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VIOLENCE AND ATROCITIES AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN INDIA – A SOCIO-LEGAL STUDY

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1. Introduction

Violence and atrocities against women and children remain among the most pressing and persistent human rights concerns in India. Despite constitutional guarantees of equality and dignity, a significant proportion of women and children continue to face abuse, discrimination, and exploitation in various forms, ranging from domestic violence and sexual harassment to trafficking, child abuse, and neglect. These acts are not isolated incidents but are often deeply rooted in societal structures, patriarchal mindsets, and systemic failures in enforcement and accountability. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) 2023¹, crimes against women increased by over 4% from the previous year, while crimes against children also saw a worrying upward trend. Such statistics highlight the continuing vulnerability of these groups despite the existence of a robust legal framework.

The issue holds immense importance in the contemporary Indian socio-legal context. With rapid modernization, urbanization, and digitalization, new forms of violence have emerged, including cyberbullying, online sexual exploitation, and digital stalking. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated these issues, with lockdowns resulting in a spike in domestic violence cases and a breakdown of institutional support systems. Despite landmark legislation and judicial activism aimed at protecting women and children, implementation gaps, low conviction rates, and societal stigma hinder justice and rehabilitation for survivors. In this context, it becomes imperative to examine the socio-legal landscape holistically to understand the root causes, evaluate the effectiveness of legal interventions, and suggest actionable reforms.

The primary objective of this study is to analyze the prevalence, causes, and consequences of

¹ Bureau, T. H. (2025) NCRB annual crime report in final stage: MHA, The Hindu. Available at: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/ncrb-annual-crime-report-in-final-stage-mha/article69207436.ece#:~:text=Minister%20of%20State%20for%20Home,delay%20in%20release%20of%20reports&text=The%20Union%20Home%20Ministry%20informed,published%20for%20the%20year%202022.> (Accessed: 2 June 2025).

violence and atrocities against women and children in India through a socio-legal lens. It aims to evaluate the effectiveness of existing legal provisions, identify systemic and structural challenges in implementation, and explore the interplay between law, society, and gender-based violence. The paper also seeks to critically examine key judicial decisions and the role of institutions such as the National Commission for Women (NCW) and the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR).

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the primary forms of violence faced by women and children in India today?
2. How effective are the existing legal frameworks in addressing these issues?
3. What are the socio-cultural and systemic barriers to the enforcement of laws protecting women and children?
4. What reforms are necessary to strengthen prevention, protection, and redressal mechanisms?

The scope of the paper is limited to analyzing the legal and social dimensions of violence against women and children in India. While international conventions and comparative perspectives are briefly referenced, the focus remains on Indian laws, policies, and judicial practices. The study does not include a primary empirical fieldwork component but is based on secondary sources such as case law, government reports, academic articles, and data from statutory commissions.

The methodology adopted is primarily doctrinal, involving a review of statutory frameworks, judicial decisions, and scholarly commentary. A socio-legal approach is employed to contextualize legal provisions within prevailing social realities. The analysis aims to bridge the gap between law in books and law in action by exploring both normative frameworks and practical challenges.

2. Socio-Cultural Roots of Violence

Violence against women and children in India cannot be understood in isolation from the broader socio-cultural fabric that sustains and perpetuates such acts. Deeply entrenched patriarchal norms, caste and class hierarchies, rigid gender roles, and socio-economic dependency form the backdrop against which much of this violence is normalized or even legitimized. These systemic factors often render women and children particularly vulnerable,

not only to violence but also to its continued silence.

The patriarchal mindset prevalent in many Indian communities regards men as inherently superior and women as subordinate. This gender-based hierarchy manifests itself in controlling behaviors, discriminatory customs, and denial of autonomy to women. Practices such as dowry, honor killings, female foeticide, and restrictions on mobility are reflective of a society where a woman's value is often determined by her obedience and conformity to male authority. Children, especially girls, are similarly affected by these patriarchal expectations, often facing neglect, early marriage, or being forced into exploitative labor or trafficking.

Socialization and reinforcement of gender roles² begin at a very early age. From toys and clothing to expectations around education and career, boys and girls are taught to conform to traditional roles—boys as providers and girls as caregivers. This gendered upbringing fosters a mindset where male aggression is tolerated or even valorized, while female submission is expected. As a result, acts of violence against women and children are frequently dismissed as “family matters” or consequences of failing to adhere to social norms.

