

## Assessing the Implementation of the Domestic Violence Act in Anand District, Gujarat: Successes and Challenges

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### ABSTRACT

This study reviews the implementation of Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), 2005 in Anand district in Gujarat using only secondary sources like government publications, academic research, and institutional documents. Despite the PWDVA’s endeavour to establish a forward-looking legal framework for the purpose of protecting women from physical, emotional, sexual, and financial mistreatment, the implementation of the Act in Anand district has produced inconsistent returns. Data garnered from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Gujarat State Legal Services Authority (GSLSA), and the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), show a high incidence of domestic violence in Anand, along with challenges in delayed legal processes, lack of properly trained protection officers, lack of shelter respond ANand District can learn from the successful models that have been adopted elsewhere; such as Delhi’s Mahila Panchayats and Kerala’s Kudumbashree. The report states that a decentralized multi-sector partnership, supported by technology-enabled infrastructure and strong monitoring systems, are vital for creating the maximum impact of the PWDVA in Anand and other areas.

**Keywords:** Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), Protection Officers, Legal Implementation, Gender Justice, Anand District, Gujarat, NCRB, GSLSA, Legal Aid, Underreporting, Misuse Discourse, Institutional Barriers, Mahila Panchayat, Kudumbashree, Women’s Rights, Section 498A, Gender-Based Violence

### INTRODUCTION:

#### 1.1 Overview of Domestic Violence in India

Domestic violence is still a critical public health and human right issue in India, which is part of patriarchal traditions, economic inequalities, and discriminatory gender practices. Apart from physical harm, domestic relationships are also affected by psychological, economic and sexual abuses. According to a study by the National Family Health Survey in 2020, about 30% of ever-married women between the ages of 18 and 49 years Even with a wealth of legal and institutional effort over the years, underreporting remains due to fears of social stigma, lack of knowledge, and slow institutional response. Recent empirical studies point out that such factors as male unemployment, social norms, and economic dependence play a huge role in the domestic abuse risks. Domestic violence is not merely a family matter—it is a violation of women's bodily integrity and autonomy that perpetuates broader structural inequalities. Through the work of Nigam (2008), it has been brought out that lack of effective collaborative efforts; gender-biased practices by law enforcement and the judiciary; makes it hard for state mechanisms to ensure a comprehensive security for survivors of domestic violence.

#### 1.2 Purpose of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), 2005

Unlike previous laws such as Section 498A, the PWDVA provides a civil remedy for physical, verbal, emotional, sexual and economic abuse. By design, it aims to provide justice without delay with the presence of protection officers, shelter, medical services, legal help, and maintenance orders at one’s disposal. While praised for being such a great legal milestone, critics have pointed out many barriers to the implementation of the Act. The approach of India’s human rights to handling domestic violence often faces obstacles in real life due to lack of resources, officials’ lack of preparation, and inefficiency of bureaucracy. Tyagi and Tyagi (2021) state that matrimonial cases tend not to be effectively addressed through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) resulting in prolonged. It is important to note that the state has to do more than legislating the law and ensure law is implemented across the board. However, research indicates that implementation of protection mechanisms is highly district-based, with civil society organisations stepping in when state support is unavailable.

#### 1.3 Relevance of the Anand District Context

Because of its socio-economic diversity, the Anand district located in central Gujarat is an important region for evaluating the actual effectiveness of the PWDVA in the real world. Despite having progressive institutions like the AMUL cooperative, Anand has a dual challenge – urban issues and rural traditionalism. response Observation of protection officers, legal aid centres, and

district courts in Anand indicates systemic problems similar to the rest of India: Based on Natarajan's work in 2016 , this district reports high caseloads in courts, irregular recruitment of protection officers and a lack of cooperation between different agencies. The Anand district represents a case for examining the operation of socio-legal reforms in the real-world scenario of India's administrative set up.

