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## Role of Law Enforcement and Policy Implementation in Reducing Violence against Women Post-Prohibition in Bihar

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**DOI : <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17129508>**

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### ARTICLE DETAILS

**Research Paper**

**Accepted:** 24-08-2025

**Published:** 10-09-2025

**Keywords:**

*Violence against women,  
law enforcement, policy  
implementation,  
prohibition, Bihar,*

### ABSTRACT

This article examines the role of law enforcement and policy implementation in reducing violence against women (VAW) in Bihar, India, following the state's prohibition policy implemented in 2016. The study critically analyzes the historical context, evaluates the effectiveness of contemporary measures, and identifies ongoing challenges in combating VAW. By exploring the interplay between legislation, enforcement, and societal attitudes, the paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the strategies required to address VAW effectively.

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### Introduction

Violence against women (VAW) is a pervasive and severe issue in India, deeply rooted in cultural, economic, and social dynamics. Bihar, one of India's most populous states, exemplifies this challenge with its entrenched patriarchal norms and high incidence of gender-based violence. Despite legislative efforts and policy measures, VAW remains a critical problem.

In 2016, Bihar introduced a state-wide prohibition on alcohol with the twin objectives of improving public health and reducing domestic violence. This policy was particularly significant in a state where alcohol consumption was often linked to domestic violence and other forms of VAW. This article



explores the impact of prohibition on VAW in Bihar, focusing on the role of law enforcement and policy implementation in this context. The study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the successes, challenges, and areas for improvement in addressing VAW post-prohibition.

Bihar, one of India's most populous and economically challenged states, presents a compelling case study for examining VAW. The state has historically struggled with high levels of gender-based violence, fueled by a combination of socio-economic deprivation, low literacy rates, and rigid cultural norms. In response to these persistent issues, the Bihar government implemented a sweeping policy measure in 2016: a complete prohibition on the sale and consumption of alcohol. This policy aimed to address not only public health concerns but also to mitigate domestic violence, which is often exacerbated by alcohol consumption.

The introduction of prohibition in Bihar was a landmark decision, championed by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and supported by various women's advocacy groups. The policy was grounded in the belief that reducing alcohol consumption would directly correlate with a decrease in domestic violence and other forms of VAW. This belief was not without merit, as numerous studies have established a link between alcohol abuse and increased aggression, particularly in domestic settings.

However, the implementation of prohibition has been fraught with complexities. While initial reports suggested a decline in domestic violence incidents, the long-term impact of the policy remains a topic of debate. Prohibition has brought to light several challenges related to law enforcement, resource allocation, and the unintended consequences of driving the alcohol trade underground. Additionally, the cultural and societal attitudes towards women, which often perpetuate VAW, have proven to be deeply resistant to change.

## **Review of Literature**

The literature on Violence against women (VAW) in India and the impact of prohibition policies is extensive, reflecting diverse perspectives and methodologies. Key themes in this body of research include the socio-economic and cultural factors contributing to VAW, the role of alcohol in exacerbating domestic violence, and the effectiveness of prohibition as a policy measure.

**Socio-Economic and Cultural Factors :** Kabeer (1999) and Patel (2011) highlight the complex interplay of socio-economic and cultural factors that contribute to VAW. These factors include patriarchal norms, economic dependency, and limited access to education and healthcare for women.



These studies emphasize the need for a holistic approach to addressing VAW, which includes economic empowerment, education, and changes in societal attitudes.

**Alcohol and Domestic Violence : Johnson et al. (2015)** demonstrates a strong correlation between alcohol consumption and increased violence against women. This body of literature underscores the potential benefits of alcohol prohibition in reducing domestic violence but also warns of the unintended consequences that can arise from such policies.

**Impact of Prohibition Policies : Sharma (2017) and Kumar (2018)** examine the immediate effects of the prohibition policy on domestic violence rates. These studies indicate a reduction in reported cases of VAW following prohibition but also highlight the complexity of enforcement and the unintended consequences on women's safety and autonomy. Sharma (2017) found that while reported incidents of domestic violence decreased, the prohibition policy also led to the emergence of illegal alcohol markets, which brought new challenges for law enforcement.

**Law Enforcement and Policy Implementation : Baxi (2014) and Natarajan (2016)** explore the challenges faced by law enforcement agencies in India, including inadequate resources, lack of training, and deep-rooted gender biases. These studies emphasize the importance of specialized training for law enforcement officials and the need for a coordinated approach to policy implementation.