Economic dependency³ further aggravates the situation. Women from marginalized communities often lack access to education, employment, and legal resources, making them reliant on male family members for survival. This financial dependence can trap them in abusive relationships. Moreover, caste and class hierarchies⁴ intersect with gender, rendering Dalit women, Adivasi women, and women from impoverished backgrounds particularly vulnerable to systemic abuse and exploitation. Caste-based sexual violence, often underreported, serves as a tool of oppression and control.

Children too are affected by structural neglect and cultural vulnerability. Traditional attitudes toward child-rearing often emphasize obedience and discipline, sometimes to the extent of justifying physical punishment. In many cases, child labour and child marriage are rationalized as economic necessities or cultural practices. Children born into poverty or marginalized

² Gender Roles & Gender Norms: Definition & Examples (2025) United Way NCA. Available at: <https://unitedwaynca.org/blog/gender-norms/#:~:text=Gender%20socialization%20is%20the%20process,trucks%20and%20girls%20with%20dolls.> (Accessed: 2 June 2025).

³ Facts and Figures: Economic Empowerment (no date) UN Women – Headquarters. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures> (Accessed: 2 June 2025).

⁴ Kumar, Ajay. (2021). Sexual Violence against Dalit Women: An Analytical Study of Intersectionality of Gender, Caste, and Class in India. 22. 123-134.

communities are at heightened risk of trafficking, sexual exploitation, and bonded labour.

The influence of media and technology has introduced both challenges and opportunities in this domain. On one hand, media can raise awareness and mobilize public opinion against violence. On the other hand, the objectification of women in advertising, entertainment, and digital spaces reinforces harmful stereotypes. Children are increasingly exposed to harmful content online, including pornography and cyberbullying, which can normalize abusive behaviour or lead to exploitation. Social media has also been used as a tool for grooming and trafficking.

In sum, the socio-cultural roots of violence against women and children in India are complex and multilayered. Addressing these deep-seated norms and structures is essential to creating a society that not only condemns violence but also fosters equality, dignity, and justice.

3. Forms and Trends of Violence Against Women and Children

Violence against women and children in India manifests in varied and often overlapping forms, driven by cultural, economic, and systemic factors. While legal reforms and public awareness have increased visibility, the sheer magnitude and evolving nature of such violence remain deeply concerning. This section outlines key forms of violence, supported by recent data and case examples.

a. Violence Against Women Domestic Violence

Domestic violence continues to be one of the most widespread and underreported forms of abuse. It includes physical, emotional, economic, and sexual abuse within the household, often perpetrated by intimate partners. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) 2023, over 137,000 cases were registered under the category of “Cruelty by Husband or Relatives” (Section 498A IPC), making it the most reported crime against women. Despite the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005⁵, lack of access to legal aid, social stigma, and economic dependence prevent many women from seeking help.⁶

Dowry-Related Violence and Deaths

Although the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, criminalizes the demand and exchange of dowry,

⁵ Garg, R. (2022) The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, iPleaders. Available at: <https://blog.iplayers.in/the-protection-of-women-from-domestic-violence-act-2005/> (Accessed: 2 June 2025).

⁶ Domestic Violence (2025) Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). Available at: <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/domestic-violence> (Accessed: 2 June 2025).

dowry-related violence and deaths persist. NCRB 2023 reported 6,223 dowry deaths, highlighting a dangerous societal norm that commodifies women in marital transactions. Women are often harassed, tortured, and even killed for failing to meet dowry demands.

Sexual Harassment and Assault (Including Workplace and Public Spaces)

The menace of sexual harassment remains rampant in both public and private spheres. Despite the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition⁷ and Redressal) Act, 2013, implementation gaps persist in both formal and informal sectors. High-profile cases, such as the Tehelka editor Tarun Tejpal case, underscore institutional reluctance to address harassment. Street harassment and molestation continue to be common, especially in urban areas.

Rape and Gang Rape

India has seen a disturbing rise in reported rapes and gang rapes. NCRB 2023 reported 32,792 cases of rape, with most perpetrators being known to the victims. The 2012 Nirbhaya gang rape in Delhi triggered widespread protests and led to significant legal reforms, including the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, but recent cases like the Hathras gang rape (2020) reveal persistent failures in law enforcement, especially when caste and class dynamics are involved.