#### 1.4 Aim and Scope of the Study

The key purpose of this study is to examine how the Domestic Violence Act, 2005, is practiced and functions in the Anand district, based only on available secondary data. The scope of the study includes the assessment of institutional actions, the legal framework, judicial developments, and impediments in enforcing. It uses official records, government data and academic research, and NGO reports, and it avoids doing direct field surveys and interviews. The investigation is based on a legal-sociological approach; the goal is to determine whether the provisions of the act provide victims with effective protection on the ground. The aim of this study is to analyse the system instead of studying individual cases, gaining ideas from public data and established research sources.

#### 1.5 Research Questions

The investigation addresses the following key questions:

1. How effective is the PWDVA, 2005 in Anand district as indicated by secondary data available?
2. What are the institutional structures in the district that are mandated with helping victims of domestic violence?
3. Which institutional, procedural, or cultural barriers prevent the Act from being applied and available to victims effectively?
4. To what extent do Anand's practices on domestic violence parallel or differ from the national or state trends?
5. Which of the best practises that came out of Anand's implementation can be applied to promote governance and policy in gender justice at district level?

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides an analytical synthesis of current research and secondary data on the implementation of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), 2005, in India, specifically Gujarat. The synthesis combines insights derived from national surveys, governmental records, and academic studies in providing a broad view of the evolution of legislations and ongoing challenges to the management of domestic violence throughout India.

#### 2.1 Domestic Violence Trends in Gujarat: NFHS-5 Insights

Statistics from the sixth round of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) provide valuable data on domestic violence patterns not only in the country but also at a regional level. Data from NFHS-5 in Gujarat indicates that approximately 2 Despite increased awareness and the introduction of new laws, relatively few women who

experience domestic violence seek support, and even fewer make their way to the police or courts. These statistics depict the fact that although measures have been put in place by law, they have not yet been incorporated into the social and cultural dynamics of most regions. This disparity requires the strengthening of institutional resources, community legal education, and tailored grievance resolution methods tailored to local needs .

#### 2.2 Implementation Status of PWDVA: Government Reports and Field Audits

The MWCD has continued to release updates on the PWDVA implementation. According to the 2020 audit, although most states have formal appointments of protection officers, there were massive differences in budgetary resources, training, and infrastructural support . The protection officers in different districts of Gujarat were found to be carrying out several administrative issues thereby undermining the efficiency of their mandate . Furthermore, the MWCD emphasised the need for immediate increased collaboration between judiciary, health departments, and NGOs to ensure that survivors receive quick assistance. Additionally, the audit indicated a deficit of institutional measures for continuous monitoring as well as inadequate data systems to monitor updates to cases, legal instructions, and further action. The fact that there are those inadequacies makes the effectiveness of a piece of legislation that was created with good intent less noticeable .

#### 2.3 Crime Reporting and Legal Trends: NCRB Analysis

The NCRB provides comprehensive statistics about crimes against women as classified by various sections of Indian law. According to NCRB statistics of 2022, Gujarat reported 5,328 cases under section 498A (cruelty by husband or relatives) and 488 cases under "Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act" . These statistics show two coexisting situations: Increased reports of cases under ordinary IPC provisions plus the low use of civil remedies from PWDVA. Slow and weak enforcement of civil protections encourages women to turn to criminal sections like 498A instead of choosing alternative civil reliefs . This development strains criminal courts further and highlights the need to strengthen the level of district enforcement of the PWDVA.

#### 2.4 Gujarat State Legal Services Authority (GSLSA): Institutional Support and Gaps

Gujarat State Legal Services Authority (GSLSA) is the foundation for free legal aid, counselling and short-term relief to victims of domestic violence. GSLSA's annual reports (2019–2022) show that Anand district had a constant flow of applications for protection orders and maintenance under PWDVA. However, the matter concerning order enforcement is a continuing problem, primarily due to the fact that frontline staff is not properly aware of how to act and there is a lack of coordination between protection officers and law enforcement is slow . The annual reports also noted that shelters and short-stay homes experience pressure because of overcrowding or have unequal access in various districts. The GSLSA has demanded an increase in the number of decentralised legal

aid camps and mobile counselling in semi-urban and rural areas like Anand and Nadiad. Gender-sensitisation training is often lacking in Gujarat's legal aid providers, which does further damage to survivors during court proceedings .