## Objectives

1. To analyze the historical context of VAW in Bihar and its evolution post-prohibition.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of law enforcement in reducing VAW in Bihar post-prohibition.
3. To assess the implementation of policies aimed at mitigating VAW in Bihar.
4. To identify gaps in current strategies and propose actionable recommendations for improvement.

## Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, comprehensive review of existing literature, policy analysis, and case studies from Bihar. Data sources include academic journals, government reports, and interviews with key stakeholders such as law enforcement officials, policymakers, activists, and victims of VAW.

## Data Collection

**Literature Review:** A thorough review of existing academic and policy literature on VAW, prohibition policies, and law enforcement in Bihar was conducted to provide a theoretical framework for the study.



**Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with law enforcement officials, policymakers, activists, and victims of VAW. These interviews aimed to gather insights into the practical challenges and successes of policy implementation.

**Case Studies:** Detailed case studies of specific instances of VAW in Bihar were analyzed to understand the impact of prohibition and the role of law enforcement.

**Policy Analysis:** An analysis of relevant policies and their implementation was conducted to identify strengths, weaknesses, and gaps.

## **Background of Study**

### **Historical Context of VAW in Bihar**

Bihar, a state in eastern India, has a long history of gender-based violence influenced by socio-economic, cultural, and political factors. Traditional patriarchal norms, low literacy rates, and poverty contribute to the marginalization of women and the perpetuation of VAW. The state's historical background of social inequity and gender discrimination has been a significant barrier to women's empowerment and safety.

### **Socio-Economic Development**

Bihar's socio-economic landscape has historically been marked by poverty, low literacy rates, and limited economic opportunities. These factors have significantly impacted the lives of women, making them particularly vulnerable to violence and exploitation. The agrarian economy of Bihar, combined with a lack of industrial development, has perpetuated economic dependency and limited the scope for women's empowerment. In many rural areas, traditional gender roles confine women to household duties, while men control economic resources and decision-making power.

The economic dependency of women on their male counterparts exacerbates their vulnerability to violence. Financial insecurity often prevents women from leaving abusive relationships, as they lack the resources and support systems needed to achieve independence. The historical marginalization of women in the economic sphere has also meant that they have had limited access to education and employment opportunities, further entrenching their subordinate status in society.

### **Cultural Norms and Patriarchy**

The cultural fabric of Bihar is deeply woven with patriarchal values that dictate the roles and behaviors of women. Traditional customs and social norms reinforce the idea of male dominance and female



subservience. Practices such as dowry, child marriage, and preference for male children are manifestations of these deeply ingrained patriarchal values. These customs not only devalue women but also contribute to various forms of VAW, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, and honor-based violence.

Dowry-related violence is particularly prevalent in Bihar. Despite legal prohibitions, the practice of dowry continues to thrive, leading to severe repercussions for women who are unable to meet dowry demands. Many women suffer physical and emotional abuse, and in extreme cases, dowry-related disputes result in bride burning and other forms of lethal violence.

Child marriage is another critical issue in Bihar. Historically, girls have been married off at a young age, which truncates their education and exposes them to early and often dangerous pregnancies. Child brides are more likely to experience domestic violence and have limited autonomy within their marital homes. Although the legal age of marriage is now 18 for women, enforcement remains weak, and child marriage persists, particularly in rural areas.

### **Political History and Governance**

Bihar's political history has also played a role in shaping the landscape of VAW. The state has experienced periods of political instability, lawlessness, and ineffective governance, which have hindered efforts to address VAW. The presence of caste-based politics and social hierarchies has further complicated the situation, as marginalized communities, including women, often find themselves at the receiving end of violence and discrimination.

In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, Bihar was known for its high crime rates and ineffective law enforcement. This period of "Jungle Raj," as it is colloquially known, was marked by rampant corruption, political patronage, and a breakdown of law and order. During this time, women were particularly vulnerable to violence, as the state's capacity to protect them and enforce laws was severely compromised.

Efforts to improve governance and law enforcement have been made in recent decades, with mixed results. Political leaders have initiated various social reforms aimed at improving the status of women and addressing VAW. However, the effectiveness of these measures has been limited by entrenched social attitudes, inadequate implementation, and the pervasive influence of traditional power structures.

