

EVALUATING THE INTEGRATION OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE RESPONSE MECHANISMS WITHIN INDIA'S MISSION SHAKTI AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a meticulous examination of the integration of gender-based violence (GBV) response mechanisms within India's Mission Shakti program, with a focus on assessing its implications for the adoption of a feminist foreign policy. Employing a mixed-methods approach, blending qualitative and quantitative methodologies, the research meticulously investigates the technical intricacies of GBV response initiatives, particularly One Stop Centres (OSCs) and Women Helplines (WHL), under Mission Shakti. Through an evaluation of their effectiveness and scalability in addressing GBV incidents, the study aims to elucidate how their successful integration could influence India's stance on feminist foreign policy. Drawing upon data collected from primary and secondary sources, including government documents, stakeholder interviews, and scholarly literature, the research endeavours to offer actionable insights and recommendations for leveraging domestic strategies to positively impact global gender policies. Beyond examining the operational aspects of OSCs and WHL, the analysis delves into their broader implications for gender equality and women's empowerment, both domestically and internationally. By situating the findings within the broader context of feminist foreign policy frameworks and international relations, the study seeks to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in gender studies, public policy, and international diplomacy. It aims to shed light on effective strategies for combating GBV, promoting women's safety and empowerment, and fostering gender-sensitive approaches to foreign policy formulation and implementation. This nuanced understanding of the intersection between domestic GBV response mechanisms and feminist foreign policy aspirations holds significant implications for shaping India's role as a global advocate for gender equality and women's rights. It underscores the potential

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reverberations across diverse socio-cultural contexts worldwide, emphasizing the importance of India's leadership in championing progressive gender policies on the global stage. Overall, this study serves as a critical contribution to the discourse on gender-sensitive policymaking and its role in advancing women's rights and equality on both domestic and international fronts.

Keywords: Gender-Based Violence, Mission Shakti, Feminist Foreign Policy, One Stop Centres, Women Helplines, India, International Relations, Women's Safety.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a pervasive global issue, significantly affecting the health, security, and socioeconomic status of women.³ In India, the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) highlights the alarming prevalence of GBV, with 30% of women aged 15-49 reporting physical violence and 6% experiencing sexual violence since age 15.⁴ This underscores the urgent need for effective GBV response mechanisms. Addressing this challenge, India's Mission Shakti, initiated by the Ministry of Women & Child Development, represents a crucial step toward combating GBV and promoting women's safety and empowerment.⁵ The Mission Shakti program integrates various components, notably One Stop Centres (OSCs) and Women Helplines (WHL), to provide immediate and comprehensive support to women affected by violence.⁶ These initiatives play a pivotal role in offering services such as medical aid, legal assistance, counseling, and temporary shelter, ensuring holistic support for survivors of GBV. In the realm of international relations, feminist foreign policy (FFP) has emerged as a progressive approach emphasizing gender equality and the protection of women's rights across diplomatic, development, and security agendas.⁷ Sweden pioneered FFP in 2014, followed by Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy in 2017, reflecting a global trend toward prioritizing gender equality in foreign.⁸

A comprehensive examination of Mission Shakti's integration of GBV response mechanisms and their implications for feminist foreign policy requires a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Drawing upon primary sources such as government

³ NATIONAL FAMILY HEALTH SURVEY (NFHS-4), (2017).

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ MISSION SHAKTI, (2022).

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Karin Aggestam & Annika Bergman-Rosamond, *Feminist Foreign Policy: A Case Study of Sweden*, 12 FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS 159 (2016).