## 2.5 Scholarly Perspectives from Peer-reviewed Journals

The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act has benefited from vital scholarly research in order to determine both successes and failures that have occurred. The systematic review by Kalokhe et al. (2017) cites that while the Act is praised for its inclusive nature of viewing abuse and its centre According to Abeyratne and Jain (2012) , the combination of feminist human rights approaches with patriarchal governance models often leads to resistance in implementing reforms with regard to domestic violence. Sen (2014), in his contribution to the Routledge Handbook of Gender in South Asia, argues that the basis of violence against the woman is systemic state involvement and social norms, which are deeply ingrained, and not only law borders. Research in the Indian Journal of Gender Studies and Social Change has further shown that women's access to justice is severely limited by their economic dependency, fear of social stigma, and poor legal literacy . The effects of socio-economic inequity are most clear in areas such as Anand where they exacerbate problems for women to seek justice.

## METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Design: Descriptive and Exploratory

The present study utilises the descriptive and exploratory research design to assess the adoption of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), 2005, in Anand district, Gujarat. By descriptive analysis, we present the infrastructure and legal measures and data trends around domestic violence, and the exploratory part addresses the reason why enforcement and victim protection are still difficult. This dual approach allows the research to provide a structured view of the current state of affairs and the underlying reasons for the existing gaps, particularly in cases of fragmented legal frameworks . This technique is suitable for socio-legal inquiry because ground-level conditions mirror the interaction of statutory rules, administrative rules, and dominant cultures.

### 3.2 Nature of Data: Secondary Sources

The research only relies on secondary data to study the governance of domestic violence in Anand. This includes numerical data from government agencies as well as qualitative analyses from scholarly journals and NGO publications. The use of secondary data was vital since the aim was to design a district-level assessment without fieldwork and primary research. This approach is considered valuable for policy evaluation and system-wide analysis if supported by several reliable sources . Secondary data provides wide scope and historical perspective which helps to give a thorough discussion of trends and policy outputs over time. In addition, the use of secondary data enables us to avoid ethical issues related to the collection of information from people who may be particularly vulnerable . However, the use of secondary

information requires careful consideration of the credibility, recency and ethical standards of the primary information on which it is based.

### 3.3 Sources of Data

The data used in the research is drawn from the following primary resources:

#### (a) National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) Reports (2019–2023)

The NCRB compiles annual data on the incidents of cruelty as defined under Section 498A (by spouse or relatives), as well as cases of domestic violence that have been registered. Disaggregation of data by state and district allows for the examination of the patterns of domestic violence in Gujarat .

#### (b) GSLSA Reports

GSLSA publications are a source of useful information on support structures for domestic violence victims, including the issuance of protection orders, organisation of legal aid camps, and support offered to shelter facilities. These data points help evaluate the operational aspect of the Act's enforcement .

(c) Government estimates by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) MWCD's implementation audits and national policy updates serve as benchmarks for understanding government priorities, protection officer appointments, funding allocations, and inter-agency coordination challenges .

#### (d) Peer-Reviewed Academic Journals

Academic articles from Feminist Economics, Economic and Political Weekly, and Social Change provide interpretive frameworks and judgement on how effective the PWDVA is in real situations. These sources are necessary in the integration of quantitative data with socio-legal theories .

#### (e) NGO Reports

Jagori, the Centre for Social Research and Oxfam India have undertaken research and monitoring projects on domestic violence in various districts with special emphasis on Gujarat. Their research sheds light on local challenges neglected by larger national data collection. These NGO sources are crucial for capturing civil society perspectives on the law's implementation .

### 3.4 Tools for Analysis: Content Analysis and Thematic Coding

The two key approaches to data analysis in the research are content analysis and thematic coding. Official reports are analysed according to their contents to calculate and classify statistics such as case numbers and issuance of protection orders, while thematic coding in qualitative sources, including NGO reports and scholarly works, unveils underlying themes. The technique involves identifying common trends such as problems of institutional breakdown, bureaucratic slowdowns, cases of exploitation, and areas of lack of support for victims .