### **Impact of Prohibition Policy**

The prohibition of alcohol in Bihar in 2016 was a significant policy intervention aimed at addressing VAW, particularly domestic violence. Alcohol consumption has long been associated with increased aggression and violence, and the prohibition policy was intended to mitigate these issues. The policy received substantial support from women's groups, who saw it as a means to reduce domestic violence and improve public safety.

Initial reports following the implementation of prohibition indicated a decrease in reported cases of domestic violence. However, the long-term impact of the policy has been complex. While there has been a reduction in alcohol-related violence, the prohibition has also led to unintended consequences, such as the emergence of illegal alcohol markets and related criminal activities. These developments have posed new challenges for law enforcement and raised questions about the sustainability of the policy's benefits.

### Data on Government Expenditure Post-Prohibition

The table below presents a summary of government expenditure in key areas post-prohibition:

**Table 3.4**

Year	Enforcement (₹ Crore)	Health & Rehabilitation (₹ Crore)	Women's Programs (₹ Crore)	Skill Development (₹ Crore)	Total Expenditure (₹ Crore)
2016-17	350	200	150	100	800
2017-18	400	220	180	120	920
2018-19	450	250	200	150	1,050
2019-20	500	270	220	180	1,170
2020-21	520	300	250	200	1,270

**Sources:** Bihar State Budget Reports (2016-2021), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

### Government Expenditure Post-Prohibition

The data in Table 3.4 provides an overview of the Bihar government's expenditure on key areas after the implementation of alcohol prohibition, reflecting its efforts to address both enforcement challenges and societal welfare. The table highlights spending in four critical areas: enforcement, health and rehabilitation, women's programs, and skill development, with total expenditures increasing steadily over the years.



In 2016-17, the year immediately following prohibition, the government allocated ₹350 crore for enforcement measures, including the policing and monitoring of illicit liquor activities. Additionally, ₹200 crore was directed towards health and rehabilitation programs to support individuals affected by alcohol dependency. Women's programs, aimed at improving the welfare and safety of women, received ₹150 crore, while skill development initiatives for economic empowerment accounted for ₹100 crore. The total expenditure for that year was ₹800 crore.

Over the subsequent years, government spending in all these areas increased significantly. By 2017-18, total expenditure rose to ₹920 crore, with a notable increase in enforcement spending (₹400 crore) and support for women's programs (₹180 crore). This trend of rising expenditure continued into 2018-19, when the total reached ₹1,050 crore, driven by greater allocations for health and rehabilitation (₹250 crore) and skill development (₹150 crore).

By 2020-21, the total expenditure had reached ₹1,270 crore, representing a nearly 60% increase from the post-prohibition baseline in 2016-17. Enforcement spending climbed to ₹520 crore, reflecting the ongoing challenge of addressing illicit liquor activities. Health and rehabilitation programs received ₹300 crore, while women's programs and skill development initiatives were allocated ₹250 crore and ₹200 crore, respectively, underscoring the government's commitment to social welfare and empowerment.

### Implications

The data underscores the Bihar government's increased investment in social and enforcement programs post-prohibition. The rising expenditure highlights the dual challenges of maintaining law enforcement to combat illicit liquor networks and providing rehabilitation and empowerment opportunities for affected individuals and families. While the increased spending demonstrates a proactive approach to addressing the broader consequences of prohibition, the government faces the ongoing challenge of ensuring that these investments translate into sustainable social and economic benefits.

### Women's Movements and Advocacy

Throughout Bihar's history, women's movements and advocacy groups have played a crucial role in combating VAW and promoting gender equality. Grassroots organizations have been instrumental in raising awareness, providing support to victims, and lobbying for legal and policy changes. These movements have often faced significant resistance but have nonetheless achieved important milestones in advancing women's rights.



The prohibition policy itself was largely driven by the advocacy of women's groups, who highlighted the link between alcohol consumption and domestic violence. These groups continue to be active in monitoring the policy's implementation and advocating for broader measures to address VAW, such as improved law enforcement, better support services for victims, and efforts to change societal attitudes.

### **Prohibition Policy in Bihar**

In April 2016, Bihar's government, led by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, implemented a complete ban on the sale and consumption of alcohol. The prohibition policy was introduced with the dual aims of improving public health and reducing domestic violence, which was often fueled by alcohol consumption. The policy received widespread public support, particularly from women's groups who had long advocated for measures to curb domestic violence.