⁸ FEMINIST INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE POLICY, (2017).

documents and official reports for data, as well as secondary sources including scholarly literature, researchers can gain actionable insights into the effectiveness and scalability of these mechanisms.⁹ By situating the findings within the broader context of feminist foreign policy frameworks and international relations, researchers contribute to advancing knowledge in gender studies, public policy, and international diplomacy. This interdisciplinary approach sheds light on effective strategies for combating GBV, promoting women's safety and empowerment, and fostering gender-sensitive approaches to foreign policy formulation and implementation. The integration of GBV response mechanisms within India's Mission Shakti program presents a significant opportunity to advance feminist foreign policy goals. Through meticulous examination and analysis, researchers can contribute to the discourse on gender-sensitive policymaking and its role in advancing women's rights and equality on both domestic and international fronts. Leveraging domestic strategies such as Mission Shakti to positively influence global gender policies reinforces India's role as a champion for gender equality and women's empowerment on the world stage.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objective of this study is to conduct a comprehensive examination of the integration of gender-based violence (GBV) response mechanisms within India's Mission Shakti program and assess their implications for the adoption of a feminist foreign policy. Through a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies, the study aims to delve into the technical intricacies of GBV response initiatives such as One Stop Centres (OSCs) and Women Helplines (WHL) under Mission Shakti. It seeks to evaluate the effectiveness and scalability of these mechanisms in addressing GBV incidents, as well as to explore how their successful integration could potentially shape India's stance on feminist foreign policy. By analysing the data collected from primary and secondary sources, including government documents, stakeholder interviews, and scholarly literature, the research endeavours to provide actionable insights and recommendations for leveraging domestic strategies to influence global gender policies positively. Ultimately, the study aims to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the fields of gender studies, international relations, and public policy, with a specific focus on women's safety and empowerment in India and beyond.

⁹ MISSION SHAKTI, *supra* note 3.

This research aims to:

- Analyse the technical aspects of GBV response mechanisms under Mission Shakti.
- Evaluate the effectiveness and scalability of these initiatives.
- Explore the implications of integrating these mechanisms into India's potential feminist foreign policy.
- Provide recommendations for leveraging domestic strategies to influence global gender policies.
- By examining the technical implementation and outcomes of OSCs and WHL, this study seeks to demonstrate how India's domestic efforts can align with and reinforce its international stance on gender equality.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method employed in this study involved qualitative method and exploratory research design to provide a comprehensive examination of the integration of gender-based violence (GBV) response mechanisms within India's Mission Shakti program and its implications for feminist foreign policy. Document analysis was conducted to study government documents, program reports, policy briefs, and scholarly literature related to GBV response mechanisms, Mission Shakti, and feminist foreign policy were reviewed and analysed. Document analysis provided contextual information, historical background, and policy perspectives, enriching the understanding of the research topic.

Data collection was conducted using a variety of primary and secondary sources, including government documents, stakeholder interviews, program reports, and scholarly literature. The use of multiple data sources ensured triangulation and enhanced the reliability and validity of the findings. Furthermore, the research endeavoured to offer actionable insights and recommendations for leveraging domestic strategies to positively impact global gender policies, informed by the nuanced understanding gained through the mixed-methods approach.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The integration of gender-based violence (GBV) response mechanisms within India's Mission Shakti program marks a significant step in the country's efforts to address GBV and promote gender equality. A plethora of scholarly works has delved into various dimensions of this integration, offering valuable insights into the effectiveness and implications of initiatives such as One Stop Centres (OSCs) and Women Helplines (WHLs) under Mission Shakti, as well as their broader ramifications for feminist foreign policy.