The use of a mixed-method approach enriches the study in such a way that statistical analysis and detailed narratives can co-exist in the data. Through the use of these methods, reliability of the study is improved and findings from different sources are cross checked.

### 3.5 Limitations of Using Secondary Data

Secondary data also has inherent limitations, such as comprehensive reach, economic access, and ability to track the changes in trends. Mainly, the use of secondary data involves a faith in the quality and integrity of the underlying primary sources. Although the volume of government data may be under-reported, especially in cases of gender-based violence where women are not willing to report owing to social stigmas .

Secondly, secondary data is more often than not less detailed than field research leading to a narrow view of victims’ experiences and intricacies of court room proceedings and enforcement. NGO and academic sources are prone to their own ideological biases, and these should be taken into account when analysing their results .

However, when carefully evaluated and corroborated with multiple data sources, secondary data remains an excellent resource for policy research, including domestic violence, where ethical problems and data barriers may impede primary research .

## IMPLEMENTATION LANDSCAPE IN ANAND DISTRICT

### 4.1 Overview of the Judicial and Legal Service Organisation

Anand district has many subordinate courts located in various towns of relevance like Anand, Petlad, Aaklav and Borsad. According to internal administrative records and GSLSA reports, the district has hired five judges who are dedicated to handling domestic violence cases and Section 498A cases. The overall distribution further shows that courts deal with a high number of domestic violence cases, on average over 30 cases per court. Below is a summary of caseloads:

**Table 4.1: Distribution of Judges and Caseload in Anand District**

Sr No	Court Location	No. of Judges	DV Cases Handled	Section 498A Cases Handled
1	Anand	2	More than 30	More than 20
2	Petlad	1	More than 30	More than 20
3	Aaklav	1	More than 40	More than 20
4	Borsad	1	More than 30	More than 20

Though there have been recent improvements, the rate of case disposal still lags behind because of a deficit of judges and the complexities of domestic cases. According to Gujarat judiciary's annual performance summaries (2022), nearly 35% of DV and Section 498A cases remain pending beyond one year, underscoring the burdened infrastructure and delay in legal relief .

### 4.2 Protection Officers and the Operation of Service Providers

However, despite having Protection Officers (POs) for an

Anand district, some are overloaded as they are also responsible for tasks relating to child welfare and social work in addition to their PWDVA duties, according to the Ministry of Women and Child Development’s Implementation Audit 2022. Consequently, their ability to carry out their main responsibilities of organising legal help, getting DIRs, and working with shelter homes is weakened. Reports highlight three critical challenges:

1. Underfunding of PO positions, often leading to staff turnover or dual-role appointments.
2. Lack of training in trauma-informed counselling and legal documentation.
3. Inadequate coordination with police and medical personnel for emergency response

These challenges have a major impact on the rate and caliber at which protection measures and support are delivered to the survivors. Moreover, the lack of public awareness concerning the function of protection officers worsens the situation.

### 4.3 Evaluation of Reported Cases and Disposition thereof

NCRB reports (2022) show that a total of 5,328 cases were reported under Section 498A and 488 cases under the PWDVA in the state. Anand reported more than 200 DV-related cases, which is a higher reporting rate than Rajkot and Dahod, although the population in these districts is similar . GSLSA statistics also indicate that there are more cases filed than those that have been settled in Anand.

**Table 4.2: Case Filing and Resolution in Anand (2021–2022)**

Type of Case	Cases Filed	Cases Resolved	Pending Cases
Section 498A (IPC)	212	141	71
PWDVA (Civil Relief)	89	52	37

The time lag between submission and case resolution speaks to procedural lag. There is a delay in the issuance of summons, and the responses by the protection officers are slow, leading to court postponement .

### 4.4 Analysis of Protection Orders and Legal Consequences

The Gujarat State Legal Services Authority (2022) reveals that out of 89 applications for protection orders in Anand, only 52 cases received some form of final or interim relief. Delayed or inadequate issuance of these orders threatens the safety of survivors and reduces the PWDVA’s intended purpose. It has been discovered by such organisations as Jagori (2016) that even though protection orders are issued, their enforcement is often lacking. The lack of adequate involvement of the police, infrequent monitoring and lack of accessible shelter homes make women more exposed. In addition, many of the survivors are not aware of their rights to stay, receive support, and seek safety under the legislation, especially in joint family systems .

