



AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFICACY OF PROTECTION OFFICER IN ENFORCING THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY.

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ABSTRACT

This comprehensive study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of protection officers in enforcing domestic violence laws, shedding light on the crucial role they play in safeguarding victims and upholding justice. Domestic violence remains a pervasive and complex issue, necessitating a thorough examination of the mechanisms in place to address and prevent such incidents. The research investigates the training, resources, and legal frameworks available to protection officers, analyzing their impact on the successful enforcement of domestic violence laws. Furthermore, the study explores the challenges faced by protection officers in the field, including societal attitudes, resource constraints, and coordination with other stakeholders. Through surveys, the research aims to identify patterns, gaps, and best practices in the enforcement process. The findings of this study are expected to contribute valuable insights to policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and advocacy groups, guiding the development of more effective strategies to combat domestic violence. By understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the current system, stakeholders can work collaboratively to enhance the efficacy of protection officers, ultimately creating a safer environment for victims and fostering a society intolerant of domestic violence.

KEYWORDS: Protection Officer, Domestic Violence, Law, Enforcement, Victim, Justice.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Domestic Violence Act, 2005, is an important piece of legislation in India designed to provide legal protection to victims of domestic violence, primarily women. It is a legal framework in India that aims to address the issue of domestic violence and protect the rights of victims, particularly women. Enacted in 2005, the act defines domestic violence to include physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, and economic abuse perpetrated by

family members against each other.¹ It provides victims with various protection measures, such as restraining orders, right to residence, and monetary relief. The act also establishes the role of Protection Officers to assist victims in accessing legal remedies and support services. By recognizing the seriousness of domestic violence and offering legal protection, the act seeks to create a safer environment for victims within their households.² Under the Domestic Violence Act, 2005, a Protection Officer plays a crucial role in assisting and supporting victims of domestic violence. The act recognizes the need for specialized personnel to help victims access legal remedies and support services effectively. A Protection Officer is typically a government official or a social worker designated by the government. Their primary responsibility is to aid victims in filing complaints and seeking protection orders against the perpetrators of domestic violence. They act as a bridge between the victim and the legal system, guiding them through the entire process.³

II. PROTECTION OFFICERS

A Protection Officer, as defined by the Act, is an official, preferably a female appointee designated by the Government in each district.⁴ A Protection Officer under the Domestic Violence Act, in brief, is a government-appointed official responsible for supporting and safeguarding the rights of victims of domestic violence. Protection Officers receive complaints from victims or their representatives regarding instances of domestic violence. They assess the complaints to evaluate the level of risk to the victim and determine the urgency of protective measures needed. Protection Officers assist victims in applying for protection orders, which can include restraining orders to prevent further abuse, residence orders to secure the victim's right to stay in the shared household, and monetary relief orders for financial support. They provide emotional support and guidance to victims, explaining their legal rights and the available remedies. They may also refer victims to counselling services⁵. Protection Officers help victims understand and access legal aid, as well as navigate the legal processes involved in obtaining protection and justice. They collaborate with victims to create safety plans, which may involve arranging for temporary shelter or other protective measures. Protection Officers ensure that protection orders are followed and take appropriate action if the abuser violates these orders. They advocate for the rights and interests of victims within the legal system and coordinate with law enforcement, legal professionals, and other relevant agencies. Protection Officers engage in community outreach and awareness programs to educate the public about domestic violence and the legal protections available. They maintain records of cases, actions taken, and outcomes for legal purposes and reporting to higher authorities. In essence, Protection Officers play a crucial role in implementing the provisions of the Domestic Violence Act, helping victims seek protection and

¹ Sharon Prescila s (Dr.) "Domestic violence against women in India: A family Menace" volume 4 Indian journal of Applied research 2014 ISSN NO. 2249- 555.

² A Brief About Protection Of Women From Domestic Violence Act 2005. available at: <https://legalvidhiya.com/a-brief-about-protection-of-women-from-domestic-violence-act-2005/>. (last visited on 23.04.2023)

³ Sakshi K. Sharma, Protection & promotion of Human Rights in India, 81(Central Law Publications, 1st Edn., 2010).

⁴ Power and Duties of Protection Officers under Protection of Women Against Domestic Violence Act

⁵ What Is Domestic Violence?, available at: <https://lawyerinc.net/in/domestic-violence>. (last visited on 23.09.2023).

justice, and ensuring their safety and well-being. Their responsibilities are vital in addressing domestic violence and holding perpetrators accountable for their actions.⁶

III. APPOINTMENT OF PROTECTION OFFICERS

The appointment of Protection Officers under the Domestic Violence Act⁷ varies by jurisdiction and country. According to the Act, it is the responsibility of the State Government to appoint Protection Officers in each district through an official notification. Additionally, the State Government must specify the geographical areas within which a Protection Officer is authorized to exercise the powers and fulfill the duties outlined in the Act. To ensure a gender-sensitive approach, the Act stipulates that Protection Officers should ideally be women. Furthermore, these appointed individuals must meet certain qualifications and possess relevant experience as per the regulations set forth.⁸ The terms and conditions of service for Protection Officers, as well as other officers working under their authority, are subject to official prescription. This means that the government will define and regulate the terms of their employment and service.⁹ In summary, the appointment and qualifications of Protection Officers are governed by the Act, with the State Government responsible for their appointment and the delineation of their operational areas.¹⁰ The Act also underscores the importance of having female Protection Officers and mandates that they meet specified qualifications and experience criteria. Additionally, the terms and conditions of service for Protection Officers and their subordinates are to be determined through official regulations.¹¹

IV. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF PROTECTION OFFICERS

Protection Officers appointed by the State Government can be either government officials or individuals affiliated with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, in India, the qualifications and experience required for Protection Officers can vary by state and the specific regulations and guidelines issued by the respective state governments. A bachelor's degree in a relevant field such as social work, psychology, law, sociology, or a related discipline is typically preferred. Prior experience in social work, counselling, or a related field, especially in working with individuals affected by domestic violence, is often valued.¹² Experience in legal advocacy or knowledge of legal procedures related to domestic violence cases can be an asset. Protection Officers should possess strong interpersonal skills, empathy, and sensitivity to the needs

⁶ Power and Duties of Protection Officers under Protection of Women Against Domestic Violence Act, available at: <https://blog.ipleaders.in/power-and-duties-of-protection-officers-under-protection-of-women-against-domestic-violence-act/>. (last visited on 24.09.2023).