### **Implementation of Bihar's Prohibition Policy**

The Bihar Prohibition and Excise Act, 2016 represents one of India's most comprehensive attempts at alcohol prohibition, marking a significant policy shift that aimed to address deep-rooted social and economic challenges through complete alcohol ban. The legislation came into force on October 2, 2016, after receiving the Governor's assent on September 7, 2016, replacing earlier prohibition laws including the Bihar Excise Act, 1915, and the Bihar Prohibition Act, 1938.

### **Initial Legislative Framework**

The Act established a total prohibition regime covering the manufacture, bottling, distribution, transportation, collection, storage, possession, purchase, sale, and consumption of all types of alcohol and intoxicating substances. This comprehensive ban extended to Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL), Foreign Made Foreign Liquor (FMFL), beer, and country liquor, with the state government retaining limited authority to issue permits for specific licensed activities.

The policy emerged from multiple strategic objectives designed to transform Bihar's social landscape. Reducing domestic violence stood as the primary motivation, with alcohol abuse identified as a significant contributor to intimate partner violence. Research published in *The Lancet Regional Health Southeast Asia* journal later validated this approach, showing the ban prevented approximately 21 lakh cases of intimate partner violence, with a 4.6 percentage point decrease in emotional violence and 3.6 percentage point decrease in sexual violence.



The public health benefits anticipated from the prohibition included addressing long-term health implications such as liver disease, cardiovascular issues, and mental health problems. Studies indicated the ban prevented 18 lakh men from becoming overweight or obese while also preventing 24 lakh cases of daily and weekly alcohol consumption.

Economic considerations played a crucial role in policy formulation, with the government expecting households to redirect money previously spent on alcohol toward better family economic conditions. However, this expectation came at a significant cost to state revenue, with excise earnings dropping from Rs 3,142 crore in 2015-16 to just Rs 46 crore the following year, and reaching absolute zero in 2017-18.

### **Stringent Legal Provisions**

The Act incorporated several robust enforcement mechanisms designed to ensure compliance. The legislation prescribed severe penalties for violations, including imprisonment ranging from 8 to 10 years for manufacturing or trading illegal alcohol, with fines extending from one lakh to ten lakh rupees. The Act also provided for enhanced punishments in cases where disability, grievous hurt, or other consequential injuries resulted from illegal alcohol activities.

One of the most controversial features was the provision for collective fines under Section 64, empowering district collectors to impose financial penalties on entire communities, villages, or localities that habitually violated the prohibition law. This mechanism was implemented in localities such as Karodi Bazaar, Deewan Pokhar in Bhagalpur, and Makaspur in Kahalgaon, where repeated violations occurred.

The Act granted extensive property confiscation powers, allowing authorities to seal premises used for manufacturing or storing illegal alcohol. These powers were further strengthened through amendments, with the 2022 rules specifying that sealing must occur within 24 hours of filing a First Information Report, and empowering officers to demolish temporary structures that cannot be effectively sealed.

Law enforcement empowerment under the Act provided police and excise officials with broad authority to conduct raids and searches without warrants, establishing a specialized Prohibition Division under police headquarters to monitor and coordinate enforcement activities. This division, headed by an Additional Director General of Police, works to achieve complete prohibition through intelligence monitoring, focused operations against liquor trafficking, and coordination with border states.



The comprehensive nature of Bihar's prohibition policy reflected the government's commitment to addressing alcohol-related social issues, though implementation challenges and unintended consequences, including increased substance abuse and illicit trade, continue to test the policy's long-term effectiveness.

### **Amendments to the Prohibition Policy**

Since its implementation, the Bihar Prohibition and Excise Act has undergone several amendments to address practical challenges and public concerns. These amendments have aimed to refine the law, making it more enforceable and just.

#### **Amendment of 2018**

The 2018 amendment was introduced to address criticisms regarding the harshness and implementation challenges of the original Act. Key changes included:

- **Relaxation of Penalties:** Reducing the severity of penalties for first-time offenders and focusing on rehabilitation rather than punishment.
- **Simplification of Procedures:** Simplifying legal procedures for small-scale offenders to ensure swift justice and reduce the burden on the judiciary.
- **Special Courts:** Establishing special courts to expedite the hearing of prohibition-related cases, ensuring timely justice.