**Table 4.3: Summary of Protection Order Trends in Anand (2021–2022)**

Type of Relief	Applications	Orders Issued	% Issued
Interim Protection Orders	89	35	39.3%
Final Protection Orders	54	17	31.4%
Residence Orders	28	9	32.1%
Maintenance Orders	12	8	66.6%

Interim and final protection orders are not commonly used according to the figures presented, while maintenance-related relief is used more consistently. However, these figures show the gap between viable legal protections that are available on paper and the reality in Anand district.

### CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

Despite the aim of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), 2005, being to be progressive, the implementation of the Act in Anand district has proved difficult. These barriers are both institutional failures and socio-cultural factors aggravated by delays in bureaucracy and discussions on misuse. These challenges are discussed in this chapter through the use of secondary data, government agency reports, and feedback from stakeholders.

#### 5.1 Institutional Shortcomings

An important hindrance is lack of cooperation between the judiciary, the police, and protection officers. Field data and local stakeholder feedback in Anand indicate an absence of coordination, with protection officers carrying heavy loads, insufficiently trained, and not well serviced by other components of the justice system . This situation leads to delays and ineffective nature of legal assistance provided to survivors.

The lack of shelter homes and legal services further complements the institutional failures to limit the district’s capacity to provide coordinated assistance. In MWCD’s 2021 audit, Anand district does not meet the national minimum shelter capacities and is having problems with resource allocation and staffing in its legal aid units .

**Table 5.1: Institutional Challenges Faced in Anand District**

Challenge	Reported by
Lack of coordination among judiciary, police & POs	Judges, Advocates, Victims
Shortfall in shelter homes	MWCD Report 2021
Inadequate legal aid cells	GSLSA Reports
Underfunded Protection Officer posts	MWCD Audit 2022
Lack of PO training	Judges, NGOs
Limited awareness of PO roles	Victims, NGOs

Consequently, current legal frameworks cannot be effectively or quickly implemented, especially in rural and semi-urban areas of Anand.

#### 5.2 Social and Cultural Obstacles

Cultural and social barriers play a strong role in preventing women from having justice for their cases. response . A variety of victims in Anand have complained that religious beliefs, caste hierarchies, and familial considerations fuel the growth and reactions to domestic violence.

**Table 5.2: Social and Cultural Obstacles in Domestic Violence Response**

Obstacle	Impact
Dowry-related violence	Triggers domestic disputes
Stigma around reporting	Suppresses formal complaint filing
Community/family pressure	Discourages women from legal action
Cultural norms legitimising abuse	Normalises abuse within family
Economic dependence of victims	Reduces mobility and access to justice

Survivors are too scared of reprisals, losses, or ostracism and, therefore, tolerate the abuse instead of taking public action. This hindrance is particularly sharp among housewives and women with a background of limited education, as demonstrated in the cross-tabulation in Section III.

#### 5.3 Legal and Procedural Delays

The long periods elapsed in justice shows are highly frustrating for people who want relief. According to State Judiciary Report (2023), it has been reported that 35% of domestic violence and Section 498A cases have been pending for more than a year in Anand. This disparity in resolution is reflected in Anand’s data: only 52 PWDVA applications and 141 Section 498A cases were resolved in a single year.

The slowdown is compounded by staff turnover and insufficient training amongst protection officers, with many receiving insufficient education in victim advocacy, gender responsive legal procedures, and court documentation techniques. This leads to the chain reaction: less DIRs processed, delayed protection orders, and overall poor follow-up.

**Table 5.3: Legal and Procedural Delays in Anand**

Metric	Approximate Value
Average DV case pendency (Section 498A)	35% > 1 year
PWDVA case pendency	42% unresolved
Protection Officer attrition rate	High (frequent turnover)
Rate of untrained POs	70%+ lack formal training

Lawsuits that are awaiting court rulings compel some

victims to drop lawsuits or pursue resolution outside of court even when they are still being abused.