⁷ Section 8 Appointment of Protection Officer: (1) The State Government shall, by notification, appoint such number of Protection Officers in each district as it may consider necessary and shall also notify the area or areas within which a Protection Officer shall exercise the powers and perform the duties conferred on him by or under this Act.

(2) The Protection Officers shall as far as possible be women and shall possess such qualifications and experience as may be prescribed.
(3) The terms and conditions of service of the Protection Officer and the other officers subordinate to him shall be such as may be prescribed.

⁸ Implementation of Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, available at: <http://wcdel.in/dwva.html>. Last visited on 30.05.2023).

⁹ See Supra 15.

¹⁰ Section 8 of the protection of Domestic Violence Act, 2005.

¹¹ Powers and duties of Protection Officer, service provider. Available at: https://www.medindia.net/indian_health_act/protection-of-women-powers-and-duties.htm. Last visited on 09.07.2023).

¹² A. Ashok Vardhan Reddy, (A-1), A. Jani Reddy, (A-2) and Smt. A.Vijayamma, (A-3) v. Smt. P. Savitha, D/o. Potula Krishna Reddy, CrI.P. No. 7063 of 2008, Decided On: 29.02.2012, Andhra Pradesh High Court.

and emotional well-being of domestic violence victims. Effective communication skills, both written and verbal, are essential for documenting cases, preparing reports, and communicating with victims, legal authorities, and support agencies.

V. TENURE OF PROTECTION OFFICERS

According to Rule 8,¹³ the tenure of a Protection Officer must span a minimum duration of three years. This regulation establishes a mandatory term of service for individuals appointed to the position of Protection Officer, ensuring continuity and stability in their role.¹⁴ The tenure of a Protection Officer under the Domestic Violence Act (DV Act) can vary by jurisdiction and the specific policies or regulations set by the relevant government authority. In many cases, Protection Officers are appointed on a contractual or fixed-term basis, and their tenure can be subject to renewal or extension. Protection Officers are often appointed on a contractual basis, typically for a specified period, such as one year or two years. The exact duration may be determined by the relevant government authority.¹⁵ Protection Officers can be removed from their positions before the end of their tenure if there are grounds for termination, such as misconduct or non-performance.¹⁶ The process for removal or termination would be in accordance with the applicable rules and regulations. Protection Officers may also resign from their positions if they choose to do so, subject to any contractual obligations.¹⁷

¹³ The Protection Of Women From Domestic Violence Rules, 2006, In exercise of the powers conferred by section 37 of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (43 of 2005), the Central Government hereby makes the followings, namely:-
!. Short title and commencement.-{ 1) These rules may be called the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Rules, 2006. (2) They shall come into force on the 26th day of October, 2006

¹⁴ Overview of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 (PWDVA); available at - <http://www.icrw.org/files/images/Reducing-HIV-Stigma-and-Gender-Based-Violence-Toolkit-for-Health-CareProviders-in-India-Annex-4.pdf>; Pg.no. 225

¹⁵ Qualifications and experience of Protection Officers.-(1) The Protection Officers appointed by the State Government may be of the Government or members of non-governmental organizations: Provided that preference shall be given to women. (2) Every person appointed as Protection Officer under the Act shall have at least three years experience in social sector. (3) The tenure of a Protection Officer shall be a minimum period of three years.

(4) The State Government shall provide necessary office assistance to the Protection Officer for the efficient discharge of his or her functions under the Act and these rules.

¹⁶ Section 9 Duties and functions of Protection Officers (1) It shall be the duty of the Protection Officer--

(a) to assist the Magistrate in the discharge of his functions under this Act;

(b) to make a domestic incident report to the Magistrate, in such form and in such manner as may be prescribed, upon receipt of a complaint of domestic violence and forward copies thereof to the police officer in charge of the police station within the local limits of whose jurisdiction domestic violence is alleged to have been committed and to the service providers in that area;

(c) to make an application in such form and in such manner as may be prescribed to the Magistrate, if the aggrieved person so desires, claiming relief for issuance of a protection order;

(d) to ensure that the aggrieved person is provided legal aid under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 (39 of 1987) and make available free of cost the prescribed form in which a complaint is to be made;

(e) to maintain a list of all service providers providing legal aid or counselling, shelter homes and medical facilities in a local area within the jurisdiction of the Magistrate;

(f) to make available a safe shelter home, if the aggrieved person so requires and forward a copy of his report of having lodged the aggrieved person in a shelter home to the police station and the Magistrate having jurisdiction in the area where the shelter home is situated;

(g) to get the aggrieved person medically examined, if she has sustained bodily injuries and forward a copy of the medical report to the police station and the Magistrate having jurisdiction in the area where the domestic violence is alleged to have been taken place;

(h) to ensure that the order for monetary relief under section 20 is complied with and executed, in accordance with the procedure prescribed under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974);

(i) to perform such other duties as may be prescribed.

(2) The Protection Officer shall be under the control and supervision of the Magistrate, and shall perform the duties imposed on him by the Magistrate and the Government by, or under, this Act.

¹⁷ *Ibid...*

VI. JURISDICTION OF PROTECTION OFFICERS

Protection Officers may have jurisdiction over both urban and rural areas within their assigned district or jurisdiction. If a victim of domestic violence moves from one jurisdiction to another (e.g., from one district to another), the Protection Officer in the new jurisdiction is responsible for providing assistance and support to the victim.¹⁸ The DV Act is designed to ensure continuity of protection and support across different areas. Protection Officers often coordinate with law enforcement agencies, legal authorities, and support services within their jurisdiction to provide comprehensive assistance to victims.¹⁹ In cases involving domestic violence across state or national borders, the jurisdiction may involve collaboration with Protection Officers or authorities in multiple jurisdictions. It's important to note that the exact jurisdictional boundaries and the appointment of Protection Officers can vary by region and the specific regulations set by the relevant government authority.²⁰

VII. DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF PROTECTION OFFICERS

Protection Officers under the Domestic Violence Act (DV Act) 2005 in India play a vital role in safeguarding the rights and well-being of victims of domestic violence. Their duties and functions are integral to the effective implementation of the DV Act and providing support to those who experience domestic violence.²¹ These officers are appointed to assist and empower victims and ensure that the provisions of the law are upheld. This introduction provides an overview of the key duties and functions of Protection Officers under the DV Act 2005. Their roles include receiving complaints, assessing risk, assisting with protection orders, providing counselling and support, offering legal assistance, facilitating safety planning, monitoring compliance with protection orders, advocating for victims, conducting awareness programs, and maintaining essential documentation. These dedicated professionals work to create a safer and more supportive environment for victims of domestic violence, helping them access legal remedies and support services while advocating for their rights within the legal system.

