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“GENDER JUSTICE AND THE LAW: A SOCIO-LEGAL CRITIQUE OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE”

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ABSTRACT

Gender justice and the law have increasingly become central themes in addressing the pervasive issue of gender-based violence. This paper critically examines gender-based violence through a socio-legal lens, highlighting the limitations of existing legal frameworks in addressing the lived realities of survivors. While numerous laws exist to curb Gender-based violence—including those on domestic violence, sexual assault, and harassment—their effectiveness is often undermined by patriarchal norms, victim-blaming attitudes, and institutional apathy. The persistence of these social and structural barriers reveals a significant gap between the law in theory and justice in practice. Drawing on feminist legal theory and intersectional analysis, the study explores how legal systems often fail to accommodate the complex and layered experiences of survivors, especially those from marginalized groups. Women from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, LGBTQ+ individuals, and ethnic minorities frequently face discrimination within the legal process, compounding their trauma and reducing their chances of receiving justice. The paper emphasizes that achieving gender justice requires more than legal statutes—it demands systemic change, including improved access to legal resources, sensitivity training for law enforcement and judiciary, and survivor-centred support services. Public education and community engagement are also critical to challenging the societal norms that enable Gender Based Violence.

Keywords:

Gender-Based Violence, Gender Justice, Socio-Legal Analysis, Intersectionality, Legal Reform

“GENDER JUSTICE AND THE LAW: A SOCIO- LEGAL CRITIQUE OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE”

"Laws alone cannot protect women unless the culture of impunity is dismantled."

Justice Leila Seth

INTRODUCTION

Gender justice refers to the fair and equitable treatment of individuals regardless of their gender, ensuring equality, dignity, and freedom from discrimination in all spheres of life. It is rooted in the principles of human rights and aims to eliminate structural inequalities that hinder full participation in society¹. It involves addressing systemic barriers that prevent women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals from fully enjoying their rights in social, economic, legal, and political spheres. Central to achieving gender justice is the eradication of GBV² a pervasive human rights violation rooted in unequal power relations and gender norms. Any destroying act committed against a person because of their gender is considered gender-based violence. GBV encompasses economic, psychological, sexual, and bodily harm, whether it takes place in a private or public setting, according to the UN. GBV is further defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as violence that causes or is likely to cause bodily, sexual, or psychological pain or suffering, including coercion and threats. Domestic violence, sexual assault, honour murders, female genital mutilation, marital rape, and internet harassment are all examples of gender-based violence.

GBV is both a legal and social issue. Legally, it violates national and international laws that protect the right to life, liberty, and bodily integrity. Socially, it reflects and reinforces patriarchal attitudes, cultural norms, and institutional practices that discriminate against women and marginalized gender groups. Despite laws in place, enforcement remains inconsistent due to stigma, victim-blaming, and systemic failures.

Globally, GBV remains widespread. WHO estimates that nearly 1 in 3 women experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime. In India, the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reported over 4.5 lakh cases of crimes against women in 2022, with domestic violence, assault, and rape as leading categories. This article aims to explore the concept of gender justice

¹ CEDAW General Recommendation No. 33 on Women's Access to Justice, U.N. Doc. CEDAW/C/GC/33 (2015).

² Gender-based violence

through a socio-legal critique of gender-based violence, examining how law interacts with societal norms and where gaps remain in protecting survivors. It will evaluate current legal frameworks, their limitations, and propose reforms aimed at achieving meaningful, inclusive gender justice.

HISTORICAL AND LEGAL EVOLUTION OF LAWS ADDRESSING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

The legal response to gender-based violence (GBV) in India has developed through a complex historical trajectory, influenced by colonial policies, socio-political movements, and international human rights standards. Under British colonial rule, legal reforms relating to women's rights were minimal and often paternalistic. Early laws like the Sati Regulation, 1829 and the Age of Consent Act, 1891 were introduced to address extreme practices but failed to challenge the structural subordination of women³. Colonial legal frameworks largely reinforced patriarchal norms, treating women as dependents or property under personal laws, with limited recognition of their autonomy.