Honor Killings

Honor killings, often sanctioned by community elders or khap panchayats, target women who defy caste, religious, or familial boundaries in matters of marriage and relationships. Although relatively underreported, NCRB recorded honor killings under murder charges, with 71 such incidents in 2022, largely in states like Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.

Cyber Crimes

With increased digital access, cyber crimes targeting women—such as revenge porn, stalking, impersonation, and non-consensual circulation of intimate images—have surged. NCRB 2023 recorded over 16,000 cybercrime cases against women, with many incidents going unreported due to victim shaming and lack of digital literacy.

⁷ Mahawar, S. (2023) A brief on sexual harassment of women at workplace, iPleaders. Available at: <https://blog.ipleaders.in/a-brief-on-sexual-harassment-of-women-at-workplace/> (Accessed: 2 June 2025).

b. Violence Against Children

Child Sexual Abuse (e.g., POCSO-related Crimes)

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, was enacted to comprehensively address child sexual abuse. Despite this, NCRB 2023 reported over 56,000 cases under POCSO, with most victims being under the age of 14. High-profile cases like the Muzaffarpur shelter home abuse (2018) exposed institutional complicity and the vulnerability of children in state care.

Child Trafficking and Forced Labor

India remains a source, transit, and destination country for child trafficking. Children are trafficked for labour, begging, domestic servitude, and sexual exploitation. According to the UNICEF India report 2022, millions of children continue to be engaged in exploitative labour, particularly in agriculture, construction, and textile sectors. The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, and the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016, have not been effectively enforced in many rural areas.

Physical Abuse and Neglect

Children face physical punishment and neglect within homes, schools, and child-care institutions. A 2017 National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) study found that 62% of school-going children reported facing corporal punishment, often by teachers. Neglect and malnutrition also remain critical issues, especially in low-income households.

Online Exploitation

Digital access has exposed children to new threats, including grooming, child pornography, and cyberbullying. The Internet Watch Foundation noted a significant increase in India-origin child sexual abuse material (CSAM) being shared on global platforms. Despite measures under the Information Technology Act, 2000, enforcement remains challenging due to technological complexities and jurisdictional issues.

4. Legal Framework

The Indian legal framework for the protection of women and children from violence is multifaceted, encompassing constitutional guarantees, statutory laws, and institutional mechanisms. While the legal architecture is robust on paper, challenges remain in terms of implementation, awareness, and access to justice. This section explores the key constitutional

provisions, statutory laws, and roles of various commissions and authorities aimed at safeguarding women and children.

a. Constitutional Safeguards

The Constitution of India lays a foundational framework for equality, dignity, and protection from exploitation. Key articles specifically protect the rights of women and children:

- Article 14⁸ guarantees *equality before the law* and *equal protection of the laws*, forming the bedrock of gender justice.
- Article 15(3) allows the State to make *special provisions for women and children*, recognizing their socio-economic vulnerabilities.
- Article 21, which guarantees the *right to life and personal liberty*, has been expansively interpreted by the judiciary to include the right to dignity, protection from sexual violence, and a safe environment.
- Article 39(e) directs the State to ensure that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter vocations unsuited to their age or strength, particularly protecting women and children.
- Article 39(f)⁹ seeks to ensure that children grow in a healthy environment and are protected against exploitation.
- Article 42¹⁰ mandates the State to ensure just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief for women.

These constitutional safeguards form the basis for a range of protective legislation.

b. Statutory Laws for Women

Several legislative provisions directly address violence and discrimination against women:

- Indian Penal Code (IPC):

⁸ Constitutional Justice for Woman: The Role of Article 14 & Article 15 Abstract (2025) The Amikus Qriae. Available at: <https://theamikusqriae.com/constitutional-justice-for-woman-the-role-of-article-14-article-15-abstract/#:~:text=These%20provisions%20guarantee%20equal%20protection%20under%20the,allowing%20affirmative%20measures%20to%20promote%20women's%20welfare.&text=These%20articles%2C%20which%20guarantee%20equality%20before%20the,addressing%20systemic%20gender%20inequalities%20and%20promoting%20justice>. (Accessed: 2 June 2025).

