Domestic Abuse Victims In The Criminal Justice System

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The purpose of this paper is to discuss how domestic abuse victims are treated in the criminal justice system. Criminal Justice is a system of practices and governments that are aimed at controlling crime, bringing justice, and punishing those who disturb the law and order of society. The criminal justice system engulfs all aspects of crime and misconduct, which may cause anarchy in society. One such misconduct is domestic abuse.

Forms of Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is a behavioral pattern that is employed by one partner to maintain control over the other in a relationship. Domestic abuse takes into account everyone, irrespective of age, race, caste, color, or gender. Domestic abuse may take numerous forms. It can be physical and sexual through beating, choking or hair-pulling, and marital rape. Psychologically pressuring one partner also characterizes domestic abuse through manipulation, gaslighting, undermining a partner's abilities, isolating him/her from society, and making them lose their confidence.

Underreporting and Neglect Within Criminal Justice

Domestic abuse is not limited to one region or country, and most women are its victims. There have been numerous efforts by some legislating bodies to control this menace and to punish the perpetrators. However, despite many efforts to control it, domestic abuse is often a neglected chapter of the Criminal Justice system. It is mostly not reported due to social factors. Many people believe that violence between partners is simply an extension of an argument that got out of control.

Patriarchal Barriers to Reporting

In patriarchal cultures, abuse is seen as a natural way to exert power over a woman. Women in such societies are discouraged from reporting abuse for fear of disgracing their families and, thus, themselves. Even if such cases are reported, law enforcers do not give them due attention, claiming them to be personal or treating abuse victims with disregard and disinterest.

Police Delay and Misunderstanding

In most common situations, many women have complained that police took a long time to attend to their calls in cases of domestic violence. When the police did arrive, many women stated that the attitude of the police officers differed greatly. Some were not treated with respect, while others said that the officers could not understand the context of the abuse (Dutton). There have been complaints that many officers did not regard domestic violence as a serious situation or a crime that they should manage.

Conflicts of Interest and Lack of Empathy

Many victims have even protested that there are social connections between the officers and the offenders, which results in a disdainful attitude of the police towards the victims. The lack of empathy on the part of the police poses a problem for the security of the victims and may serve as a reason for domestic abuse not being reported. Numerous police officers have been criticized for treating the victims in a manner that only demoralizes them and paints them in a humiliating light.

Court Anxiety and Renewed Victimization

The above-mentioned attitude of many police officers has often discouraged many survivors from seeking help from the courts. Courts have been a possibility for many to get justice, but for others, the experience has been even more painful than their police encounters. Many victims show reluctance to go to court because they are nervous about the court process, cross-examination, and the fear of facing the abuser again. Many women faced intimidation from the abuser's defense and were further harassed by the perpetrators themselves as they waited for their cases to be called on (Douglas and Stark).

Cross-Examination and Victim Credibility

The nature of cross-examination often leaves the victims perplexed. Many survivors have claimed that they were ridiculed by the offender's defense and felt that they were being portrayed as liars. Such behavior from the upholders of justice only disheartens the victims and leads them to take back their cases and simply suffer in silence.

Reforming the Criminal Justice Response

The Criminal Justice System has to improve with regard to domestic violence. Domestic abuse is a serious social concern that not only isolates the victim from society but often goes neglected due to

the stigma attached to it. Recommendations must be sought so that the Criminal Justice System can respond to domestic abuse without any polarization.

Training, Access, and Trauma-Informed Policing

Domestic abuse must be considered a serious problem that can disrupt the harmony between society and its individuals. Authorities must learn the dynamics of this abuse as it can lead to murder and suicide. The barriers that make it difficult to access criminal justice must be eradicated. Police officers must be trained in how to effectively deal with abuse victims without underestimating their trauma. Survivors must be given the opportunity to deal with officers of the same gender so they can better communicate their cases. Similarly, the environment of the court proceedings must be improved.

Courtroom Protection and Compensation

The perpetrator's defense must avoid harassing the victim during cross-examination. Similarly, in order to avoid any unwanted contact between the victim of abuse and the abuser, separate entrances and rooms must be provided by higher authorities. The government should give legal protection to all survivors, and it must pay them compensation, which can later be recovered from the offenders themselves (Flannigan).

Protecting Survivors and Strengthening Justice

It must be realized that many people, whether men, women, or children, are subjected to domestic abuse. It has led many to commit suicide or lose their sanity, and if not regulated by law enforcers, it can claim the lives of many people. Better treatment of abuse survivors can lead to better regulation of the Criminal Justice System, better monitoring of crime, and strict penalties for those who violate the fundamental rights of other individuals.

Works Cited

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