Post-independence, the Indian Constitution marked a significant shift by embedding gender equality into its core principles. Articles 14, 15, and 21 guarantee equality before the law, prohibit gender-based discrimination, and protect the right to life and personal liberty⁴. These constitutional guarantees laid the groundwork for legal reforms to combat GBV.

A timeline of key legislative developments shows the evolving recognition of GBV:

- The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, aimed at curbing the social evil of dowry.
- The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (PWDVA) provided civil remedies for domestic abuse.
- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act), legislated in response to the *Vishaka* guidelines⁵.

The judiciary has played a pivotal role in shaping gender justice. In *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan* (1997), the Supreme Court laid down guidelines to address sexual harassment at the workplace, recognizing CEDAW as enforceable in the absence of domestic law⁵. In *Lillu v.*

³ Archana Parashar, *Women and Family Law Reform in India: Uniform Civil Code and Gender Equality* 54–55 (Sage Publ'ns 1992).

⁴ India Const. arts. 14, 15, & 21

⁵ *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan*, (1997) 6 S.C.C. 241 (India).

State of Haryana (2013), the Court declared the "two-finger test" in rape cases unconstitutional and violative of women's dignity under Article 21⁶. In *Joseph Shine v. Union of India* (2018), the Court decriminalized adultery, stating that the law treated women as property and was inherently discriminatory⁷.

International law has significantly influenced India's legal evolution on GBV. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), ratified by India in 1993, obligates the state to eliminate discrimination and violence against women in both public and private spheres. Further, UN Women reports and Sustainable Development Goal 5 emphasize the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls as essential for achieving gender equality.

Thus, the legal journey from colonial control to constitutional protection and international alignment reflects an ongoing, though incomplete, commitment to gender justice.

SOCIETAL NORMS AND STRUCTURAL BARRIERS

Gender-based violence (GBV) in India is not merely a product of individual deviance but is deeply entrenched in societal norms and structural inequalities that normalize and perpetuate violence. One of the most pervasive challenges is the culture of silence and stigma surrounding sexual violence, particularly rape. Victims often face social ostracization, loss of family support, and reputational harm, which discourages reporting and reinforces impunity for perpetrators. Cultural taboos discourage open discussions about sexual violence, framing it as a matter of family honour rather than a violation of bodily autonomy.

Patriarchy plays a central role in both legal and informal power structures, influencing how laws are interpreted, enforced, and resisted. Patriarchal attitudes often shape the behaviour of police officers, medical professionals, and judges, resulting in institutional apathy, procedural delays, and denial of justice⁸. This structural bias is also evident in victim-blaming narratives, where survivors are scrutinized for their clothing, behaviour, and background in both media and courtrooms. Such narratives shift the focus from perpetrator accountability to survivor morality, reinforcing harmful gender norms.

⁶ Lillu v. State of Haryana, (2013) 14 S.C.C. 643 (India)

⁷ Joseph Shine v. Union of India, (2019) 3 S.C.C. 39 (India)

⁸ Pratiksha Baxi, *Public Secrets of Law: Rape Trials in India* 27–30 (Oxford Univ. Press 2014).

The intersectionality of caste, class, disability, and religion further complicates the experience of GBV. Dalit women face not only gendered violence but also caste-based discrimination, often leading to institutional neglect by law enforcement and medical services⁴. Working-class women, particularly those in informal sectors like domestic work or garment industries, are vulnerable to exploitation and sexual harassment with little legal recourse⁹. Women with disabilities are at higher risk of violence due to dependence on caregivers and limited access to reporting mechanisms or legal aid¹⁰. Additionally, religious personal laws sometimes perpetuate patriarchal control over women's rights in marriage, divorce, and inheritance. For example, discriminatory practices within certain interpretations of Muslim and Hindu personal laws have been critiqued for reinforcing gender inequality.

These overlapping systems of oppression demonstrate that GBV cannot be addressed through legal reforms alone. It requires a broader dismantling of societal norms and institutional structures that enable and justify violence.