VIII. FUNCTIONS OF THE PROTECTION OFFICER UNDER THE ACT

The primary and paramount role of the Protection Officer is to safeguard the victim from any further instances of domestic violence. The Protection Officer serves as a crucial intermediary, fostering communication and cooperation between the woman seeking assistance, the police, and service providers. It's important to note that the operations of Protection Officers must be executed with due caution to ensure they do not infringe upon the fundamental rights of privacy and the autonomy of women who have filed complaints. Upon receiving a

¹⁸ Section 9(b): To make a domestic incident report to the Magistrate, in such form and in such manner as may be prescribed, upon receipt of a complaint of domestic violence and forward copies thereof to the police officer in charge of the police station within the local limits of whose jurisdiction domestic violence is alleged to have been committed and to the service providers in that area;

¹⁹ Section 9(e) to maintain a list of all service providers providing legal aid or counselling, shelter homes and medical facilities in a local area within the jurisdiction of the Magistrate;

²⁰ *Ibid.*,,

²¹ Aditya Saharya, Protection Officer Under The Domestic Violence Act, March 27, 2023. Available at: <https://nyayconnection.com/protection-officer-under-the-domestic-violence-act/#:~:text=Counseling%20and%20support%3A%20Protection%20Officers,legal%20assistance%2C%20or%20medical%20services.> (last visited on 30.10.2023).

complaint from an aggrieved individual, the Protection Officer is tasked with generating a Domestic Incident Report.²² Protection Officers play a pivotal role in the following key functions:

Providing Information: They educate victims about their legal rights and the available remedies outlined in the Domestic Violence Act, ensuring victims are informed about their options.²³

Assisting with Complaints: Protection Officers aid victims in the process of registering complaints with the appropriate authorities or the court, guiding them through the necessary procedures.²⁴

Obtaining Protection Orders: They assist victims in securing various types of protection orders, such as restraining orders or residence orders, with the primary aim of ensuring the victim's safety and well-being.²⁵

Coordinating with Other Agencies: Protection Officers collaborate with other relevant agencies and service providers to ensure that victims receive essential support services such as medical assistance, counselling, and access to shelter when needed.²⁶

Follow-up and Monitoring: They play a crucial role in monitoring the implementation of protection orders and ensuring that the accused party complies with the court's directives, thereby safeguarding the victim's interests.²⁷

Maintaining Confidentiality: Protection Officers adhere to strict confidentiality protocols, safeguarding the victim's identity and personal information, thus preserving their privacy and safety. These functions collectively contribute to creating a supportive and secure environment for victims of domestic violence, empowering them to seek legal recourse and assistance while protecting their rights and well-being.²⁸

IX. DUTIES OF THE PROTECTION OFFICER

The commitment to safeguarding the aggrieved person from violence and preventing its recurrence underscores the significance of the PO's role in promoting the welfare and protection of individuals affected by domestic violence.

1. Duty to Receive Complaints of Domestic Violence

The primary responsibility of the Protection Officer is to receive complaints of domestic violence and take necessary action, either based on the PO's assessment of the complaint or at the specific request of the aggrieved person. When an aggrieved person presents a complaint of domestic violence to the PO, the complaint is required to be transformed into a Domestic Incident Report,²⁹ as outlined in Form I of the PWDVA Rules. The PO assists

²² Protection Officer Under the Domestic Violence Act, Available at: <https://nyayconnection.com/protection-officer-under-the-domestic-violence-act/#:~:text=Medical%20examination%3A%20Protection%20Officers%20are%20responsible%20for%20getting%20the%20aggrieved,the%20necessary%20protection%20and%20support>. (Last visited on 30.10.2023).

²³ Rule 9 of Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Rules 2006.

²⁴ *Ajay Kant vs. Alka Sharma* 2008 CrLJ 264 (MP).

²⁵ Section 18 of Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005.

²⁶ Rule 5(2) of Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Rules 2006.

²⁷ Section 32 of Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005.

²⁸ *Ibid.*,,

²⁹ See *Supra*-70.

the aggrieved person in completing the DIR, ensuring accuracy in detailing, confirming the completeness of accompanying documentation, and subsequently countersigning the DIR.³⁰

2. Duty to Inform the Aggrieved Person of Her Legal Rights and Remedies:

The Protection Officer (PO) is obligated to apprise the aggrieved person of her legal rights and remedies under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA) and other pertinent laws. Section 5 of the PWDVA specifies the duty to provide information, and the nature of this information is encapsulated in Form IV.³¹

3. Duty to Facilitate the Aggrieved Person's Access to Support Services and Protective Measures:

Recognizing that an aggrieved person may require diverse forms of assistance to address domestic violence ranging from legal and medical to psychological support the PO's duties extend to facilitating access to these services and implementing protective measures. Key responsibilities include:

Safe Shelter Homes: The PO must arrange for the aggrieved person to be accommodated in a safe shelter home if she so requires. Copies of the records documenting her stay in the shelter home are forwarded to the Magistrate and the relevant police station. The PO may also assist in arranging transportation for the aggrieved person and her children to the shelter home.³²

Medical Examination: If the aggrieved person has sustained bodily injuries, the PO ensures she undergoes a medical examination. Copies of the medical report are forwarded to the Magistrate and the police station in whose jurisdiction the alleged act of domestic violence occurred. Transportation to the medical facility is arranged as needed.³³

Information on Support Services: The PO provides information on available support services and registered Service Providers in the area, particularly counseling services, enabling the aggrieved person to access these services independently.³⁴ To fulfill this duty, the PO maintains an up-to-date list of registered Service Providers, notified medical facilities, shelter homes, and counselors within her/his jurisdiction.³⁵

Protective Action - Safety Plan: To prevent further acts of domestic violence, the PO, in consultation with the aggrieved person, prepares a "Safety Plan" as per Form V of the PWDVA Rules. This proactive measure is intended to assess the aggrieved person's situation and the support she may require, serving as a valuable tool even before an application for relief is filed in court.³⁶

³⁰ *Ibid.*,,

³¹ Under Section 5, information to be provided to the aggrieved person includes:

- (a) Her right to make an application to obtain relief/s under the PWDVA;
- (b) The availability of the services of Service Providers;
- (c) Her right to legal aid;
- (d) Her right to file a complaint under Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

³² See Supra-69.