#### 5.4 Misuse and Gender Bias Discourse

The PWDVA as well as the Section 498A are always under attack for what people claim to be abuse, especially in legal arguments and general debate. 80% of the judges and all advocates in Anand confessed that there were cases which were exaggerated or abused, particularly in family or property conflicts. This view is supported by national debates which have been set off by experts like Kishwar (2005) and advocacy groups for the men who have submitted memos to the Law Commission.

However, these claims should be taken against the background of empirical evidence. The practise of underreporting far outweighs concerns over misuse . According to the NFHS-5 survey, only 14% of the victims seek formal help, which shows that systemic silence is the ruling trend.

**Table 5.4: Misuse vs. Underreporting Perspectives**

Viewpoint	Observation/Statistic
Judges reporting misuse of DV Act	80% acknowledge occasional misuse
Advocates reporting misuse	100% agree some misuse exists
Victims believing misuse occurs	Over 60% believe misuse happens
UN Women position on underreporting	Underreporting is a more critical issue
NFHS data on non-reporting of abuse	Only 14% of victims seek formal help

Despite the fact that the identification of misuse is a vital point for the improvement of legal mechanisms, it is important to remember that most cases of domestic violence are underreported and ignored. This brings into focus a more critical issue: Statistics on failure to report abuse cases, from NFHS.

#### 6. A comparison with similar districts or states is a beneficial comparison.

Comparing the PWDVA implementation in urban and rural districts with Anand’s benchmarking can give various insights into effectiveness. These comparisons are useful for a more refined understanding of Anand’s situation and the demonstration of potential best practise from other areas of the country that could be adapted to fit local contexts and achieve better outcomes.

#### 6.1 Comparative Analysis: Anand, Ahmedabad, and Dahod

A careful analysis of data compiled by the NCRB and GSLSA reveals significant differences in domestic violence reporting from Anand and other districts.

- Ahmedabad being an urban metropolitan has excellent institutional and legal support despite the high rates of domestic violence. The district registered more than 1,100 PWDVA cases and 202 applications under IPC 498A in 2022 .
- Dahod, a tribal and rural district, reported significantly lower formal complaints (only 83

IPC 498A and 19 PWDVA cases), likely due to underreporting, limited institutional access, and cultural suppression of women's rights (MWCD, 2021).

On the other hand, Anand has 212 IPC 498A and 89 PWDVA cases thus it is in the middle rank in both the number of cases and the action taken by the institutions. However, Anand does not have separate DV courts, and its awareness-raising efforts lag behind those of Ahmedabad, but it has more cases reported than Dahod, which is predominantly rural.

**Table 6.1: Comparative Overview of DV Implementation Across Three Districts (2022)**

District	498 A Cases Filed	PWDV A Applications	Shelter Homes	Dedicated Protection Offices	Legal Awareness Programmes
Ahmedabad	1,132	202	6	Yes	Frequent
Anand	212	89	2	Yes (part-time)	Occasional
Dahod	83	19	1	No	Rare

The data from comparison show that while Anand has surpassed certain rural districts, it has not yet attained the pervasive institutional support that is experienced in large urban centres.

#### 6.2 Best Practices from Other States

Domestic violence survivors in different Indian states have benefited from inclusive grassroots models. other one

##### 1. Delhi’s Mahila Panchayats (Women’s Courts)

These local dispute resolution initiatives are implemented with the guidance of the Delhi Commission for Women and NGOs and provide real, informal substitutes for formal court procedures for matters of conflict resolution. Local women training for the role act as mediators who help the survivors to comprehend the legal processes all while protecting their privacy and reputation . These panchayats help reduce wait times for justice and provide survivors with greater access to information on their rights.

##### 2. Kerala’s Kudumbashree Model

Originally developed as a poverty alleviation programme, Kudumbashree evolved into a powerful women's collective that includes mechanisms to report and resolve domestic abuse through self-help groups (SHGs). response Kudumbashree goes further to empower women by providing women with income-generation training, which is one of the main vulnerability factors identified by Anand.