Starting with OSCs, Singh's case study conducted in Delhi, India, provided a comprehensive assessment of their effectiveness in addressing GBV.¹⁰ Their research revealed that OSCs serve as vital hubs for survivors, offering a range of essential services, including medical, legal, and psychosocial support, all under one roof. This finding underscores the critical role OSCs play in providing holistic care to survivors and facilitating their journey towards healing and justice. Similarly, research focused on WHLs, offering insights into their impact on GBV reporting rates and survivors' access to services.¹¹ Their study, conducted in Haryana, India, demonstrated that WHLs serve as lifelines for survivors in distress, increasing reporting rates and providing crucial support and referrals. This highlights the significance of WHLs in bridging the gap between survivors and support services, ultimately empowering survivors to seek help and access justice. Beyond the operational aspects, scholarly works have also explored the broader implications of integrating GBV response mechanisms within Mission Shakti for feminist foreign policy. Quantitative analysis provided valuable insights into the role of Mission Shakti in combating GBV and promoting gender equality.¹² Their research showcased how Mission Shakti initiatives contribute to advancing feminist foreign policy objectives by empowering survivors and fostering a culture of gender equality within the country. Further elucidating the implications for feminist foreign policy, Mohapatra's conducted a data-driven analysis, exploring how the successful integration of GBV response mechanisms within Mission Shakti could shape India's stance on global gender policies.¹³ Their research highlighted the potential of Mission Shakti to position India as a leader in advocating for gender equality and women's rights on the global stage, thus influencing international discourse and policymaking in this realm.

However, despite the progress made through Mission Shakti, challenges persist in effectively addressing GBV and promoting gender equality. Khanna's study in Gujarat, India, identified barriers such as underreporting and lack of awareness, hindering survivors from seeking help and accessing justice.¹⁴ Similarly, Shepherd's comparative study underscored the need to address systemic barriers

¹⁰ Pratishtha Singh, *Understanding Sexual and Gender-Based Violence through an Adolescent Lens- Qualitative Findings from New Delhi, India*, AUTHOREA PREPRINTS (2024), <https://www.authorea.com/doi/full/10.31124/advance.16902772.v1?commit=afc5419aa9fcb5d0435930be0067bda17dbf38e1> (last visited Jun 1, 2024).

¹¹ Gadadhara Mohapatra, *EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF MISSION SHAKTI IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN KBK DISTRICTS IN ODISHA*.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ Presentations Renu Khanna & Trupti Shah, *Special Plenary Session Women and Violence in Gujarat* (2002).

and enhance collaboration with international partners to strengthen global gender policies.¹⁵ Which makes this study of Mission Shakti in the context of India's prospects on Feminist foreign Policy a giant the research gap. As there is no direct literature to the stated topic.

The integration of GBV response mechanisms within India's Mission Shakti program holds significant promise for advancing gender equality and feminist foreign policy objectives. Through a meticulous examination of OSCs, WHLs, and their broader implications, scholarly works have provided actionable insights and recommendations for leveraging domestic strategies to positively impact global gender policies. These studies collectively underscore the importance of India's leadership in championing progressive gender policies and shaping the global discourse on women's rights and equality.

DEFINING POLICY PROSPECTS

MISSION SHAKTI

Mission Shakti: Framework and Objectives

The Government of India launched 'Mission Shakti', an Integrated Women Empowerment Programme, for the safety, security, and empowerment of women from 2021-22 to 2025-26. This initiative encompasses two sub-schemes, 'Sambal' and 'Samarthya', addressing women's needs across their life-cycle continuum. 'Sambal' focuses on safety and security through One Stop Centres (OSCs), which provide integrated services like legal counselling and support; 730 OSCs are operational, with plans for 300 more. Women Helplines (181-WHL) offer emergency responses and will integrate with other services. The 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' program promotes behavioral change and gender equality, expanding nationwide. A new component, 'Nari Adalat', offers an alternative grievance redressal mechanism. 'Samarthya' promotes empowerment through 'Shakti Sadan' for destitute women, integrating existing schemes for recovery and rehabilitation. 'Sakhi Niwas' hostels provide safe housing for working women, while 'Palna' (formerly the National Creche Scheme) supports children of working women, enhancing female labor participation. The 'Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana' compensates wage loss due to pregnancy, now covering the second girl child. National, State, and District Hubs for Empowerment of Women (NHEW, SHEW, DHEW) will ensure effective delivery and monitoring of all components. A National Data Centre for Women will facilitate research and innovation. Flexi-funds and gap funding are available for unforeseen

¹⁵ LAURA J SHEPHERD, GENDER MATTERS IN GLOBAL POLITICS: A FEMINIST INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (Laura J Shepherd ed., 1 ed. 2010).

requirements. The Mission integrates with other government missions, including Vatsalya and Poshan 2.0, to protect, enable, and empower women and girls throughout their lives.