#### **Amendment of 2020**

The 2020 amendment aimed to further streamline enforcement and address new challenges that had emerged:

- **Stricter Enforcement Measures:** Enhancing the capabilities of law enforcement agencies with better training and resources.
- **Increased Community Involvement:** Encouraging community participation in monitoring and reporting violations to create a collective effort against illegal alcohol trade.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Launching extensive public awareness campaigns to educate citizens about the harms of alcohol and the benefits of prohibition.



## Recent Amendments and Current Status

Recent amendments have continued to focus on balancing enforcement with public welfare:

- **Focus on Rehabilitation:** Greater emphasis on rehabilitation programs for alcohol addicts, including counseling and vocational training.
- **Support for Women:** Strengthening support systems for women affected by domestic violence, including better access to legal aid, shelters, and mental health services.
- **Technological Integration:** Utilizing technology for better enforcement, including surveillance systems and digital monitoring of illegal activities.

## Broader Implications of Prohibition Policy

### Impact on Domestic Violence

One of the primary objectives of the prohibition policy was to reduce domestic violence. Initial reports indicated a significant decrease in domestic violence incidents, as alcohol-induced aggression diminished. Women's advocacy groups reported feeling safer, and there was a noticeable reduction in alcohol-related crimes.

### Public Health Benefits

The prohibition policy has led to improved public health outcomes. Hospitals and health centers have reported fewer cases of alcohol-related illnesses and injuries. The policy has also contributed to a decrease in road accidents and alcohol poisoning cases.

### Economic Impact

While the policy aimed to generate economic benefits by reducing household expenditure on alcohol, the economic impact has been mixed. On one hand, families have more disposable income for essential needs and savings. On the other hand, the state has experienced a loss in revenue from alcohol taxes, which has necessitated adjustments in budget allocations and public spending.

### Cultural and Social Resistance

Cultural attitudes towards alcohol consumption vary widely, and in some communities, there has been resistance to the prohibition. Social norms and traditional practices have made enforcement difficult in



certain areas. Additionally, the stigmatization of alcohol users and the punitive approach have sometimes led to social isolation and mental health issues among those affected.

### **Impact of Prohibition on Domestic Violence**

Initial data suggested a decrease in reported cases of domestic violence following the prohibition. Women's advocacy groups reported feeling safer, and there was a notable reduction in alcohol-related crimes. However, the long-term impact remains mixed, with some reports indicating that prohibition has driven the alcohol trade underground, leading to other forms of violence and exploitation.

### **Positive Outcomes of Prohibition on Domestic Violence**

#### **Improved Household Dynamics**

One of the most significant positive outcomes of the prohibition policy has been the improvement in household dynamics. With reduced alcohol consumption, many families experienced fewer conflicts and a more harmonious domestic environment. Women reported that their husbands and male relatives were more present and engaged in family activities, contributing to better overall family cohesion.

#### **Economic Benefits**

The economic benefits of prohibition have indirectly contributed to reducing domestic violence. With fewer financial resources being spent on alcohol, households had more disposable income for essential needs, such as food, education, and healthcare. This financial stability helped reduce stress and tension within families, which can often be a precursor to domestic violence.

#### **Public Health Improvements**

The prohibition policy also led to significant public health improvements. Reduced alcohol consumption resulted in fewer alcohol-related health issues, such as liver diseases and alcohol poisoning. Healthier men were less prone to aggressive behavior, thereby reducing the likelihood of domestic violence. Additionally, fewer alcohol-related accidents and injuries contributed to a safer community environment.

### **Findings**

#### **Effectiveness of Law Enforcement**

Effective enforcement of prohibition has been a significant challenge. Law enforcement agencies in Bihar faced issues such as inadequate resources, corruption, and lack of training in handling VAW cases.



While there were increased efforts to address domestic violence, the focus on enforcing prohibition sometimes diverted attention and resources away from other critical areas of VAW.

Effective law enforcement is essential for the successful implementation of any policy aimed at social change, especially in the context of addressing deep-seated issues such as domestic violence and other forms of VAW. This section explores the role of law enforcement, the challenges faced, and the strategies employed to enhance their effectiveness in the context of Bihar's prohibition policy.

#### Crime Data Before and After Prohibition

The table below provides a comparative analysis of crime rates in Bihar before and after the implementation of prohibition, using data from official crime reports and studies by research institutions.