³³ Rule 8(1)(xii).

³⁴ Section 9(2) of Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005.

³⁵ Section 9(1)(f).

³⁶ Rule 8(1)(vii).

4. Duty to Facilitate the Aggrieved Person's Access to Support Services and to take Protective Measures

(i) Preparation of Application:³⁷

The PO is required to prepare or assist in preparing an application for relief under the PWDVA as per Form II of the PWDVA Rules (PWDVR). This application must be accompanied by a copy of the Domestic Incident Report (DIR), and in cases where immediate relief is necessary, the PO may file an affidavit as per Form III of the PWDVR to seek an interim order from the Court.³⁸

(ii) Legal Aid Assistance:

In instances where the aggrieved person cannot afford the services of a lawyer, the PO must ensure that she is provided legal aid under the Legal Services Authorities Act. The PO is also responsible for making the prescribed form for obtaining such aid available to the aggrieved person free of cost. Additionally, the PO has the duty to comply with the orders of the Court, assisting the Magistrate in discharging their functions under the PWDVA. During this stage of duties, the PO operates under the control and supervision of the Magistrate. Before undertaking specific duties, the PO must receive an order from the Court. These duties include:

(i) **Service of Notices:** Ensuring that notices are served on the respondent to appear in court.³⁹

(ii) **Home Visit:** Conducting a home visit of the shared household premises if the Court requires clarifications before granting an ex parte order.⁴⁰

(iii) **Economic Status Report:** Making inquiries and filing a report on the economic status of the respondent by examining emoluments, assets, bank accounts, and other relevant documents.⁴¹

(iv) **Restoration of Personal Effects:** Restoring an aggrieved person's personal effects, such as gifts and jewelry, and reinstating her in the shared household.⁴²

(v) **Custody and Visitation Assistance:** Assisting an aggrieved person in regaining custody of her children and securing visitation rights as ordered by the Court.⁴³

(vi) **Enforcement of Orders:** Assisting the Court in the enforcement of orders in the manner directed by the Court.⁴⁴

³⁷ Rule 8(1)(iv).

³⁸ Training Program for Protection Officers in Addressing Domestic Violence, (28th June – 2nd July, 2021), In collaboration with National Commission for Women. Available at: [https://www.lbsnaa.gov.in/lbsnaa_sub/upload/uploadfiles/files/NGC/Document/Report-%20Training%20for%20POs_28th%20June-1st%20July%20\(UP-1\)\(1\)\(1\).pdf](https://www.lbsnaa.gov.in/lbsnaa_sub/upload/uploadfiles/files/NGC/Document/Report-%20Training%20for%20POs_28th%20June-1st%20July%20(UP-1)(1)(1).pdf). (Last updated on 30.10.2023).

³⁹ Section 9(2).

⁴⁰ Rule 10(1)(b).

⁴¹ Rule 10(1)(c).

⁴² Rule 10(1)(d).

⁴³ Rule 10(1)(e). Enforcement of orders is discussed in detail in Chapter Duties of the Protection Officer During and Post Litigation, Part 3.4.

⁴⁴ Rule 10(1)(f).

(vii) **Confiscation of Weapons:** Confiscating weapons used to commit domestic violence with the assistance of the police.⁴⁵

Section 9(1)(h) additionally obligates POs to ensure that orders for monetary relief are complied with and executed following the procedure prescribed under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1908 (CrPC). The PO's availability to render assistance is outlined in Rule 10, where the Magistrate can issue directions for general practice, and the PO is duty-bound to carry out these additional directions.⁴⁶

X. STATUS OF THE PROTECTION OFFICER

The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA) designates Protection Officers (POs)⁴⁷ as "public servants" within the meaning of Section 21 of the Indian Penal Code⁴⁸. This classification establishes the official status of POs while performing their duties under the PWDVA. Furthermore, PWDVA shields Protection Officers from legal consequences for acts performed in good faith under the provisions of the law.⁴⁹ It explicitly states that no suit, prosecution, or any other legal action for damages can be initiated against a PO for actions undertaken in good faith during the course of their duties under the PWDVA. Despite the comprehensive legal protection accorded to POs, the PWDVA outlines potential consequences for unjustified failures or refusals by a PO to comply with directions issued by the Magistrate in any protection order granted. In such cases, a PO may face imprisonment for up to one year and/or a fine of up to Rs. 20,000. However, given that a PO is considered a public servant with a fixed remuneration, Section 34 of the PWDVA mandates that prior approval from the State Government or any authorized officer is required before initiating any prosecution under Section 33 of the Act. This provision ensures oversight and scrutiny before legal proceedings are instituted against a Protection Officer.

XI. ACCESSIBILITY OF PROTECTION OFFICERS

Before delving into the impact of Protection Officers on outcomes for women affected by violence, it is crucial to examine the circumstances surrounding their appointment, as it significantly determines their accessibility to women seeking assistance.⁵⁰ However, research findings indicate that Protection Officers were the least accessible among various law enforcement entities, including the police, lawyers, and service providers.⁵¹ This is a rather alarming discovery, given that Protection Officers play a pivotal role in the protection of women, and ensuring their accessibility should be a top priority, aligning with the very purpose of their appointment. Interestingly, despite the police receiving a low ranking, women found it relatively easier to access the police compared to

⁴⁵ Rule 10(2).