ENFORCEMENT GAPS AND INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES

Enforcement of gender-based violence (GBV) laws in India suffers from low conviction rates, revealing serious institutional breakdowns. According to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, the conviction rate in rape cases consistently ranged between 27–28% from 2018 to 2022, while chargesheets were filed in only about 64% of such cases, reflecting investigative and procedural flaws¹¹. A separate analysis by the Ministry of Statistics reported a startlingly low conviction rate of just 2.56% in rape trials, with only 0.92% of inmates serving time for attempted rape, underscoring an alarming gap between legal intent and implementation.¹² These statistics indicate that justice for survivors is more often an exception than the rule.

Police apathy and under-registration of FIRs remain another central enforcement gap. Many victims face reluctance or outright refusal by police officers to register complaints, especially in cases involving influential perpetrators. In 2020, NCRB noted that nearly 17% of rape cases

⁹ Nisha Varia, *Sweeping Change? A Review of Recent Reforms on Wages and Conditions for Domestic Workers in India*, Human Rights Watch (2020), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/07/06/sweeping-change>.

¹⁰ Shanta Pandey & B.R. Chaudhary, *Women with Disabilities and Experiences of Violence in India*, 24 J. Interprets. Violence 2, 305–307 (2009).

¹¹ National Crime Records Bureau, *Crime in India 2022* 163–65 (2023), <https://ncrb.gov.in/sites/default/files/CII-2022-PDF/Crime-in-India-2022-Volume-1.pdf>.

¹² Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, *Women and Men in India 2023*, Gov't of India, https://mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/Women_Men_2023.pdf.

were closed before investigation, often marked as “false” or “mistakenly filed”¹³. This premature dismissal erodes survivors’ access to justice. Moreover, several reports and testimonies suggest that victims are frequently subjected to coercion or ridicule at police stations, disincentivizing them from pursuing legal remedies.

Another weak link is the implementation of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act), especially in informal sectors and educational institutions. Despite its mandate for Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs), a 2015 FICCI–EY survey found that 36% of Indian companies and 25% of multinational companies operating in India had not complied with basic requirements. Additionally, as of 2023, sectoral non-compliance was evident as approximately 50% of Indian sports bodies had not established ICCs. The requirements of the Act mostly do not apply to informal workplaces, where the majority of Indian women labor.

The medico-legal process, crucial for securing evidence in GBV cases, suffers from poor infrastructure and outdated practices. Delays in forensic examination, lack of training for medical professionals, and reliance on archaic “two-finger” tests (despite judicial condemnation) hamper the survivor’s access to a fair trial. A recent study published in *BMC Public Health* showed that only 10% of rape trials were completed, and more than 75% ended in acquittals due to poor documentation, insufficient coordination, and evidentiary gaps.

Lastly, prosecutorial inefficiencies and lack of victim-witness protection compound these challenges. Public prosecutors often lack specialized training in GBV cases, resulting in poor legal strategies. Survivors receive little to no guidance during trial processes and face intimidation by the accused, exacerbated by India’s lack of an institutionalized witness protection scheme. The Verma Committee Report (2013), while advocating fast-track courts and improved prosecution, remains poorly enforced¹⁴.

¹³ National Crime Records Bureau, *Crime in India 2020*, <https://ncrb.gov.in/en/crime-india>.

¹⁴ Justice Verma Committee, *Report of the Committee on Amendments to Criminal Law* (Jan. 23, 2013), <https://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Justice%20verma%20committee/js%20verma%20committe%20report.pdf>.

SOCIO-LEGAL ANALYSIS OF SPECIFIC FORMS OF GBV

a) Domestic Violence

Domestic violence in India is deeply entrenched in social norms that often normalize abuse within the household, leading to chronic underreporting. Financial dependency, pressure to maintain family honour, fear of shame, and patriarchal expectations deter women from obtaining legal help.¹⁵ Enacted as a civil legislation, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (PWDVA) offers protection against economic, verbal, emotional, and sexual assault in addition to physical abuse. The Act allows women to seek protection orders, residence orders, custody, and monetary relief from the court.

