

Access to Justice: The Implementation and Effectiveness of One Stop Centre Model in India

"Nothing rankles more in the human heart than a brooding sense of injustice. The illness we can put up with. But, injustice makes us want to pull things down."

Pervasive violence against women is a global public health problem and an inherent violation of human rights. Making progress on the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially toward the goals of Gender Equality (#5) and Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (#16), requires various kinds of reform to address systemic sources of violence. Eliminating gender discrimination across the justice chain is critical for protecting women's economic assets, bodily integrity, voice and agency. Women victims of violence experience various difficulties and barriers in accessing justice. Studies have attributed the existence of these barriers to law and to society's construction of women and of women's issues. There is a need to look beyond legal measures and into the interplay of politics, economics, and culture in women's access to justice in cases of violence.

Access is not confined to access to the legal system (substantive, normative, procedural) as it includes access to multidisciplinary support services as well, taking into account women's active participation, agency, and empowerment in the overall process; their specific needs for immediate protective orders and the circumstances of access which lie beyond the law and the legal system. It likewise considers the necessary political, economic, social and cultural contexts and conditions which enable and empower women to access justice in cases of violence. Justice looks into women's substantial and critical participation in the process. It aims for a more strategic, comprehensive and long-lasting shift in the conditions of women in society.

Realizing the need for this shift, The Women and Child Development Ministry of the Government of India has introduced 'Mission Shakti' a scheme in mission mode aimed at strengthening interventions for women's safety, security and empowerment. It seeks to realise the Government's commitment to "women-led development" by addressing issues affecting women on a life-cycle continuum basis and by making them equal partners in nation-building through convergence and citizen-ownership. Mission Shakti has two sub-schemes - 'Sambal' and 'Samarthya'. The "Sambal" sub-scheme is for women's safety and security, and the "Samarthya" sub-scheme is for women's empowerment.

Within the Sambal scheme, the **One Stop Centre** will be the mainstay of this sub-scheme. The aim is to provide integrated support and assistance to women affected by violence and in distress, both in private and public spaces under one roof and facilitate immediate, emergency and non-emergency access to a range of services including medical, legal, temporary shelter, police assistance, psychological and counselling support to fight against any forms of violence against women.

This paper will attempt to study the implementation and success of Mission Shakti with special reference to the One Stop Centre (OSC) in the state capital assessing SDG 11.7 of Universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible spaces both Public and Private.