⁴⁶ Rule 10(3).

⁴⁷ Section 30 of the Act.

⁴⁸ Section 21 of IPC.

⁴⁹ Section 35: Protection of action taken in good faith.—No suit, prosecution or other legal proceeding shall lie against the Protection Officer for any damage caused or likely to be caused by anything which is in good faith done or intended to be done under this Act or any rule or order made thereunder.

⁵⁰ Ministry of Women and Child Development, NCW in collaboration with LBSNAA Launches Training Programme of Protection Officers in addressing Domestic Violence, available at: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1730983>. (Last updated on 30.10.2023).

⁵¹ Krishnadas Rajagopala, Supreme Court intrigued by the lack of 'protection officers' for domestic violence cases, Available at: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/lack-of-protection-officers-for-domestic-violence-cases-intrigues-sc-about-mission-shakti/article66557250.ece>. (Last updated on 29.10.2023).

Protection Officers. This paradox raises concerns about the accessibility of Protection Officers, especially considering that the Act envisions their appointment to create a supportive environment for women facing violence. In practice, however, nearly half of the women did not even make contact with Protection Officers.⁵² This discrepancy in accessibility can be attributed to several factors, including whether Protection Officers were appointed on a full-time or part-time basis and the level at which they were appointed, either at the district or sub-district level. It's worth noting that the research primarily focuses on women's perspectives of their interactions with Protection Officers and how these officers assisted them in navigating the PWDVA, rather than solely evaluating the accessibility of Protection Officers. This section provides insight into the experiences of women who did engage with Protection Officers and the influence of these interactions on their outcomes.

XII. PROTECTION ORDERS

A Protection Officer under the Domestic Violence Act (DV Act) 2005 in India is a pivotal figure tasked with ensuring the protection and support of victims of domestic violence. Their role is instrumental in implementing the DV Act and providing assistance to individuals who are subjected to abuse and violence within domestic settings. Protection Officers are appointed by the government and serve as a crucial link between the legal system and victims of domestic violence. They play a multifaceted role that encompasses various responsibilities, including receiving and assessing complaints, facilitating the application of protection orders, offering emotional support and counseling, providing legal guidance, ensuring safety planning, and monitoring compliance with protection orders. Additionally, they advocate for victims' rights within the legal system and promote awareness about domestic violence in the community.⁵³ The DV Act 2005 aims to empower and protect victims by recognizing various forms of abuse, including physical, emotional, sexual, and economic, and by providing legal mechanisms for seeking relief and justice.⁵⁴ Protection Officers are instrumental in realizing these objectives, working tirelessly to create a safer environment for those affected by domestic violence and ensuring that the law's provisions are effectively applied. Their dedication and expertise are essential components of the broader effort to combat domestic violence and promote gender equality in society.

A Protection Order issued under the Domestic Violence Act (DV Act) is a legally binding directive from the court designed to safeguard victims of domestic violence. Its primary objective is to ensure the safety and well-

⁵² Ashok KM, Not Mandatory For Magistrate To Consider Domestic Incident Report Before Passing Any Order In Application Filed By Aggrieved Person Herself Or Her Advocate: Supreme Court, available at: <https://www.livewlaw.in/top-stories/supreme-court-domestic-incident-report-magistrate-not-mandatory-198971>. (Last visited on 30.10.2023).

⁵³ Women's Aid, Domestic abuse is a gendered crime[website], <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/domestic-abuse-is-a-gendered-crime/>, (accessed 19 January 2020).

⁵⁴ Objectives of the Domestic Violence Act, 2005

The aim and objectives of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 is to serve the following purposes: To identify and determine that every act of domestic violence is unlawful and punishable by law.

To provide protection to victims of domestic violence in the cases such acts occur.

To serve justice in a timely, cost-effective, and convenient manner to the aggrieved person.

To prevent the commission of domestic violence and to take adequate steps if such violence occurs.

To implement sufficient programmes and agendas for the victims of domestic violence and to guarantee the recovery of such victims.

To create awareness among the people about domestic violence.

To enforce harsh punishment and must hold the culprits accountable for committing such heinous acts of violence.

To lay down the law and govern it in accordance with the international standards for the prevention of domestic violence.

being of the victim and anyone else affected by the domestic violence. Here are the key aspects of Protection Orders:

Primary Purpose: The foremost aim of a Protection Order is to protect the victim from further harm resulting from domestic violence. It serves as a legal shield against various forms of abuse, including physical, verbal, emotional, and economic abuse, as well as eviction from the home.

Application: A Protection Order can be sought by the victim or on their behalf, providing details of the domestic violence experienced and the specific relief sought.⁵⁵

Types of Orders: Courts can issue various types of Protection Orders tailored to the specific circumstances of the case, prohibiting the respondent from committing acts of domestic violence, aiding or abetting such acts, entering the victim's workplace or, in the case of a child victim, their school, or any other place frequented by the victim. It can also restrict communication in any form with the victim, prevent the alienation of assets or usage of bank accounts, and prohibit violence against dependents or other relatives.⁵⁶

Duration: Protection Orders are typically issued for a specified duration, but they can be extended or modified as necessary to ensure ongoing protection.⁵⁷

Enforcement: Law enforcement agencies and authorities are responsible for enforcing Protection Orders and ensuring the victim's safety.⁵⁸

Legal Consequences: Violating a Protection Order is a punishable offense, and the accused may face legal consequences, including imprisonment. In summary, Protection Orders are vital legal mechanisms that provide immediate protection and relief to victims of domestic violence. They serve to prevent further abuse and ensure the safety and well-being of those affected by domestic violence. The court issues Protection Orders after assessing the situation and considering input from both the aggrieved person and the respondent to address the specific circumstances of each case.⁵⁹

XIII. SUPPORT IN COMPLIANCE OF ORDERS

"Support in compliance of orders" within the context of the Domestic Violence Act (DV Act) pertains to the assistance and measures put in place to ensure that court-issued orders designed to protect victims are diligently adhered to by all parties involved.⁶⁰ This multifaceted support encompasses several critical aspects:

⁵⁵ M. Johnson and K. Ferraro, 'Research on Domestic Violence in the 1990s: Making Distinctions', Journal of Marriage and the Family, vol. 62, no. 4, 2000, p.957.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*,,

⁵⁷ Indira Jaising, Handbook On Law Of Domestic Violence, Lawyers Collective, 1st Edition 2009, Lexis Nexis Butterworths Wadhwa, Nagpur Publication.

