

- ... army,
- (i) Curtailment of right to self-expression;
 - (ii) Promiscuity of the husband;
 - (iii) Accusing the women in the household of unchaste behaviour;
 - (iv) Irresponsible behaviour and alcoholism of the husband;
 - (v) Humiliating and victimizing women;
 - (vi) Fleeing women and their parents of their money and assets by compulsion; and
 - (vii) Coercion and threat and squandering of money for non-household purposes.

LAWS FOR PROTECTION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005) is a comprehensive legislation to protect women in India from all forms of domestic violence. It also covers women who have been/are in a relationship with the abuser and are subjected to violence of any kind—physical, sexual, mental, verbal or emotional.

Women in India which has a patriarchal society have been facing a lot of violence at their homes, particularly, in matrimonial site. Taking the cognizance of the domestic violence, the Parliament of India passed section 498A in 1983. This was for the first time that domestic violence was recognized as a specific criminal offence. This section deals with cruelty by a husband or his family towards a married woman. Now, under IPC section 498A, women has protection from four types of cruelties:

- Conduct that is likely to drive a woman to suicide,
- Conduct which is likely to cause grave injury to the life, limb or health of the woman,
- Harassment with the purpose of forcing the woman or her

- relatives to give some property, or
- Harassment because the woman or her relatives is unable to yield to demands for more money or does not give some property.

Dowry-related Harassment

The law under Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code covers dowry-related harassment as well. If a woman is being harassed for dowry by in-laws or husband, the provision provides women protection and allows women to go to court to deter this kind of harassment. Though there is specific provision under section 304-B that talks about dowry death; however, women don't need to wait for that; rather, filing a case under 498A is an apt solution.

Women can file a case for cruelty in these situations :

- Persistent denial of food,
- Insisting on perverse sexual conduct,
- Constantly locking a woman out of the house,
- Denying the woman access to children, thereby causing mental torture,
- Physical violence,
- Taunting, demoralizing and putting down the woman with the intention of causing mental torture,
- Confining the woman at home and not allowing her normal social intercourse,
- Abusing children in their mother's presence with the intention of causing her mental torture,
- Denying the paternity of the children with the intention of inflicting mental pain upon the mother, and
- Threatening divorce unless dowry is given.

LEGAL RIGHTS AND PROVISIONS FOR WOMEN IN INDIA

Apart from 498A, the Parliament of India also passed the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 to protect women from domestic violence. The law was brought

into force by the Indian government from October 26, 2006 and as of November 2007; it has been ratified by four of the twenty-eight state governments in India, e.g. Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Odisha. As we grow into an economic and political powerhouse in the international arena, the rights and opportunities that have been provided for all of us in the constitution are also gaining prominence. Additionally, women have taken the center stage by gradually moving into the workforce and getting career-oriented. However, mental, physical and sexual harassment, misogyny and gender inequality continue to be a way of life for most of them. It is in this context that her awareness of the legal rights, mandated by Indian law, gains significance.

1. Right to Equal Pay

According to provisions under the Equal Remuneration Act, one cannot be discriminated on the basis of sex when it comes to salary or wages.

2. Right Against Harassment at Work

The enactment of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act gives you the right to file a complaint against sexual harassment

3. Right Against Domestic Violence

The Act primarily looks to protect a wife, a female live-in partner or a woman living in a household like a mother or a sister from domestic violence at the hands of a husband, male live-in partner or relatives. She or anybody on her behalf, can file a complaint.

4. Right To Maternity

The Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India ("Ministry of Labour") vide Official Gazette notification dated 31 March 2017 has approved 1 April 2017 as the date on which the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act 2017 ("MB Amendment Act") has come into force. However, the relevant

provision on the "work from home" option will come into effect from 1 July 2017. The MB Amendment Act had received Presidential assent on 27 March 2017 and was published in the Official Gazette on 28 March 2017.

- Increased Paid Maternity Leave : The MB Amendment Act has increased the duration of paid maternity leave available for women employees from the existing 12 weeks to 26 weeks. Under the MB Amendment Act, this benefit could be availed by women for a period extending up to 8 weeks before the expected delivery date and remaining 18 weeks can be availed post childbirth. For women who are expecting after having 2 children, the duration of paid maternity leave shall be 12 weeks (i.e., 6 weeks pre and 6 weeks post expected date of delivery).

5. Right To Free Aid

When a woman goes to the police station without being accompanied by a lawyer she is either quoted wrong, ignored or humiliated for her statements. She should be aware of the fact that she has a right to get the legal aid and that she should demand for it. According to a Delhi High Court ruling, whenever a rape is reported, the station house officer has to bring this to the notice of the Delhi Legal Services Authority. The legal body then arranges for a lawyer for the victim.

6. Right To Privacy

A woman who has been raped has a right to record her statement in private, in front of the Magistrate without being overheard by anyone else. She also has a freedom to record her statement with a lady officer/ Judge/ Magistrate in person. Under section 164 of the Criminal Procedure Code, the Courts will have to give the privacy to the victim without stressing her in front of masses.

7. Right To Untimely Registration

There are many reasons as to why a woman would postpone going to the police to lodge a complaint. She considers her reputation, dignity of the family and threats from the culprit to take her life away. Police in any way cannot say no to register her complaint, no matter if it's too late to register. The self-respect of women comes before anything else. She cannot be denied of anything.

8. Right to Virtual Complaints

According to the guidelines issued by the Delhi Police, a woman has the privilege of lodging a complaint via email or registered post. If, for some reason, a woman can't go to the police station, she can send a written complaint through an email or registered post addressed to a senior police officer of the level of Deputy Commissioner or Commissioner of Police. The officer then directs the SHO of the police station, of the area where the incident occurred, to conduct proper verification of the complainant and lodge an FIR. The police can then come over to the residence of the victim to take her statement.

9. Right to Zero FIR

A rape victim can register her police complaint from any police station under the Zero FIR ruling by Supreme Court. Sometimes, the police station under which the incident occurs refuses to register the victim's complaint in order to keep clear of responsibility, and tries sending the victim to another police station. In such cases, she has the right to lodge an FIR at any police station in the city under the Zero FIR ruling. The senior officer will then direct the SHO of the concerned police station to lodge the FIR. This is a Supreme Court ruling that not many women are aware of it. So don't let the SHO of a police station send you away saying it "doesn't come under his area."