⁹ Garg, R. (2022) Article 39 of the Indian Constitution, iPleaders. Available at: <https://blog.iplayers.in/article-39-of-the-indian-constitution/> (Accessed: 2 June 2025).

¹⁰ Mahawar, S. (2022) Article 42 of the Indian Constitution, iPleaders. Available at: <https://blog.iplayers.in/article-42-of-the-indian-constitution/#:~:text=It%20also%20states%20that%20no,a%20directive%20to%20the%20state>. (Accessed: 2 June 2025).

- *Section 498A* criminalizes cruelty by husband or his relatives.
- *Section 304B* addresses dowry death, prescribing punishment for unnatural deaths of women within seven years of marriage.
- *Section 376* deals with rape and was significantly amended post-Nirbhaya to broaden the definition and enhance punishment.
- Other relevant sections include 354 (assault on women), 509 (outraging modesty), and 354D (stalking).
- **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005:** This civil law recognizes multiple forms of abuse—physical, emotional, sexual, verbal, and economic—and provides victims with rights to protection orders, residence, and monetary relief. The Act emphasizes speedy redressal through Protection Officers and designated Magistrates.
- **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013:**
Enacted following the Vishaka Guidelines, this law mandates Internal Complaints Committees in all workplaces and provides a mechanism to redress workplace harassment. However, lack of awareness and compliance in informal sectors remains a concern.

c. Laws Protecting Children

Children in India are protected by a combination of general criminal law and child-specific statutes:

- **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012:**
This landmark legislation criminalizes all forms of sexual abuse against children under 18. It provides for child-friendly procedures during investigation and trial, special courts, and presumption of culpability for certain offences. The Act was amended in 2019 to introduce stricter punishments, including the death penalty in aggravated cases.
- **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015:** This Act governs the legal framework for both children in conflict with the law and children in need of care and protection. It sets up Juvenile Justice Boards and Child Welfare Committees and includes provisions for rehabilitation and social reintegration.
- **Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 (as amended in 2016):**
The amended Act prohibits employment of children below 14 in all occupations and processes, and of adolescents (14–18 years) in hazardous work. However, certain

exemptions for family businesses have been criticized for perpetuating exploitative practices.

d. Role of Commissions and Authorities

To ensure the enforcement of these laws and monitor human rights violations, various statutory bodies have been established:

- **National Commission for Women (NCW):**
Established in 1992, NCW investigates and examines all matters relating to constitutional and legal safeguards for women. It also recommends measures for effective implementation and redressal.
- **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR):**
Formed in 2007, the NCPCR monitors the implementation of child rights laws and policies. It works closely with State Commissions, courts, and NGOs to protect children from abuse and exploitation.
- **State Commissions for Women and Children:**
These commissions perform similar functions at the state level and often intervene in specific complaints of abuse or negligence.
- **Fast-track and Child-Friendly Courts:**
Following directions from the Supreme Court, fast-track courts have been established across states for swift disposal of rape and POCSO cases. The POCSO Act mandates child-friendly procedures—such as non-threatening environments, female officers, and in-camera trials—to reduce trauma and ensure justice.

5. Judicial Response and Case Law

The Indian judiciary has played a transformative role in addressing violence and atrocities against women and children. Through landmark judgments, proactive interpretation of rights, and suo motu interventions, the courts have evolved a jurisprudence that strengthens legal protections. Nevertheless, significant challenges remain in enforcement, particularly concerning procedural delays, victim protection, and evidentiary burdens.

Landmark Judgments

One of the most pivotal cases in the context of sexual harassment at the workplace was *Vishakha v. State of Rajasthan* (1997). In the absence of statutory law, the Supreme Court laid down the *Vishakha Guidelines*, mandating employers to prevent and redress sexual harassment. These

guidelines were later codified into the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013. This case marked a watershed moment in recognizing gender-specific workplace violence and the role of the judiciary in filling legislative gaps.

In *Independent Thought v. Union of India* (2017), the Supreme Court read down Exception 2 to Section 375 IPC, thereby criminalizing marital rape of girls between 15 and 18 years of age. The judgment held that such an exception violated the POCSO Act and the constitutional rights of the girl child, thereby harmonizing child protection laws with the criminal law on rape.