⁵⁸ Dr. Pooja P. Narwarkar , Law Relating To Domestic Violence In India, 2014, Hind Law House

⁵⁹ N.K.Acharya , Commentary on The Protection Of Women From Domestic Violence Act, 2005, 5th Edition , Asia Law House.

⁶⁰ Dr.S.C.Tripathi & Vibha Arora, Law Relating To Women And Children, 1 st Edition 2004, Central Law Publication.

Monitoring and Follow-up: Following the issuance of protection orders, relevant authorities, such as law enforcement and Protection Officers, actively oversee the situation to verify that the orders are being upheld. Regular follow-up is conducted to promptly identify and address potential violations.⁶¹

Enforcement: In cases where the accused party breaches the protection orders, legal actions can be taken against them. This may entail filing a contempt of court petition, potentially resulting in penalties or even imprisonment for the violator.⁶²

Counselling and Rehabilitation: In certain situations, counselling and rehabilitation programs may be made available to the perpetrator to address their abusive behaviour and prevent future instances of violence.⁶³

Provision of Support Services: Victims are offered support services such as counselling, medical assistance, or shelter to aid in their recovery and ensure their safety.

Educational Programs: Community awareness and educational initiatives can be organized to educate the public about domestic violence and emphasize the importance of adhering to protection orders.

Legal Aid: Victims may receive legal aid and assistance in navigating any challenges encountered when enforcing protection orders or pursuing additional legal remedies.⁶⁴

Empowering the Victim: Emotional support and empowerment of the victim are essential components, enabling them to assert their rights effectively. This empowerment can significantly contribute to ensuring compliance with protection orders. Support in compliance of orders represents a collaborative effort involving various agencies and service providers.⁶⁵ Its primary goal is to guarantee the effective implementation of court-mandated protective measures, ensuring the safety and well-being of domestic violence victims while holding perpetrators accountable for their actions.⁶⁶

XIV. DOMESTIC INCIDENT REPORTS

A Domestic Incidents Report under the Domestic Violence Act (DV Act) is a concise but vital document used to record and document instances of domestic violence and abuse.⁶⁷ This report serves as a crucial tool in ensuring the protection of victims and facilitating legal actions against perpetrators. A Domestic Incidents Report is primarily designed to record incidents of domestic violence and abuse comprehensively. It plays a central role in assessing the victim's situation, providing legal protection, and gathering essential evidence for legal proceedings.⁶⁸ A Domestic Incidents Report typically includes: victim's and alleged perpetrator's names,

⁶¹ National Consultation On The Protection Of Women From Domestic Violence Act, 2005.

⁶² Overview of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 (PWDVA); available at - <http://www.icrw.org/files/images/Reducing-HIV-Stigma-and-Gender-Based-Violence-Toolkit-for-Health-CareProviders-in-India-Annex-4.pdf>; Pg.No.227.

⁶³ *Ibid.*,,

⁶⁴ See supra-69.

⁶⁵ Agnes Flavia, "Violence against Women: Review of Recent Enactments" in In the name of Justice, Women and law in Society, Swapna Mukhopadhyay (ed.), Manohar, 1999.

⁶⁶ Rachana Kaushal, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005—An Appraisal. Available at: <https://www.mainstreamweekky.net/article1936.html>. (Last visited on 30.10.2023).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*,

⁶⁸ Shobha Saxena, "Crime Against women and protection Laws", (Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi, 2007)

addresses, and contact information. The report records the date and time of the domestic violence incident, establishing a timeline of events.⁶⁹ It specifies where the incident occurred, such as the shared household or another location. This section describes the nature of the domestic violence incident, including specific abusive behaviors or violent actions that transpired. Any injuries sustained by the victim or damage to property resulting from the incident are documented, sometimes accompanied by photographs.⁷⁰ Details of any witnesses present during the incident, along with their statements if available, may be included.⁷¹

It provides an official record of the incident, serving as valuable evidence in legal proceedings to secure protection orders and pursue legal remedies. The report aids authorities in assessing the risk level faced by the victim, helping determine appropriate protective measures. It supports the development of safety plans for the victim, which may involve temporary shelter arrangements or other protective measures. The report can be used to initiate legal action against the perpetrator, holding them accountable for their actions.⁷² It is a fundamental part of maintaining a comprehensive record of domestic violence cases, aiding in monitoring compliance with protection orders and identifying patterns of abuse. Domestic Incidents Reports typically contain sensitive information and are treated with confidentiality to protect the privacy and safety of the victim.⁷³ Access to these reports is typically limited to authorized personnel, including law enforcement, Protection Officers, and legal professionals involved in the case. In summary, a Domestic Incidents Report under the DV Act is a concise yet crucial document used to record instances of domestic violence and abuse, supporting the protection and legal recourse of victims while maintaining their confidentiality and privacy.⁷⁴

When a complaint of domestic violence is received, the Protection Officer is required to create a domestic incident report using Form I.⁷⁵ This report should be submitted to the Magistrate, and copies of it must also be sent to the police officer in charge of the police station within the local jurisdiction where the reported domestic violence occurred, as well as to service providers operating in that area.⁷⁶ Additionally, upon the request of any aggrieved person, a service provider is authorized to document a domestic incident report using Form I. This report should then be forwarded to the Magistrate and the relevant Protection Officer who has jurisdiction over the area where the alleged domestic violence took place.⁷⁷

⁶⁹ McCue Margi Laird, "Domestic violence: A Reference Handbook", (ABCCLIO Inc. Oxford, England, 2008)

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*,

⁷¹ *Ibid.*,

⁷² Raju Sandhya, "Domestic violence and The Law", (Human Rights Law Network, New Delhi, 2008)

⁷³ *Ibid.*,

⁷⁴ Jaising Indira & Sakhrani Monica, "Law of Domestic Violence", (Universal Law Publishing Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, 2008.

⁷⁵ See the annexure.

