another oppressed and marginalised group. Cases of domestic violence are common among women who belong to the weaker sections of society, and these crimes are done either by people who belong to the same caste or relatively better-off sections of society. Dalit women may be more prone to being subjected to abuse and violence as compared to women who belong to the upper class and the violence may not solely be because of the sex of the women but because they become the victims of triple subjugation due to their caste, class, and gender. Women are subjected to various kinds of abuse and discrimination like rape, murder, female infanticide, honor killings, dowry-related harassment, etc., which violate their right to live a life with dignity. These different forms of abuse of women mostly happen outside their homes which gets a lot of attention and support from society and the State. However, there are different forms of abuse inflicted on women within their homes that are somehow invisible to the eyes of society and because the abuse takes place within the domestic relationship, it is believed that it is a private matter and does not require interference by the society or the State.

While feminism stands for equality for all genders, intersectional feminism identifies how different aspects of one's social and political life affect how they are being treated in society. This results in a new kind of oppression – one that is not just based on the fact the person who is being discriminated against is a woman, but in addition to the sex of the person, the woman belongs to a certain group or class in the society. A woman who is from the Dalit community will suffer more as she was already being treated as someone who is inferior for being a woman, but now she suffers more for being a woman who is from the Dalit community. Every woman in the country is a combination of various factors and no two women will suffer the same kind of abuse and discrimination. Since the term 'violence' has a very wide connotation to it as the understanding of violence may differ from culture to culture, there is a need to define the term. The basic understanding of the term 'violence' is restricted to physical acts, but the broader understanding of what violence is can include the threat or actual abuse which can be in the form of mental, emotional, sexual, verbal, or even economic abuse. From a human rights perspective, violence would include all forms of abuse, physical and non-physical. However, the criminal justice system looks at violence as the intention coupled with the act to cause someone physical injury.

The World Health Organization defines violence as physical force or power which is used intentionally and results in the injury of the victim. The injury need not necessarily be physical and can be mental or sexual too. However, the concept of violence is so vast and abstract, that a concrete exhaustive definition can't be given. Determining whether an act is violent or not would depend on a case-to-case basis, and the ambit of violence would keep changing with the changing norms of society. As stated by the Supreme Court in *Gurbux Singh v Harminder Kaur*¹ that "*Human mind is extremely complex and human behavior is equally complicated. Similarly, human ingenuity has no bound; therefore, to assimilate the entire human behavior in one definition is almost impossible*". Therefore it can be understood that the meaning of violence is very dynamic and changes according to different circumstances.

Women are considered to be an oppressed group because they undergo pain and suffering their entire life. It starts with childbirth, where the birth of a female child is still considered to

¹ *Gurbux Singh v Harminder Kaur* (2010) Civil Appeal No. 5010/2007

be a curse in major parts of India and it continues in their childhood when they are deprived of getting educated and are forced to do household chores. This harassment and discrimination continue when girls are often forced to get married while they're young to protect the chastity and reputation of the family and the community. Once she is married, she is subjected to domestic abuse which includes dowry-related harassment. In her old age, she is ostracized with no one to take care of her.

The power dynamics which result in the abuse of such power is the main reason why women are treated as subordinate and not given basic human rights. Most offenses against women are not committed because of any personal grievance against them but are committed with the mindset that women are weak and vulnerable and therefore deserve to be treated in a disrespectful or inhumane manner. Domestic violence is found in cultures where there exists a very dominant patriarchal structure. This patriarchal structure prevents women from already oppressed classes from having access to education or getting employed which further results in complete dependence on their male counterparts. This dependence on the male counterparts makes it very easy for the abuser to subject the women to domestic violence.

The issue of gender-related violence against women has garnered a lot of attention, especially from human rights advocates across the world. Women in India do not get easy access to education, or health care facilities, and the condition is worse in the rural parts of the country. The Domestic Violence laws in India are inadequate especially when it comes to protecting the interests of women who belong to other marginalized sections of society. The present research explores the lacuna in the existing legal system and how women who belong to oppressed classes can be empowered and Dalit women who are victims of domestic violence get easy access to justice.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women in 2009 mentioned that numerous Dalit women are victims of rape and are beaten by members of the higher caste on a regular basis. The above-mentioned statistics infer that women in the country are combinations of various factors and therefore are at a different intersection, because of which the extent of violence and discrimination is not equal among women as they are not a homogeneous group.