However, the law's success is limited by poor implementation, particularly through Protection Officers (POs) and shelter services. Many states lack sufficient POs, and their workload is often distributed among overburdened government officials with limited training or sensitivity. Shelter homes, although mandated, are scarce and underfunded, failing to provide long-term rehabilitation.

b) Sexual Harassment

The Supreme Court established rules for employer accountability and grievance resolution in the historic *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan* decision, which was the first time sexual harassment at work was handled by the legal system. These evolved into the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act), which mandates the creation of Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs) in all organizations with more than ten employees.

Despite legislative backing, corporate compliance remains inconsistent. A 2015 FICCI-EY survey reported that over one-third of surveyed companies were non-compliant with key provisions of the POSH Act, and many ICCs lack independence or training. Periodic Annual Reports to District Officers, as required by law, are often not filed, and transparency in implementation remains poor¹⁶.

c) Cyber Violence

With increased digital connectivity, women face new forms of violence such as online

¹⁵ National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), *India Report*, Int'l Inst. for Pop. Sciences (2021), <https://ruralindiaonline.org/en/library/resource/national-family-health-survey-nfhs-5-2019-21-india-report/>.

¹⁶ Ministry of Women & Child Development, *Annual Report on Implementation of POSH Act 2019*, https://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/Annual%20Report_POSH_2019.pdf.

harassment, revenge porn, cyberstalking, and doxxing. These forms of abuse exploit the anonymity and borderlessness of the internet, making enforcement particularly difficult. Legal remedies are scattered across statutes. Under the Information Technology Act, 2000, Section 66E penalizes violation of privacy, and Section 67 criminalizes the publishing or transmission of obscene material. The Indian Penal Code (IPC) addresses sexual cyber crimes under Sections 354A-D (sexual harassment, voyeurism, stalking, etc.).

Yet, jurisdictional ambiguity, challenges in identifying perpetrators, and police apathy make redress difficult. Law enforcement often lacks training in cyber forensics, and delays in platform cooperation (especially with global tech giants) hamper timely investigation¹⁷.

d) Marital Rape

Marital rape, despite being among the most severe violations of bodily autonomy, remains legally non-criminalized in India due to the Exception 2 to Section 375 IPC, which states that it is not rape when a man engages in sexual activity with his wife if she is older than 18. This legal position contradicts international human rights norms and India's own constitutional values under Article 14 and 21. Although the Justice Verma Committee (2013) strongly recommended the criminalization of marital rape, successive governments have resisted citing concerns over misuse and the sanctity of marriage.

Civil remedies exist under PWDVA, where sexual abuse within marriage can be grounds for protection orders, but criminal justice mechanisms remain unavailable, depriving survivors of full legal recourse and reinforcing a patriarchal notion of conjugal consent.

COMPARATIVE LEGAL PERSPECTIVES

Comparing India's approach to gender-based violence (GBV) with international legal systems reveals significant lessons in both legal frameworks and institutional innovations. Countries like Sweden and Canada provide models of gender justice through comprehensive legal protections, survivor-centric policies, and multi-sectoral coordination.

In Sweden, GBV is viewed not just as a criminal justice issue but as a public health and human rights concern. The Swedish Penal Code includes explicit provisions for sexual crimes, including marital rape, and emphasizes consent-based laws where lack of voluntary participation constitutes rape. The state also offers civil protection orders, restraining orders,

¹⁷ Internet Freedom Foundation, *Online Violence Against Women in India*, IFF Policy Brief (2021), <https://internetfreedom.in/online-violence-against-women/>. (last visited July 5 2025)

and economic support through victim compensation programs administered by the Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority.

Canada's legal framework similarly emphasizes protection and rehabilitation. The Canadian Criminal Code criminalizes various forms of domestic and sexual violence, including cyber-related offences. Survivors can apply for emergency protection orders, peace bonds, and long-term restraining orders under provincial legislation such as Alberta's *Protection Against Family Violence Act*. Importantly, Canada's Victims Bill of Rights (2015) legally guarantees victims the right to information, protection, participation, and restitution¹⁸.