⁷⁶ Jahan, Farhat, "Women in India" (Anmol Publication, New Delhi, 2004)

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*,

Giving Orders

Protection Order: If after hearing both the parties, the magistrate is satisfied that domestic violence took place, the magistrate can pass a protection order in favour of the aggrieved party.⁷⁸ Such protection order restricts the respondent from:

Committing the act of domestic violence. Abetting in the commission of domestic violence. Entering the place of employment, school, etc. of the aggrieved person. Attempting to communicate with the aggrieved person.⁷⁹ Alienate any assets, bank accounts or lockers enjoyed by either both the parties or the respondent singly, including her Sridharan. Causing violence to any person who helped the aggrieved person and provided protection from domestic violence. Committing any other act which is specified in the order given.⁸⁰

Residence Order⁸¹

The magistrate may also pass the Residence Order. Such order may: Restrain the respondent from dispossessing or distributing the possessions of the aggrieved person. Direct the respondent to remove himself from the shared household. Restrain the respondent or any of his relatives from entering the shared household of the parties where the aggrieved person resides. Restrain the respondent from renouncing his rights in the shared household. Restrain the respondent from disposing off the shared household.⁸²

⁷⁸ section 18, the protection women from domestic violence act 2005 also see rule 4, 10, 15, the protection of women from domestic violence rules 2006.

⁷⁹ Raju Sandhya, "Domestic violence and The Law", (Human Rights Law Network, New Delhi, 2008)

⁸⁰ Protection order passed by the magistrate under section 18 of the act:

The magistrate after giving an opportunity to the aggrieved person and respondent of being heard and if the magistrate is satisfied that a prima facie case of domestic violence has taken place or is likely to take place pass a protection order in favour of aggrieved person prohibiting the respondent from the following act such as committing any act of domestic violence: Aiding or abetting in the commission of act of domestic violence; entering the place of employment of aggrieved person or if the person is child, its school or any other places attempting to communicate in any form whatsoever, with the aggrieved person, including personal, oral or written., electronic or telephonic contract; Alienating any assets operating bank account, bank locker held or enjoyed by both parties jointly or singly by the respondent including her stridhan or any other property held either jointly by the parties or separately by them without leave of the Magistrate;. causing violence to the dependents or other relative or any other person who give the assistance to the aggrieved person or Committing any other act as specified by the protection officer.

⁸¹ section 2(p)& section 19.The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, available at: -V.P.Anuradha v. S. Sugantha & suganthi on 4 february 2015,

Indiankanoon.org/search/? Formlnput=citedby:485515. (Last updated on 23.10.2023).

⁸² Residence orders.—

(1) While disposing of an application under sub-section (1) of section 12, the Magistrate may, on being satisfied that domestic violence has taken place, pass a residence order—

- (a) restraining the respondent from dispossessing or in any other manner disturbing the possession of the aggrieved person from the shared household, whether or not the respondent has a legal or equitable interest in the shared household;
- (b) directing the respondent to remove himself from the shared household;
- (c) restraining the respondent or any of his relatives from entering any portion of the shared household in which the aggrieved person resides;
- (d) restraining the respondent from alienating or disposing of the shared household or encumbering the same;
- (e) restraining the respondent from renouncing his rights in the shared household except with the leave of the Magistrate; or
- (f) directing the respondent to secure same level of alternate accommodation for the aggrieved person as enjoyed by her in the shared household or to pay rent for the same, if the circumstances so require: Provided that no order under clause (b) shall be passed against any person who is a woman.

(2) The Magistrate may impose any additional conditions or pass any other direction which he may deem reasonably necessary to protect or to provide for the safety of the aggrieved person or any child of such aggrieved person.

(3) The Magistrate may require from the respondent to execute a bond, with or without sureties, for preventing the commission of domestic violence.

Monetary Relief⁸³

The magistrate may also direct the respondent to pay monetary relief to the aggrieved person for expenses incurred and losses suffered by her. Such relief may include (but is not limited to): Loss of earnings, Medical expenses, Loss caused due to destruction and damage of any property, Maintenance for the aggrieved person and her children.⁸⁴

Custody Order⁸⁵

The magistrate may also grant the custody of a child or children to the aggrieved person or person making an application on her behalf. He may also specify the visitation arrangements as well. In case he feels that visitation by the respondent would be harmful to the child, the magistrate may even refuse to allow such a visit.⁸⁶

(4) An order under sub-section (3) shall be deemed to be an order under Chapter VIII of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974) and shall be dealt with accordingly.

(5) While passing an order under sub-section (1), sub-section (2) or sub-section (3), the court may also pass an order directing the officer-in-charge of the nearest police station to give protection to the aggrieved person or to assist her or the person making an application on her behalf in the implementation of the order.

(6) While making an order under sub-section (1), the Magistrate may impose on the respondent obligations relating to the discharge of rent and other payments, having regard to the financial needs and resources of the parties.

(7) The Magistrate may direct the officer-in-charge of the police station in whose jurisdiction the Magistrate has been approached to assist in the implementation of the protection order.

(8) The Magistrate may direct the respondent to return to the possession of the aggrieved person her stridhan or any other property or valuable security to which she is entitled to.

⁸³ Monetary reliefs.—

(1) While disposing of an application under sub-section (1) of section 12, the Magistrate may direct the respondent to pay monetary relief to meet the expenses incurred and losses suffered by the aggrieved person and any child of the aggrieved person as a result of the domestic violence and such relief may include but is not limited to—

(a) the loss of earnings;

(b) the medical expenses;

(c) the loss caused due to the destruction, damage or removal of any property from the control of the aggrieved person; and

(d) the maintenance for the aggrieved person as well as her children, if any, including an order under or in addition to an order of maintenance under section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974) or any other law for the time being in force.

(2) The monetary relief granted under this section shall be adequate, fair and reasonable and consistent with the standard of living to which the aggrieved person is accustomed.

(3) The Magistrate shall have the power to order an appropriate lump sum payment or monthly payments of maintenance, as the nature and circumstances of the case may require.

(4) The Magistrate shall send a copy of the order for monetary relief made under sub-section (1) to the parties to the application and to the in-charge of the police station within the local limits of whose jurisdiction the respondent resides.

