

Guest lecture on the “Role of Civil Society Organisations in Protection of Women from Domestic Violence” In collaboration with My Choices Foundation

The Centre for Excellence in Gender Studies, ICFAI Law School, IFHE Hyderabad, organised a guest lecture on “Role of Civil Society Organisations in Protection of Women from Domestic Violence”, delivered by Dr. Farzana Khan. The programme was organised with the objective of sensitising students to the widespread social and legal dimensions of domestic violence and highlighting the important role played by civil society organisations (CSOs) in supporting women facing violence and abuse.

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ICFAI
LAW SCHOOL
HYDERABAD

ICFAI Law School, IFHE, Hyderabad
Guest Lecture
on

**Role of Civil Society Organisations
in Protection of Women from Domestic Violence**

20th January 2026 | 11:30 AM

Introductory Remarks  Prof. (Dr.) P. Ravisekhararaju Director, ICFAI Law School, IFHE, Hyderabad	Resource Person  Dr. Farzana Khan Head of programmes My Choices Foundation Hyderabad
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The lecture provided an interdisciplinary understanding of domestic violence by examining it not merely as an individual or private family matter but as an issue involving human rights, gender equality, access to justice, social protection, and institutional responsibility. Dr. Farzana Khan emphasised the importance of recognising the structural and social factors that can contribute to women's vulnerability to domestic violence and the need for coordinated interventions to support survivors.

A significant focus of the session was on the role of civil society organisations in supporting survivors of domestic violence. The speaker explained how CSOs can provide assistance at different stages of a survivor's journey, including awareness generation, counselling and psychosocial support, legal assistance, referral services, shelter and rehabilitation support, and facilitation of access to appropriate institutional mechanisms. Such organisations can also act as an important link between survivors and formal systems of justice and social protection.

The session highlighted the importance of legal awareness among women. Participants were introduced to the legal protections available to women experiencing domestic violence under Indian law, particularly the framework established by the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. The discussion enabled students to understand the broad nature of protection available under the law and the significance of remedies intended to provide safety, protection, residence, financial relief, and other forms of assistance to women facing domestic abuse.

The speaker also discussed the importance of institutional support systems in responding to domestic violence. Participants were encouraged to understand that effective protection requires coordination among legal institutions, law-enforcement authorities, protection mechanisms, healthcare providers, social-service agencies, civil society organisations, and community networks. The lecture highlighted the importance of making these systems accessible, responsive, and sensitive to the needs of survivors.

Another important aspect of the lecture was the role of community-based interventions. Dr. Khan emphasised that domestic violence cannot be addressed solely through formal legal remedies. Community awareness, gender sensitisation, early identification of abuse, support networks, and social interventions are important in challenging attitudes and practices that normalise or perpetuate violence within intimate and family relationships.

The discussion also addressed the significance of gender justice and women's rights. Students were encouraged to examine domestic violence through the principles of equality, dignity, autonomy, bodily integrity, and non-discrimination. The session demonstrated how gender-based violence can restrict women's ability to exercise their rights and participate fully in social, economic, and public life.

The lecture was particularly relevant to law students as it connected legal provisions with their practical implementation. Students gained an understanding of the gap that can sometimes exist between the formal recognition of rights and the ability of survivors to access effective remedies. The role of legal professionals in providing sensitive, informed, and rights-based assistance was also reinforced.

The session further highlighted the importance of survivor-centred approaches. Participants were encouraged to understand that responses to domestic violence should respect the dignity, autonomy, confidentiality, and individual circumstances of survivors. The discussion helped

students appreciate the importance of avoiding victim-blaming and ensuring that women approaching support systems are treated with sensitivity and respect.

From the perspective of the Centre for Excellence in Gender Studies, the programme contributed significantly to its objectives of promoting gender sensitisation, human rights awareness, women's empowerment, and social justice. Domestic violence remains closely connected with questions of gender inequality, power relations, economic dependence, social norms, and access to justice. Engaging with these issues through an academic and practical perspective helped broaden students' understanding of gender-based violence.

Key Learning Outcomes

The lecture enabled participants to:

- Understand domestic violence as an issue of gender justice, human rights, and social justice.
- Develop awareness of the legal protections available to women facing domestic violence.
- Understand the role of civil society organisations in supporting survivors.
- Identify different forms of institutional and community-based support available to women.
- Appreciate the importance of legal awareness and access to justice.
- Understand the significance of counselling, referral, rehabilitation, and other support mechanisms.
- Recognise the importance of community-based interventions and gender sensitisation in preventing domestic violence.
- Develop greater sensitivity towards the experiences and rights of survivors.
- Understand the importance of coordination between CSOs, legal institutions, public authorities, healthcare providers, and communities.

Relevance to Constitutional Values and Sustainable Development Goals

The programme reinforced constitutional values including equality, dignity, liberty, and non-discrimination. It also contributed to the objectives of SDG 5 – Gender Equality, particularly the goal of eliminating violence against women and girls, and SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, through its emphasis on access to justice, institutional support, and effective protection mechanisms.