**Table 1**

Type of Crime	2015 (Pre-Prohibition)	2018	2020	2023 (Post-Prohibition)	% Change
Murder	3,178	2,512	2,370	2,280	-28.3%
Domestic Violence Cases	27,684	22,750	20,980	19,680	-28.9%
Kidnapping	6,750	3,456	3,100	2,250	-66.6%
Dacoity	1,210	975	940	930	-22.8%
Public Disorder	5,860	3,400	3,150	2,920	-50.2%
Illicit Liquor Seizures	1,020	4,870	5,320	6,150	+502%

**Sources:** National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Asian Development Research Institute (ADRI), Bihar Police Department.

The data in Table 1 provides a comparative analysis of crime rates in Bihar before and after the implementation of alcohol prohibition, covering key years from 2015 (pre-prohibition) to 2023 (post-prohibition). It reveals significant reductions in several types of crimes, demonstrating the policy's impact on public safety. For instance, **murder cases** declined by 28.3%, dropping from 3,178 cases in 2015 to 2,280 in 2023. Similarly, **domestic violence cases** experienced a reduction of 28.9%, highlighting improvements in household environments often affected by alcohol-related conflicts. A remarkable decrease is observed in **kidnapping cases**, which fell by 66.6%, indicating a substantial improvement in safety and security.



Further, **public disorder incidents** saw a 50.2% reduction, reflecting enhanced social stability and decreased alcohol-induced disturbances. **Dacoity cases**, which involve violent property crimes, decreased by 22.8%, showcasing the economic impact of reduced alcohol-related desperation. However, the data also highlights an unintended consequence of prohibition: a dramatic increase in **illicit liquor seizures**, which rose by 502%. This indicates the emergence of a black market for alcohol, posing challenges for law enforcement and policy effectiveness.

Overall, the data underscores the dual nature of prohibition's impact. On the one hand, it successfully reduced violent, domestic, and public order crimes. On the other hand, it fueled the growth of illegal alcohol production and distribution, reflected in the sharp rise in seizures. These trends highlight the need for balanced enforcement and policy measures to address the unintended consequences of prohibition while maintaining its social benefits.

## Challenges Faced by Law Enforcement

### Resource Constraints

One of the primary challenges faced by law enforcement agencies in Bihar is the lack of adequate resources. This includes:

- **Personnel Shortages:** Insufficient staffing levels hinder the ability of law enforcement to effectively monitor and enforce the prohibition policy and address domestic violence cases.
- **Training Deficiencies:** A lack of specialized training in handling domestic violence cases and understanding the nuances of the prohibition policy impacts the effectiveness of law enforcement efforts.
- **Technological Gaps:** Limited access to modern technology and equipment necessary for efficient enforcement and investigation processes.

### Corruption and Misconduct

Corruption within law enforcement agencies poses a significant challenge to the effective implementation of the prohibition policy and the protection of women from violence. Issues include:

- **Bribery and Collusion:** Instances where law enforcement officials accept bribes to overlook violations of the prohibition policy or collude with illegal alcohol traders.



- **Abuse of Power:** Reports of law enforcement officials misusing their authority, leading to distrust and fear among the public, particularly among victims of domestic violence.

### **Cultural and Social Resistance**

Cultural and social norms that perpetuate gender inequality and condone violence against women can undermine law enforcement efforts. Challenges include:

- **Community Attitudes:** Resistance from communities where alcohol consumption is a cultural norm or where patriarchal values are deeply entrenched, making it difficult to enforce prohibition and protect women.
- **Victim Reluctance:** Fear of social stigma and retaliation often prevents victims from reporting domestic violence or cooperating with law enforcement.

### **Strategies to Enhance Law Enforcement Effectiveness**

#### **Capacity Building and Training**

Enhancing the capacity of law enforcement agencies through comprehensive training programs is crucial. Strategies include:

- **Specialized Training:** Providing training on handling domestic violence cases, understanding the legal framework of the prohibition policy, and employing gender-sensitive approaches.
- **Technology Integration:** Equipping law enforcement agencies with modern technology for surveillance, evidence gathering, and case management to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

#### **Community Policing and Engagement**

Building trust and collaboration between law enforcement agencies and communities can improve compliance with the prohibition policy and support for victims of domestic violence. Approaches include:

- **Community Outreach:** Engaging with community leaders, local organizations, and the public to raise awareness about the prohibition policy and the importance of preventing VAW.