(5) The respondent shall pay the monetary relief granted to the aggrieved person within the period specified in the order under sub-section (1).

(6) Upon the failure on the part of the respondent to make payment in terms of the order under sub-section (1), the Magistrate may direct the employer or a debtor of the respondent, to directly pay to the aggrieved person or to deposit with the court a portion of the wages or salaries or debt due to or accrued to the credit of the respondent, which amount may be adjusted towards the monetary relief payable by the respondent.

⁸⁴ Section 125 criminal procedure 1973 : Order for maintenance of wives, children and parents:

1- If any person having sufficient means neglects or refuses to maintain—

a -, his wife, unable to maintain herself, or

b- his legitimate or illegitimate minor child, whether married or not, unable to maintain itself, or

c- his legitimate or illegitimate child(not being a married daughter) who has attained majority, where such child is by reason of any physical or mental abnormality or injury unable to maintain itself, or

d- his Father or mother, unable to maintain himself or herself a, magistrate of the first class may, upon, proof of such neglect or refusal, order such person to make a monthly allowance for the maintenance of his wife or such child father, or mother, at such monthly rate not exceeding 500 rupees in the whole, as such magistrate thinks fit, and to pay the same to such person as the magistrate may from time to time direct; provide that the. Magistrate may order the father of a minor female child r to in clause (b) to make such allowance, until she attains her majority, if any Magistrate is satisfied that the husband of such minor female child, if married, is not possessed of sufficient means.

⁸⁵ section 21, The protection of women from domestic violence Act, 2005.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*.,.,

Compensation Orders⁸⁷

The magistrate may also pass an order directing the respondent to pay compensation to the aggrieved person for the injuries, mental torture and emotional distress caused to her because of the domestic violence. In case the magistrate feels it is necessary and is satisfied that the respondent has caused domestic violence and may continue to do so in the future, he may also pass interim and ex-parte orders.⁸⁸

XV. PENALTY FOR BREACH OF PROTECTION ORDER

The law stipulates that a violation of a protection order or an interim protection order by the respondent constitutes an offense.⁸⁹ The offender may be subject to imprisonment, which can extend up to one year, a fine of up to twenty thousand rupees, or both. This offense of breaching a protection order is classified as cognizable and non-bailable.⁹⁰ Moreover, the court has the authority to determine, based solely on the testimony of the aggrieved person, that the offense has indeed taken place.⁹¹

One distinctive aspect of this legislation is the provision granting women in domestic relationships the right to reside in a shared household. This right is extended regardless of whether or not the woman has any financial interest in the property in question. Importantly, this provision holds precedence over any conflicting laws currently in force.⁹² Furthermore, the law establishes that the respondent cannot lawfully evict or exclude the aggrieved person from the shared household, or any portion of it, unless such actions are executed following the legal procedures established for such cases.⁹³

XVI. GUIDELINES FOR PROTECTION OFFICERS ON GENERAL STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING

Acquire a comprehensive understanding of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA) and other relevant criminal and civil laws.

1. Familiarize yourself with general procedural laws, including the Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure, and the Indian Evidence Act.

⁸⁷ Section 22, The protection of women from domestic violence act 2005.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*,,

⁸⁹ Section 17- 'right to reside in the shared household and section 19- 'Residence order' r/w section. 31- 'penalty for breach of protection order by respondent'.

⁹⁰ Ahluwalia Anupam, "Dimensions of Domestic violence Against women", paper presented at all India , 2010, 27-28th March 2010, Punjab University, Chandigarh

⁹¹ Protection of Domestic Violence Act, Section 32. Penalty for breach of protection order by respondent.—

(1) A breach of protection order, or of an interim protection order, by the respondent shall be an offence under this Act and shall be punishable with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine which may extend to twenty thousand rupees, or with both.

(2) The offence under sub-section (1) shall as far as practicable be tried by the Magistrate who had passed the order, the breach of which has been alleged to have been caused by the accused.

(3) While framing charges under sub-section (1), the Magistrates may also frame charges under section 498A of the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860) or any other provision of that Code or the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 (28 of 1961), as the case may be, if the facts disclose the commission of an offence under those provisions.

⁹² Ahuja S. (Dr.) " Domestic violence against women-The constitutional Dimensions", Indian Bar Review vol. XLII(3) 2015.

⁹³ *Id.*, Section 17.

2. Stay informed about government schemes and available facilities that the aggrieved person may utilize.
3. Collaborate with the District Administration to raise awareness about the PWDVA.
4. Encourage multi-agency and interdepartmental cooperation to establish a robust Domestic Violence Response System.
5. Clearly and sensitively explain the offense of domestic violence to the aggrieved person, outlining her rights and remedies under the PWDVA.
6. Develop the ability to guide the aggrieved person in addressing domestic violence effectively.
7. Acquire the necessary skills to conduct thorough inquiries and submit accurate investigation reports to the Court.
8. Carefully prepare the Domestic Incident Report (DIR) and ensure that all supporting documentation is organized.
9. Ensure the timely service of notices to all relevant parties.
10. Facilitate the effective enforcement of Court orders related to domestic violence cases.
11. Maintain complete and up-to-date records of casework for reference and reporting purposes.
12. Cultivate problem-solving and crisis-management skills to handle challenging situations effectively.

XVII. SUM UP

The Protection Officer, as established under the Domestic Violence Act, plays a pivotal role in assisting the court and ensuring the Act's effective implementation. Their responsibilities encompass a wide range of services aimed at safeguarding the interests and well-being of victims of domestic violence. These responsibilities often include providing medical assistance, counselling, legal aid, and other essential services to the aggrieved parties. While the Act mandates the appointment of Protection Officers by State Governments, concerns have arisen due to the fact that many individuals appointed to these roles may not be working full-time in this capacity. In many cases, this duty is assigned as an additional charge to those already employed in various government services. This situation can lead to issues related to qualifications and commitment, potentially impacting the quality of support and assistance provided to victims. In summary, the Protection Officer is a crucial component of the Domestic Violence Act, entrusted with the task of ensuring that victims receive the necessary protection and assistance. However, there is room for improvement in terms of their qualifications and dedication to effectively fulfill their roles under the Act.