The case of *Nipun Saxena v. Union of India* (2019) was instrumental in securing victim anonymity and dignity in cases of sexual offences. The Supreme Court issued directions to ensure non-disclosure of victims' identities, installation of CCTV cameras in police stations, and the establishment of one-stop centers for survivors. This judgment emphasized the need for a sensitive, victim-centric approach in legal processes.

Shakti Vahini v. Union of India (2018) addressed the growing concern of honor killings. The Court directed states to establish special cells and safe houses for couples in inter-caste or inter-faith relationships and issued preventive, remedial, and punitive measures to curb "khap" panchayat-led violence.

Role of PILs and Suo Motu Cognizance

Public Interest Litigations (PILs) have been a powerful tool for judicial intervention in cases of systemic failure. Civil society groups and NGOs have frequently approached courts through PILs to seek better implementation of laws, compensation schemes, shelter homes, and child protection services. For instance, PILs led to the formulation of the "Nirbhaya Fund" and policy changes in victim compensation schemes.

Moreover, the judiciary has often taken *suo motu cognizance* of incidents of gender and child-based violence. The judiciary's response to the Kathua rape case, and later to the Unnao and Hathras cases, demonstrates its increasing willingness to monitor investigations and ensure accountability, especially where executive agencies were seen to falter.

Challenges in Judicial Enforcement

Despite these interventions, the effectiveness of judicial protection is marred by several

challenges. Pendency of cases remains a critical issue, especially in POCSO and domestic violence matters. Many fast-track courts face infrastructural and staffing limitations, diluting their purpose.

Evidentiary issues, particularly in sexual offences, place a heavy burden on victims. Delay in FIR registration, lack of forensic evidence, and hostile witnesses often lead to acquittals, undermining victims' faith in the justice system.

Victim protection and witness support mechanisms, though judicially mandated, are often poorly implemented. There is an acute shortage of shelter homes, psychological counselling, and legal aid, which are vital for the effective exercise of legal rights by survivors.

6. Implementation Challenges and Gaps

While India has developed a comprehensive legal framework to combat violence against women and children, the real challenge lies in its implementation. Systemic shortcomings, institutional apathy, and deep-seated social prejudices continue to undermine the effectiveness of laws meant to protect vulnerable populations.

Underreporting and Social Stigma

One of the most critical barriers is the underreporting of crimes, particularly sexual violence. Victims, especially women and children, are often reluctant to report abuse due to fear of social stigma, ostracization, and victim-blaming. In rural areas and among marginalized communities, cultural taboos and honor-based norms further suppress reporting. For child victims, especially in incestuous or familial abuse cases, dependency on the perpetrator complicates disclosure.

Police Insensitivity and Lack of Training

Law enforcement agencies often lack gender sensitivity and child-friendly approaches, which deters victims from seeking help. There are instances of police refusing to file First Information Reports (FIRs), trivializing complaints, or pressuring victims to settle cases informally. Inadequate training in handling POCSO and sexual assault cases leads to procedural lapses and secondary victimization. Many police stations also lack female officers, dedicated child welfare officers, and secure interview spaces.

Poor Conviction Rates

Despite the gravity of offences, conviction rates remain abysmally low in cases of violence against women and children. As per the NCRB 2022 report, the conviction rate in rape cases is less than 30%, with pendency exceeding 80%. Delayed investigations, poor evidence collection, untrained forensic support, and hostile witnesses contribute to this dismal record. Lack of coordination between investigating officers, prosecutors, and victim support services further weakens the prosecution's case.

Victim-Blaming and Hostile Court Environment

The judicial process itself often becomes traumatic for survivors. Victim-blaming attitudes, aggressive cross-examinations, and questions on a victim's character or past conduct are still common. Despite directions from higher courts, lower court judges often display insensitivity or bias, especially in cases involving intimate partner violence or consensual relationships among adolescents.

Inadequate Rehabilitation and Support Mechanisms

Finally, the lack of effective rehabilitation schemes and psychosocial support mechanisms fails to provide holistic justice. Government-run shelter homes are overcrowded and poorly managed. Access to counselling, legal aid, education, and employment rehabilitation is extremely limited. Survivors of child abuse or trafficking often fall through institutional gaps due to poor monitoring and coordination between departments.