- **Victim Support Programs:** Establishing dedicated units within police departments to provide support and protection to victims of domestic violence, ensuring they receive the necessary assistance and encouragement to report crimes.

### **Anti-Corruption Measures**

Implementing strict anti-corruption measures within law enforcement agencies can enhance their credibility and effectiveness. Steps include:

- **Internal Accountability Mechanisms:** Establishing robust internal oversight bodies to investigate and address instances of corruption and misconduct.
- **Public Reporting Systems:** Creating transparent and accessible systems for the public to report corruption and abuse of power by law enforcement officials.

### **Inter-Agency Collaboration**

Collaboration between law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders, such as social services, healthcare providers, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), can provide a holistic approach to addressing domestic violence. Initiatives include:

- **Multi-Disciplinary Teams:** Forming teams that include law enforcement officers, social workers, healthcare professionals, and legal experts to provide comprehensive support to victims and ensure coordinated responses.
- **Information Sharing:** Developing protocols for sharing information and resources between agencies to enhance the effectiveness of interventions and prevent duplication of efforts.

### **Impact of Enhanced Law Enforcement on Domestic Violence**

#### **Improved Response Rates**

Enhanced law enforcement capabilities have led to more timely and effective responses to domestic violence incidents. Victims report receiving faster assistance and experiencing a greater sense of security knowing that law enforcement agencies are actively working to protect them.

#### **Increased Reporting and Prosecution**



With improved trust in law enforcement, there has been an increase in the reporting of domestic violence cases. More victims are coming forward to report abuse, leading to a higher number of prosecutions and convictions. This not only provides justice to victims but also serves as a deterrent to potential offenders.

### **Community Empowerment**

Community policing initiatives have empowered local communities to take an active role in preventing domestic violence and supporting the prohibition policy. Community members, particularly women, are more engaged in monitoring and reporting violations, leading to a collective effort to create a safer environment.

### **Reduction in Alcohol-Related Violence**

The stringent enforcement of the prohibition policy has contributed to a reduction in alcohol-related violence. By curbing the availability and consumption of alcohol, law enforcement agencies have helped mitigate one of the key factors contributing to domestic violence. This has resulted in a noticeable decrease in the frequency and severity of such incidents.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Strengthen Law Enforcement Training**

Law enforcement agencies should receive specialized training in handling VAW cases, with a focus on gender sensitivity and victim support. Training programs should be developed in collaboration with experts in gender studies and human rights to ensure that officers are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge.

#### **Enhance Resource Allocation**

Adequate resources should be allocated to both prohibition enforcement and VAW prevention programs to ensure a balanced approach. This includes funding for training, infrastructure, and support services for victims. Budget allocations should be regularly reviewed and adjusted based on the needs and effectiveness of programs.

#### **Comprehensive Support Services**

Develop and implement comprehensive support services for VAW victims, including shelter homes, legal aid, and rehabilitation programs. These services should be easily accessible, culturally sensitive, and



tailored to the specific needs of women in Bihar. Collaboration with non-governmental organizations and community groups can enhance the reach and impact of these services.

### **Community Engagement**

Engage communities in awareness campaigns and educational programs to shift cultural norms and attitudes towards women. Community leaders, religious figures, and influencers should be involved in promoting gender equality and condemning VAW. Grassroots initiatives can be particularly effective in changing long-standing cultural practices.

### **Policy Monitoring and Evaluation**

Establish mechanisms for continuous monitoring and evaluation of policies to identify gaps and areas for improvement. Regular assessments should be conducted to measure the impact of prohibition and other VAW-related policies. Feedback from victims, law enforcement, and community members should be incorporated into policy revisions.

### **Empowerment Programs**

Implement empowerment programs for women, focusing on education, employment, and legal rights awareness to enhance their autonomy and ability to resist violence. These programs should include vocational training, financial literacy, and legal support to help women become economically independent and confident in asserting their rights.

### **Conclusion**

Reducing violence against women in Bihar requires a multifaceted approach that combines effective law enforcement, comprehensive policy implementation, and societal change. The prohibition policy has had some positive effects, but there are significant challenges that need to be addressed to achieve sustained progress. Strengthening law enforcement training, enhancing resource allocation, developing comprehensive support services, engaging communities, and implementing empowerment programs are critical steps towards creating a safer environment for women in Bihar.

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