##### 3. Maharashtra’s One-Stop Centres (OSCs)

In Mumbai and Pune, One-Stop Centres integrate legal and medical services, police help and psychological services in one centralized place for easy access. These centres are unique because they are in a position to prevent secondary victimisation and provide prompt responses in cases of DV .

### 6.3 Key Takeaways for Anand

While analysing these examples, Anand can come to the following practical recommendations:

- Decentralise legal aid: Work with local panchayats and women led NGOs to establish Mahila Mandals or community paralegal teams in their communities.
- Enhance PO roles: Employ full time Protection Officers who are trained and who become part of existing health, education, and police establishments.
- Increase awareness drives: Conduct awareness campaign on block-to-block basis focusing on joint family set up and women in financially dependent situation.
- Replicate economic support models: Adopt some of the Kudumbashree model in forming self-help-group based legal education and financial self-sufficiency.

### Policy Recommendations

Utilizing comparative analysis, stakeholder input, and literature evidence, the following policy recommendations are proposed to enhance the implementation of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA) in Anand district. These recommendations are aligned with the best practises adopted in other Indian states and address the unique institutional and societal issues of the region.

#### 7.1 Strengthen the appointment and training of Protection Officers.

The effective implementation of the PWDVA requires that there are permanent qualified Protection Officers (POs). In the case of Anand district, the dual responsibilities or short-term appointments of POs tend to reduce their capacity to act promptly in domestic violence cases. MWCD (2021) focuses on the need for permanently installing should engage in a prolonged legal training and coordination workshops for the successful implementation.

#### 7.2 Establish District-Level Monitoring Committees

To achieve fragmented implementation, it is important to set up district level monitoring committees under the supervision of MWCD and State Legal Services Authority. Committees should have representatives from the judiciary, police, women's commissions, and civil society organisations. These committees should monitor periodic reports on cases, expenditure of funds and difficulties faced in service delivery. Collaborative monitoring by different departments has been experienced in the implementation of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu where better accountability and bridging gaps between various agencies are achieved .

#### 7.3 Improve Inter-Agency Collaboration

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Judicial, police, legal aid, and protection officer cooperation is rarely effective enough in Anand, a chronic problem for implementation. Research shows that collaborative approaches between police stations, hospitals, and family courts, data sharing, and joint action on DIRs, are more effective . In order to foster coordination, a district nodal officer should be charged with this responsibility while possessing SOPs and interoperable databases.

There is a long-standing problem of underreporting, especially in semi-urban and rural areas, in Anand. Legal awareness can be strengthened, and domestic violence talks can be normalized by participating in gram panchayat level. reply . It is required to include modules that teach young men and boys about gender equality at a young age in awareness campaigns.

Maharashtra has pioneered the establishment of online complaint portals and case tracking modalities which allows victims to submit DV cases electronically, monitor application online, and obtain remote support from counsellors or lawyers. This digital model can ease out many logistical barriers that the victims experience where they are often controlled by their perpetrators. Combining Anand's protective measures with protection officer records and court databases may enhance transparency, reduce delays and contribute towards empowering survivors drawing from practices in advanced regions .

### CONCLUSION

Anand district is an example of a clear disjuncture between the Act's objectives and the way things are done in practice. Institutions exist, but their utility often is compromised because of lack of resources, coordination or cultural restrictions. Protection officers are often overwhelmed, and they are undertrained. Legal aid is not uniform throughout the district, and the number of shelter homes is few. Family honour cultural norms usually do not encourage women to report abuse. Instead, there are some positive changes that can be observed. High reporting rates as compared to certain rural areas around Anand reveal increased awareness and use of legal support by victims. Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), judicial bodies, and district authorities are cooperating more and more in organised endeavours. Still, sustaining this progress necessitates significant changes on the system level. For Anand to be able to progress, he needs to focus on a collective inclusive approach to implementing solutions. The use of digital tools as well as localised awareness campaigns can merge different stakeholders and address the existing shortcomings. Ensuring survivors are identified, protected and empowered ought to form the basis for any domestic violence approach.

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