Several jurisdictions have pioneered specialized GBV courts and one-stop crisis centers, which serve as holistic service hubs providing medical, psychological, legal, and police support under one roof. South Africa, for instance, introduced Sexual Offences Courts with specially trained staff, private waiting areas, and child-friendly procedures, leading to faster trial resolution and reduced trauma. Similarly, Malaysia's One-Stop Crisis Centres (OSCCs) provide integrated support services in public hospitals for GBV victims, minimizing secondary victimization.

Globally, trauma-informed interviewing techniques are now standard in jurisdictions like New Zealand and the Netherlands, ensuring that law enforcement and legal professionals approach survivors with psychological sensitivity. This includes avoiding re-traumatization during evidence collection and offering therapy alongside legal procedures. Restorative justice model as used in Norway and New Zealand involve mediated, voluntary encounters between survivors and offenders (outside the traditional courtroom), aiming to foster accountability and survivor closure, while carefully safeguarding against coercion.

These comparative insights highlight that beyond legal drafting, the effectiveness of GBV laws depends on how institutions operationalize survivor support, ensure swift access to justice, and create spaces of dignity and safety. Countries that prioritize preventive frameworks, survivor healing, and inter-agency collaboration tend to record higher levels of reporting, successful prosecutions, and survivor recovery.

¹⁸ Canadian Victims Bill of Rights, S.C. 2015, c. 13 (Can.), <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca>.

ROLE OF JUDICIARY AND PUBLIC INTEREST LITIGATION

The Indian judiciary has played a transformative role in advancing gender justice, especially through the vehicle of Public Interest Litigation (PIL). By invoking constitutional principles such as equality (Article 14), dignity (Article 21), and non-discrimination (Article 15), courts have expanded the interpretation of rights to address the lived realities of women. PILs have served as catalysts in areas where legislative or executive inertia prevailed, becoming a powerful tool for social change in the gender justice domain.

The courts have frequently relied on constitutional interpretation to uphold women's dignity. In *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan*, the Supreme Court read Articles 14, 15, and 21 to frame guidelines protecting women from sexual harassment in the workplace—well before the enactment of the POSH Act in 2013¹⁹. Similarly, in *Laxmi v. Union of India*, the Court responded to a PIL seeking regulation on acid sales, issuing directives for compensation schemes and stricter controls²⁰. These cases illustrate how the judiciary has expanded the scope of Article 21 to include safety, autonomy, and bodily integrity.

A landmark example is *Independent Thought v. Union of India*, where the Supreme Court read down Exception 2 to Section 375 IPC, which had earlier allowed marital intercourse with a minor wife (between ages 15 and 18). The Court held such an exception unconstitutional, observing that marriage cannot be a license to violate a child's bodily integrity, thereby harmonizing statutory law with constitutional guarantees and child protection statutes. This ruling was praised for recognizing the individual rights of girls within the institution of marriage, challenging the long-standing immunity given to husbands under criminal law.

However, the judiciary's progressive role has not been without limitations. Delays in adjudication, particularly in gender-based violence and sexual harassment cases, dilute the efficacy of such decisions. The time-lag in hearing and implementing PILs often prolongs justice for survivors. For instance, despite the Vishaka Guidelines (1997), enforcement remained weak until the POSH Act was passed 16 years later. Moreover, courts have faced criticism for inconsistent jurisprudence in gender matters. For example, in some cases like *Joseph Shine v. Union of India*²¹, the Supreme Court struck down the adultery law as

¹⁹ *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan*, (1997) 6 S.C.C. 241.

²⁰ *Laxmi v. Union of India*, (2014) 4 S.C.C. 427.

²¹ *Joseph Shine v. Union of India*, (2019) 3 S.C.C. 39.

discriminatory against women but it has simultaneously refused to criminalize marital rape, deferring instead to legislative domain, despite constitutional arguments being made.