Therefore treating them the same and giving them the same equal protection will further violate their rights in society. The laws, which safeguard the rights of women in the country, use various schools of feminism. Feminism is not only for the rights of the privileged set of women in the country, but it has to be inclusive of the women who are discriminated against based on factors other than their sex.²

The current legal provisions under various statutes like The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, The Indian Penal Code 1860, and The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 exist in the country to safeguard the rights of women and prevent any form of domestic abuse is inadequate as it provides for protection that is common for all women as the gravity and frequency of violence that is directed towards Dalit women in domestic relationships has not been considered in the legal framework. Dalit women do not have access to basic education and employment opportunities, which in turn makes them emotionally and financially dependent on their male counterparts and hence are forced to live in the

Domestic violence means and includes any form of violence or abuse in a domestic relationship like marriage or cohabitation. The current existing legal provisions to protect women from domestic violence do not take into account the various social and political factors like religion, race, and caste which lead to unique modes of abuse and discrimination. The author focuses not only on Dalit women being domestically abused by upper-class members of the family (for example, an inter-caste marriage), but also on Dalit women who are facing domestic abuse from people within the Dalit community and are not able to leave the relationship despite it being abusive due to lack of education and employment opportunities, and also due to the lack of immediate relief provided to Dalit women in hospitals and police stations. In order to make better laws to protect the rights of Dalit women from domestic abuse, other disciplines and schools of thought like psychology and sociology must be studied.

Domestic violence should be understood as a wrong against humans, and should not be seen as a domestic affair where the State and society should not intervene. In the case of

² D Sujatha, 'Redefining Experiences of Dalit Women' (2014) 49 (47) Economic and Political Weekly <<https://www.epw.in/journal/2014/47/commentary/redefining-domestic-violence.html>> accessed 05 May 2022

*Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation v Nawab Khan Gulab Khan*³, the court held the right under Article 21⁴ which is the right to life essentially means the right to live a dignified life. A dignified life essential means a life devoid of any humiliating sexual acts and sexual and emotional abuse. Any act done by the husband that negatively affects the rights of the wife would come under the Domestic Violence Act if it does not fall under the purview of the Indian Penal Code.

Domestic violence cases have been increasing on a daily basis, especially with the COVID-19 pandemic, where people were forced to reside in their homes, which led to increasing conflicts. There have multiple discussions about domestic violence and the negative impact it has on the physical and mental health of the victims. However, there are not a lot of discussions regarding the domestic abuse that is faced by women who belong to marginalized communities, for example, Dalit women. We live in a patriarchal society where laws are made by men for the betterment of women, without looking at the grassroots problems or the ground realities. The patriarchal society also leads to viewing women as inferior and as merely objects of sexual desire. Therefore, women who already become an oppressed class also happen to be from another oppressed section of the society, which leads to double discrimination and oppression. There are more chances of abuse on women who belong to the Dalit community as opposed to upper-class women in India.

The police authorities who have been entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that the people, especially the ones who are vulnerable and belong to the weaker sections of society, are protected and are allowed to live a life of dignity. However, the police officials in India do not have the necessary training with respect to dealing with sensitive issues, such as domestic abuse. More often than not, police officers humiliate women when they come to register a complaint of domestic abuse, which scares and demotivates women from approaching the police authorities. This also results in domestic abuse instances not being recorded or reported.

³ *Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation v Nawab Khan Gulab Khan* (1996) 11 SCC 123

⁴ Constitution of India, 1950, art.21

TYPES OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

1. **Physical** - This is the most prominent form of violence against women. This includes any act that causes bodily pain or injury or has a detrimental impact on the health of the woman. Examples of physical abuse are slapping, kicking, pushing, etc.
2. **Verbal and Emotional** - Verbal abuse refers to the remarks or threats made by the perpetrator to the victim. This is often done to insult, ridicule, and degrade the victim's psychological health. Yelling, screaming, abusing, and insulting you in a public place would be examples of verbal and emotional abuse.
3. **Sexual** - Sexual abuse refers to any non-consensual sexual assault or acts done to the victim by the perpetrator. This also includes forcing the woman to undergo an abortion.
4. **Economic** - Economic abuse refers to the perpetrator depriving or threatening to deprive the victim and her children of having access to financial resources.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Various factors are at play when the issue of domestic violence is discussed. Violence is inflicted on others and there are multiple reasons for the same. By understanding the different theories pertaining to domestic abuse, policymakers will be in a better position to make laws in order to address the issue in an effective matter. Jan E. Stets and Shelly N. Osborn have classified theories into three categories:

1. **Individualistic** - Here the behavioral pattern and the characteristics of the perpetrator or the victim are analyzed, for example, the dominant or the submissive nature of the victim or the perpetrator.
2. **Interactional** - Here the focus is on the interaction between the perpetrator and the victim and the kinds of violence that are inflicted as a product of the relationship.
3. **Socio-cultural** - This helps to understand how societal and cultural values and beliefs propagate the idea of abuse.