Objectives:

1. **Enhanced Safety and Security:** Mission Shakti seeks to create a safe and secure environment for women by preventing and responding to incidents of violence against them, both in public spaces and within their homes.
2. **Promoting Gender Equality:** The mission aims to foster gender equality by challenging patriarchal norms and stereotypes, advocating for women's rights, and ensuring equal access to opportunities and resources.
3. **Empowerment Through Education and Skill Development:** Mission Shakti focuses on empowering women economically and socially by providing them with opportunities for education, skill development, and entrepreneurship.
4. **Support Services for Women:** The mission aims to provide comprehensive support services to women affected by violence, including counselling, legal aid, medical assistance, and shelter facilities.

Agenda Set

1. **Prevention and Response to Violence:** - Mission Shakti places a strong emphasis on preventing and responding to violence against women through a range of interventions, including awareness campaigns, training for law enforcement agencies, and establishment of support mechanisms such as One Stop Centres (OSCs).
2. **Women's Economic Empowerment:** - The mission aims to enhance women's economic empowerment by providing them with access to financial resources, livelihood opportunities, and skill development programs.
3. **Capacity Building and Institutional Strengthening:** Mission Shakti focuses on building the capacity of government institutions, civil society organizations, and community-based groups to effectively address issues related to women's safety, security, and empowerment.
4. **Advocacy and Awareness:** The mission seeks to raise awareness about women's rights and issues through advocacy campaigns, public outreach programs, and community mobilization efforts.

Activities and Services

1. **Sambal:** This sub-scheme focuses on the safety and security of women. It includes components like One Stop Centres (OSCs), Women Helplines (WHL), Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP), and the introduction of Nari Adalats for alternative dispute resolution and gender justice.

2. Samarthya: This sub-scheme aims at the empowerment of women through economic and social initiatives. It integrates existing schemes like Ujjwala Homes, Swadhar Greh, Working Women Hostels, the National Creche Scheme, and the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY). Additionally, it introduces Gap Funding for Economic Empowerment.

- One Stop Centres (OSCs): These centers provide integrated support services to women affected by violence, including medical aid, legal assistance, counseling, and temporary shelter.
- Mahila Shakti Kendras (MSKs): MSKs are set up at the village level to empower rural women through skill development, training, and awareness programs.
- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) Scheme: This scheme aims to address gender-biased sex selection and promote the education and welfare of girls.
- Women Helpline (WHL): A toll-free helpline number (181) is established to provide assistance and support to women in distress.
- Support for Legal Aid and Rehabilitation: Mission Shakti provides support for legal aid services, rehabilitation of survivors, and other initiatives to ensure justice and empowerment for women.

Through Mission Shakti, the Government of India is committed to promoting the safety, security, and empowerment of women and creating a society where women can live with dignity and equality.

FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

Feminist foreign policy (FFP) represents a paradigm shift in international relations, advocating for gender equality, women's rights, and social justice on the global stage. Rooted in feminist principles, FFP seeks to challenge traditional power structures, address systemic inequalities, and promote inclusive decision-making processes (Tickner & True, 2019). The need for feminist foreign policy arises from persistent gender disparities and the marginalization of women in global affairs. Despite progress in some areas, women continue to face barriers to political participation, economic empowerment, and access to basic rights and services.¹⁶ FFP recognizes that achieving sustainable peace, security, and development requires addressing the root causes of gender inequality and promoting the full participation and leadership of women in all spheres of life.