These contradictions expose the structural and interpretive limitations of judicial activism. While PILs have expanded the legal landscape for gender rights, implementation gaps, inconsistent doctrine, and lack of enforceability mechanisms undermine their real-world impact.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE WAY FORWARD

Despite constitutional guarantees and legal frameworks, the actual realization of gender justice in India remains deeply constrained by legal, institutional, and cultural barriers. Addressing the epidemic of gender-based violence (GBV) requires a multi-pronged strategy that reforms law, transforms institutions, and empowers communities. The following recommendations offer a holistic roadmap:

1. Decriminalization of Marital Rape Exception

Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution are violated by the legal protection afforded to husbands under Exception 2 to Section 375 of the IPC. The Supreme Court's progressive decision in *Independent Thought v. Union of India* must be extended to adult women. Marital rape should be fully criminalized, recognizing that consent does not dissolve in marriage. This change is essential to align India with international human rights obligations under CEDAW and to protect bodily autonomy.

2. Mandatory Gender Sensitization in Police and Judicial Training

Law enforcement and judiciary are often the first points of contact for survivors. Therefore, gender sensitization modules must be made compulsory in all police training academies and judicial institutes. These modules should include trauma-informed interviewing, survivor psychology, and bias recognition. Currently, sensitization is often ad hoc or outsourced to NGOs with limited scope²².

3. Fast-Track Courts for Sexual Violence Cases

While fast-track courts were introduced after the 2012 Nirbhaya case, their coverage and

²² Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), *Model Training Manual on Gender Sensitization of Police Personnel*, <https://bprd.nic.in>.

efficiency remain limited. As of 2023, only about 700 fast-track special courts (FTSCs) exist against a backlog of thousands of sexual violence cases. Expansion of these courts, along with trained staff and procedural streamlining, can ensure time-bound justice, as delays often deter survivors from pursuing complaints.

4. Strengthening Witness Protection and Victim Compensation

India lacks a uniform, enforceable witness protection mechanism. The Model Witness Protection Scheme (2018) remains under-implemented across states. Survivors and witnesses face intimidation, social boycott, and re-victimization, leading to hostile testimony and high acquittal rates. Compensation under Section 357A CrPC must be prompt, accessible, and not contingent on conviction, ensuring dignity and support to survivors.

5. Grassroots Legal Awareness Campaigns

Marginalized communities—especially in rural, tribal, and Dalit areas—often remain unaware of legal rights and remedies. Community-level legal literacy programs, tailored in local languages and culturally sensitive formats, should be integrated into panchayat, school, and health platforms. Partnerships with Legal Services Authorities, women's collectives, and civil society organizations can amplify reach.

6. Promoting Feminist Jurisprudence and Legal Clinics

Law schools and bar councils should incorporate feminist legal theory, intersectional analysis, and GBV law into core curricula. Expanding community legal clinics with paralegals, women's rights legal professionals, and students on staff can help the general public access justice while integrating feminist practice into legal education. This also closes the gap between the written law and the actual law.

CONCLUSION

The fight against gender-based violence (GBV) in India remains a deeply complex challenge, shaped by both legal inadequacies and entrenched social norms. Despite the existence of progressive legislation—such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005), the POSH Act (2013), and criminal law amendments following the Nirbhaya case—their implementation has been hampered by low conviction rates, institutional apathy, and deep-rooted patriarchy. Survivors often encounter police inaction, judicial delays, insensitive medico-legal processes, and lack of systemic support, which collectively erode their access to

justice. While Indian courts have played a pivotal role through Public Interest Litigation and constitutional interpretation in expanding gender rights, the progress has been inconsistent and often symbolic without corresponding structural change. Moreover, critical gaps persist—such as the continued legal non-recognition of marital rape, insufficient protection mechanisms, and widespread non-compliance with gender-safeguarding laws, especially in informal and rural sectors.

It is increasingly evident that laws alone are not enough. Legal reforms must be supported by cultural transformation, grassroots legal awareness, and institutional restructuring. The justice system must centre survivors' voices, respect bodily autonomy, and ensure equal access irrespective of caste, class, geography, or education. True gender justice demands not only punitive responses but also preventive, rehabilitative, and transformative approaches rooted in feminist jurisprudence and community empowerment. The way forward lies in building an inclusive, equitable, and survivor-centric justice system—one that dismantles impunity, promotes dignity, and transforms society from the ground up. Only then can the promise of constitutional equality be meaningfully realized for all.

