

## **Bengaluru Safe City Police Training Programme**

The theme of gender discrimination and gender-based violence that is the central focus of the Bengaluru Safe City Police Training Programme includes a session on the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (PWDVA).

Domestic violence is one of the most common forms of gender-based violence and gender-based discrimination. As per the findings of the 5<sup>th</sup> National Family Health Survey, 44% of married women surveyed in the time-period between 2019-2021 from Karnataka claimed that they had faced domestic violence in one form or another, thereby, making Karnataka the leading state in the country to witness domestic violence cases.

### **The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005**

The Act aims to provide more effective protection to the rights of women which are guaranteed under the Constitution. The Act is aimed at protecting women who are victims of violence of any kind occurring within the family.



### **Key observations from the Training Sessions on PWDVA, 2005:**

1. An observation from the training sessions was that it was widely believed that committing violence against women was 'normal.' This belief was buttressed by patriarchal notions that there is nothing inappropriate or unacceptable in the husband

hitting a wife or abusing her otherwise. Women participants observed that they felt it was their duty to preserve the marital relationship and the familial harmony and hence remaining quiet or hiding details of such events was more prudent.

2. Many male participants voiced their opinion that commission of such acts aided in sustaining the dominance of the male within the household and the family. This argument is supported by the societal expectation of men playing a central and dominant role within families, in their workplaces and within their communities as a whole.
3. As far as the Act was concerned, it was observed that there was an evident lack of information amongst the participants regarding the location of shelter homes or the contact details of the protection officers in the city and district-wise both. A shallow understanding of the Act implied that participants were unaware about the statutory provisions.
4. Most participants voiced the opinion that women should remain quiet about events that transpire within a household and should not pursue a legal recourse as that will place the children and the family at risk of being ostracised by the society.
5. During these sessions, many participants noted that such acts do not constitute a crime or an offence and many a times, women exaggerate about such incidents to gain sympathy or support or monetary compensation.

### **What is the Bengaluru Safe City Police Training Programme aiming to achieve?**

The objectives of this session can be enlisted as follows –

1. Foremost, it is imperative to make the participants understand and acknowledge that any act of physical, mental, emotional or sexual violence constitutes a crime and is a punishable offence. It is not an act that is normal or routine but directly impacts the self-respect of the victim.
2. Violence against wife is not only violence but the commission of any such act against a woman including a mother, sister, daughter who reside within a shared household is covered under the definition of an ‘aggrieved person’ under the Act.
3. One of the most significant contributions of this session is to provide the participants with the relevant information on the registered protection officers, their contact details as well

as the information on location of shelter homes across the city and their contact details. Moreover, in cases of domestic violence, local NGOs play a critical role in facilitating the entire process and the participants are provided with the information of the NGOs that are actively engaged in handling cases of domestic violence.

4. The interactions in these sessions are aimed at initiating a behavioural change that violence against women is not a privilege that men enjoy and to understand that violence in any form harms the well-being of women and produces a long-lasting impact on the children, on the family and the society as a whole.
5. Lastly, these sessions focus on discussions that are centred on real-life case studies and judgments which makes the training more inclusive and participatory.