7. Recommendations and Way Forward

Tackling violence and atrocities against women and children in India requires a comprehensive and multi-layered strategy that goes beyond legislation. The following recommendations aim to address the systemic, structural, and cultural challenges that hinder the effective prevention and redressal of such violence.

Legal Reforms

Although India has enacted a robust legal framework, uniform implementation across states remains a major hurdle. Regular audits of enforcement, stricter monitoring of investigation timelines, and mandatory filing of FIRs in cognizable offences should be ensured. Amendments may be required to address gaps, such as expanding the definition of marital rape and ensuring consistency between POCSO and other overlapping laws. The establishment of

victim and witness protection laws with dedicated funding must be prioritized.

Institutional Strengthening

Reinforcing institutions is critical. Police stations must have women officers, child-friendly infrastructure, and specialized investigation units for gender-based crimes. Fast-track courts dealing with sexual and domestic violence cases should be expanded with adequate resources. State-run shelter homes and one-stop centers should be regularly monitored for safety, hygiene, and rehabilitation outcomes. Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) and Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs) must be made more accountable and better trained.

Awareness and Education Campaigns

A preventive approach rooted in education is essential. Gender sensitization campaigns in schools, colleges, and workplaces can challenge deep-seated patriarchal attitudes. Public awareness programs on legal rights, helplines, and reporting mechanisms—especially in rural and marginalized communities—can empower victims and bystanders to act. The inclusion of gender and child rights education in school curricula is equally important.

Gender-Sensitive Training

Mandatory gender-sensitive training for police, judges, prosecutors, and medical personnel should be institutionalized. Such training should cover trauma-informed handling of victims, the nuances of consent, and the psychological impact of abuse on survivors, particularly children.

Community Participation and Civil Society

Local communities and civil society organizations (CSOs) can play a pivotal role in early intervention and victim support. Community-based monitoring committees, partnerships with NGOs, and funding of grassroots awareness initiatives should be institutionalized at the district level.

Technology-Driven Solutions

Leveraging technology can significantly improve outcomes. 24/7 national helplines, mobile-based safety apps, real-time tracking of case status, and centralized offender databases can enhance both prevention and redress. Integration of systems like Crime and Criminal Tracking

Network & Systems (CCTNS) with POCSO and DV case monitoring is vital.¹¹

8. Conclusion

This study has underscored the grave and persistent nature of violence against women and children in India, cutting across socio-economic, regional, and cultural boundaries. Despite significant legal advancements—including comprehensive statutes like the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, the POCSO Act, and progressive constitutional safeguards—the ground reality reflects widespread underreporting, poor conviction rates, and systemic lapses in enforcement and victim support. The prevalence of patriarchal norms, economic dependency, social stigma, and caste-class inequalities continue to reinforce cycles of abuse and silence around these issues.

The analysis of legal frameworks and judicial responses reveals that while courts have often taken proactive stances—especially in landmark cases such as *Vishakha*, *Independent Thought*, and *Nipun Saxena*—the lack of institutional preparedness, awareness, and sensitivity frequently undermines access to justice. Moreover, children remain particularly vulnerable, with abuse often occurring in familial or institutional settings, further complicating disclosure and redress.

It is therefore imperative that India adopts an integrated socio-legal approach¹² that combines robust laws with equally strong social interventions. This includes legal reforms, education and awareness, institutional accountability, community engagement, and technological innovation.

Addressing violence against women and children is not merely a legal imperative, but a moral and social necessity. The urgency of systemic reform cannot be overstated. Only through a holistic and sustained effort can India ensure safety, dignity, and justice for its most vulnerable citizens—and move toward a more equitable and humane society.

¹¹ [egovernance.vikaspedia.in](https://egovernance.vikaspedia.in/viewcontent/e-governance/national-e-governance-plan/mission-mode-projects/crime-criminal-tracking-network-and-systems?lgn=en). Available at: <https://egovernance.vikaspedia.in/viewcontent/e-governance/national-e-governance-plan/mission-mode-projects/crime-criminal-tracking-network-and-systems?lgn=en>.

¹² © Schiff, D. N. (1976) *The Modern Law Review*, 39(3), pp. 287–310. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2230.1976.tb01458.x.

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