Under these, various other theories can be looked at:

1. Theory of coercive control - This theory focuses on how the perpetrator has dominance in the relationship and using his coercive control which includes psychological abuse prevents the woman from reporting instances of domestic abuse. Here the perpetrator, without using physical power is successfully able to control the victim.
2. Control balance theory - This theory was given by Charles Tittle who is a criminologist and who says that in order for there to be a healthy relationship, there should be a balance in the control exercised by the parties in a relationship. An abusive relationship is one where the perpetrator has excess control and the victim has a deficit of control.
3. Identity theory - This theory explains how an individual starts to identify himself or herself to how society views them. Very often, men are taught to be strong and aggressive and this results in the man using aggression in the domestic relationship. Men are also taught to be assertive, and when in a relationship, their needs are not catered to, they resort to violence. Similarly, the victim too from a young age has been treated as an inferior which results in her identifying herself as an inferior in the domestic relationship.
4. Social learning theory - This theory focuses on the childhood experiences and the background of the perpetrator in order to understand why they resort to violence. This theory suggests that children who have either witnessed domestic abuse or have been victims of domestic abuse have a higher chance of subjecting their partners to domestic abuse. This is because of various reasons. They feel that the idea of men abusing the wife is a natural act and therefore see nothing wrong with it. This behavior of the perpetrator is influenced by the behavior of the people he interacts with.
5. The cycle of violence - Escalation theory - This theory was given by Lenore Waler who states that there is a cycle of violence that starts with tension building in the relationship, which leads to actual violence taking place. The next stage is where the perpetrator apologizes, which makes the victim feel that the pattern of violence is a

temporary phase. This cycle keeps getting reported and is one of the main reasons why women don't report instances of domestic abuse.⁵

CAUSES OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

1. **Cultural** - The patriarchal society in India propagates the idea that having a male child is a blessing and a female child is seen as a cultural and economic burden. This automatically leads to the cultural belief that women are inferior to men and therefore can be subjected to abuse and violence. Women see the female members in their family being in abusive relationships and therefore accept that way of life and that violence and abuse in a relationship are completely normal. It also gives the male members the feeling of superiority over the women. These cultural beliefs stem from personal laws and traditional practices.
2. **Economics** - An important cause of domestic violence is the financial dependency of women on their male counterparts as Dalit women are often denied basic education and employment opportunities. Hence, in order to get the basic necessities, they need to depend on the man even if he is abusive.
3. **Legal** - This factor is basically the lack of laws for Dalit women and the implementation of the already existing laws that protect victims of domestic abuse. The laws include provisions regarding service providers and police officials. However, in reality, police officers are not sensitized or made aware of their responsibilities. The service providers and shelter homes are also of extremely poor quality.

REASONS WHY WOMEN CHOOSE TO STAY IN A DOMESTIC RELATIONSHIP DESPITE IT BEING ABUSIVE

1. **Fear** - Women who are victims of domestic abuse live in constant fear of when the perpetrator would get abusive again. Dalit women are often ridiculed and humiliated by society and by the police. They fear that if they talk to someone about the violence or

⁵ Ambily P, 'Domestic Violence and Criminal Justice' (2014) 3 (2) Christ University Law Journal
<<https://journals.christuniversity.in/index.php/culj/article/download/485/1942/5883>> accessed 05 May 2022

even file a complaint, they might get harassed by people and the police, and this, in turn, would result in the partner subjecting them to more violence.

2. **Financial dependence** - Illiteracy and unemployment are very common in Dalit families who live in the rural parts of the country. Dalit women do not have access to basic education or employment opportunities, therefore becoming dependent on their male counterparts who earn a livelihood. They feel staying in an abusive relationship is a much better option than being unemployed and not being able to provide for themselves and their children, if there are any.
3. **Guilt and shame** - Women often feel that the abuse by their partners is a result of their own actions and feel that the husband's abusive behavior is justified. They feel guilty and ashamed of their actions and therefore choose to stay in the relationship despite the abuse.
4. **Hope** - Many women tend to not leave the abusive relationship in the hopes that the partner would change his abusive behavior.
5. **Communal and societal beliefs** - There is still a considerable amount of the population in the country, especially in the rural areas that feel that it is the right of the man to subject women to abuse. Women are also taught this from a very young age and therefore, they accept their inferior position in the relationship and continue to live with the abusive partner.

The main reason why Dalit women choose to live in the domestic relationship despite it being abusive is that, in the majority of the cases, women are not aware of their rights. In other cases, since women do not have access to basic education and employment opportunities, they are forced to depend financially on their male counterparts like their husbands or father, which makes it difficult for them to leave the relationship as they will not be able to provide for themselves. Another important reason why Dalit women choose to stay in the abusive relationship is that they fear the treatment that they will have to go through with the police officials while filing a complaint, and if there is no action taken by them against the perpetrator, it would lead to her being subjected to a more serious form of domestic abuse.

The enforcement mechanism is extremely poor which also is one of the major reasons why incidents of domestic abuse are rarely reported to the police. Dalit women also refrain from talking about the domestic abuse that they face because they fear that it would lead to revictimization by society. They fear that by approaching police stations or counseling centers, they would be treated badly or in a disrespectful manner.

CURRENT LAWS ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The laws that have been passed to address the issue of domestic violence are The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, and section 498⁶ A of the Indian Penal Code, 1860. The primary issue with these statutes is that they provide the same remedies and compensation to the victim irrespective of the different backgrounds that they come from. Dalit women are more oppressed as compared to upper-class women in society, and therefore by providing the same remedies to all women victims of domestic abuse, they are being categorized as one homogenous group, and the political and social factors are not considered.

The Dowry Prohibition Act, of 1961 addresses the issue of dowry-related harassment that takes place, mostly in the domestic household. Most Dalit families have been oppressed for decades and are forced to take up menial jobs as they do not have the necessary education or employment opportunities to earn a good livelihood. This results in them not being able to provide a dowry to the family of the groom. Such dowry-related issues are addressed in the Dowry Prohibition Act, of 1961. However, the statute does not consider dowry-related harassment faced by oppressed classes where such harassments are more severe and frequent. Similarly, section 498 A of the **Indian Penal Code, 1860** penalizes cruelty on the spouse by the husband or his relatives but fails to take into account the abuse and violence inflicted on a person due to the marginalized community that they are from.

The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Prevention of Atrocities Act of 1989 was a statute passed by the Parliament of India in furtherance of the Indian Penal Code and the Protection

⁶ Indian Penal Code, 1860, s 498A

of Civil Rights Act of 1955 due to the non-implementation of the provisions of law and ineffectiveness of the same. Despite the fact that the Indian Penal Code penalizes sexual assault against women by men, there was a need to recognize the intersectional approach where the rights of Dalit women against sexual violence were recognized and separate legal provisions were introduced penalizing any sexual violence against Dalit women under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Prevention of Atrocities Act 1989.

Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 is a statute that protects women from any form of domestic abuse. It also provides for civil remedies and the setting up of shelter homes in order to protect women and to ensure that they get immediate relief in cases of domestic abuse. However, the law focuses on women as a homogenous community and does not take into consideration the social and political factors which might affect the frequency or severity of domestic abuse. Dalit women are oppressed not only outside their homes, but within their houses as well. Dalit women who marry men from other social classes become victims of domestic abuse in the hands of the husband as well as the relatives of the husband. Here, the violence is not only inflicted because she is a woman but also because of her class and caste. Dalit women who are married to upper-class men are often victims of humiliation and harassment by the husband and the relatives of the husband.

Similarly, Dalit women who are not in an intercaste marriage, still undergo domestic abuse. However, since the Dalit community comes with its own set of problems which include illiteracy, and lack of employment opportunities, women become forced to rely on their male counterparts emotionally and economically, thereby preventing them from leaving the abusive relationship as they will not be able to earn a livelihood and take care of themselves. The entire feminist movement can be challenged as it primarily voiced the concerns of the upper-class privileged women in India, and neglected the problems and issues faced by Dalit women. Domestic abuse of Dalit women violates their basic fundamental rights like Articles 14, 15, and 21⁷ of the **Constitution of India**.

⁷ Constitution of India, 1950, art.14, art.15, and art.21

Article 14⁸ provides for equal protection and equality before the law. However, only equals can be treated equally. Merely providing a statute with a blanket protecting all women and considering them a homogenous group violates the right to equality for Dalit women. The failure to reasonably classify Dalit women from upper-class women violates the rights of the Dalit women.

Article 15⁹ provides for the right against discrimination on the basis of caste and sex. It also provides for affirmative action for women where the State is of the opinion that their rights are being violated.

Article 21¹⁰ provides every person the right to live with dignity. Victims of domestic abuse who belong to socially and educationally backward classes suffer physically and mentally, which affects their confidence and self-esteem as well, which results in the violation of their right to live a dignified life.

Article 46¹¹ is a direct principle of the state policy which provides that the State must promote the economic and educational interests of the weaker sections of the society and must safeguard their interests against any exploitations.

The International Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1970 and the signatory States were obligated to the principles given by CEDAW, where the States were required to take effective measures and introduce policies to prevent any gender-related violence against women. The States are also required to prohibit any cultural practice that leads, propagates, or encourages gender-related violence against women.

The World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 recognized violence against women as a violation of human rights. **The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1993** explicitly addressed the problem of violence against women and provides guidelines for actions to be taken on the national and international levels.

⁸ Constitution of India, 1950, art.14

⁹ Constitution of India, 1950, art.15

¹⁰ Constitution of India, 1950, art.21

¹¹ Constitution of India, 1950, art.46

ROLE OF NGOS, POLICE STATIONS, AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

The NGOs and service providers who work towards protecting the rights and interests of victims of domestic abuse, need to be cognizant of the fact that there is a need for better protection for Dalit women who are victims of domestic abuse. NGOs need to conduct more awareness programs to educate Dalit women about their rights, especially with respect to the right against domestic abuse, and should also be provided with proper shelter homes in case they need immediate relief. The State has a responsibility of ensuring that Dalit women are made aware of their rights, and should also sensitize other people regarding the issues faced by Dalit women. The State must set aside funds that only focus on the rights of marginalized classes, like Dalit women. They must also be provided with basic education and vocational training so that they can be economically independent.¹²

The role of the police officials is also very crucial, as police officers are often known to humiliate and harass people belonging to the socially and educationally backward classes. Therefore police officials need to be educated and sensitized regarding the rights of Dalit women and they also be given adequate training to ensure that Dalit women who have been subjected to domestic abuse are not re-victimized again.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In India, violence against women is a serious threat to the dignity and well-being of women in the country. Women who belong to the Dalit community are at greater risk and are more prone to violence as compared to women who belong to the upper castes in society. The laws relating to domestic abuse in India are common to all women and do not take into account the specific problems faced by Dalit women. To address this problem, it is necessary that not only are there more specific and stringent laws but private and nonprofit organizations must also take initiatives to prevent domestic abuse against Dalit women. The following are the suggestions that could reduce domestic abuse against Dalit women and can provide immediate and better relief to victims of domestic abuse.

¹² Shanta Kumari Khatri, 'Domestic Violence and Its Impact among Married Dalit Women: A Study of Kalika' (2021) 21 Journal of Political Science <<https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/JPS/article/view/35265>> accessed 05 May 2022

1. **Separate legal provisions for domestic violence against Dalit women with stringent punishment** - Article 14 of the Constitution of India ensures that equals will be treated equally. Dalit women have their own sets of experiences and problems that they face and undergo, and therefore putting them in the group as upper-class women with respect to laws relating to domestic abuse is a violation of their rights. It is imperative that separate legal provisions are introduced keeping in mind the intersectionality of caste and sex which can cater to the needs of Dalit women.
2. **Providing education to Dalit women** - Despite there being free and compulsory education that is provided to children, families tend to not send their children to school. Education should be made available to both children as well as adults belonging to marginalised groups. This will enable women to empower themselves and be independent. This will also enable her to critically think about real-life problems. This will also provide them the ability to cope with their environment and alter their patterns of behavior which include social skills.
3. **Providing employment opportunities and vocation training** - The major reason why women choose to not leave the abusive relationship is that they are financially dependent on the men in the family. By providing vocation training or by providing employment opportunities either in the organized sectors or unorganized sectors, they will not only become financially independent but also would learn skills that lead to their well-being. Being financially independent would also ensure that women do not fear the abusive partner and are less reluctant to approach the police for help.
4. **Sensitizing the police officials and the service providers** - One of the important reasons why instances of domestic abuse being reported or recorded are less is because of the insensitive and condescending behavior of the police officers. Police officers have a moral and legal obligation to protect the interests of vulnerable and marginalized groups. Sensitization programs need to be conducted for the police officials and for service providers to ensure that victims of domestic abuse are not victimized again.

5. **Better quality of shelter homes** - The shelter homes as provided under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 are set up to provide immediate shelter and relief to victims of domestic abuse. The State must ensure that the quality of the shelter homes is good and are equipped to give medical attention to victims of physical domestic abuse.
6. **Awareness programs conducted by the government and non-government organizations** - The State and the NGOs must organise awareness campaigns and programs to educate women about their rights and the remedies available. They must also create awareness regarding the penalties for domestic abuse, to deter such acts in the future.