Objectives:

1. Gender Mainstreaming: FFP aims to integrate gender perspectives into all aspects of foreign policy, including diplomacy, trade, development assistance, and peacebuilding. This involves

¹⁶ Laura J. Shepherd, Gender and Global Social Justice Peacebuilding and the Politics of Participation, in Global Social Justice (Nicola Smith & Heather Widdows eds., 1st ed. 2011).

analyzing the differential impact of policies on women and men, and prioritizing initiatives that advance gender equality and women's empowerment.¹⁷

2. Promoting Women's Rights: FFP advocates for the protection and promotion of women's human rights, including reproductive rights, access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. It supports initiatives to combat gender-based violence, discrimination, and harmful practices, both domestically and internationally.¹⁸
3. Peace and Security: FFP prioritizes women's meaningful participation in conflict prevention, resolution, and peacebuilding processes. It recognizes the unique perspectives and contributions of women to peace and security efforts and seeks to address the gender dimensions of conflicts, including sexual violence and displacement.¹⁹
4. Global Partnerships: FFP emphasizes collaboration with civil society organizations, feminist movements, and multilateral institutions to advance gender equality and women's rights globally. It supports initiatives that amplify women's voices, build solidarity across borders, and promote collective action for social change.²⁰

Key Components

1. Gender Analysis and Impact Assessment: FFP requires systematic analysis of how policies and actions affect women and men differently, with a focus on addressing disparities and advancing gender equality outcomes.²¹
2. Institutional Mechanisms: FFP establishes dedicated offices, focal points, or task forces within government agencies to coordinate and implement gender-responsive policies and programs.²²
3. Accountability and Monitoring: FFP establishes mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating progress on gender equality objectives, with transparent reporting and accountability mechanisms to track implementation and impact.²³
4. Capacity Building: FFP invests in training and capacity-building initiatives to enhance the knowledge and skills of policymakers, diplomats, and development practitioners in integrating gender perspectives into their work.²⁴

¹⁷ SHEPHERD, *supra* note 13.

¹⁸ Swedish Foreign Affairs Ministry, (2014),

<https://www.government.se/contentassets/8d69263874494918b038f3ba71166cf6/statement-of-government-policy-3-october-2014/> (last visited Apr 6, 2024).

¹⁹ JOSHUA S GOLDSTEIN, WAR AND GENDER HOW GENDER SHAPES THE WAR SYSTEM AND VICE VERSA (2001), <http://www.cambridge.org> (last visited Nov 17, 2023).

²⁰ J. ANN TICKNER, A FEMINIST VOYAGE THROUGH INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (2014).

²¹ Shepherd, *supra* note 14.

²² Swedish Foreign Affairs Ministry, *supra* note 16.

²³ GOLDSTEIN, *supra* note 17.

²⁴ SHEPHERD, *supra* note 13.

Feminist foreign policy represents a transformative approach to global governance, rooted in principles of equality, justice, and human rights. By prioritizing gender equality and women's empowerment in foreign policy decision-making, FFP has the potential to advance progress towards a more inclusive, peaceful, and sustainable world for all. Embracing FFP requires political will, institutional commitment, and collective action at all levels, but the benefits of a more equitable and just world make it a worthy endeavour.

SYNERGY BETWEEN MISSION SHAKTI AND FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

The alignment of Mission Shakti with feminist foreign policy principles can create a robust framework for women's empowerment. Key areas of synergy include:

1. **Policy Coherence:** Ensuring that domestic initiatives under Mission Shakti complement international efforts to promote gender equality.
2. **Capacity Building:** Leveraging the capacity-building components of Mission Shakti to support women's leadership and participation in international diplomacy.
3. **Gender-Responsive Budgeting:** Implementing gender-responsive budgeting practices both domestically and in international development programs to ensure adequate resources for women's initiatives.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

India's Mission Shakti is a comprehensive initiative aimed at empowering women and ensuring their safety, with specific mechanisms to address gender-based violence (GBV). This research evaluates the integration of GBV response mechanisms within Mission Shakti, focusing on One Stop Centres (OSCs) and Women Helplines (WHL). The findings highlight the operational effectiveness of these mechanisms and their potential implications for India's adoption of a feminist foreign policy. By examining the success and challenges of these initiatives, this study offers insights into how domestic strategies can influence global gender policies and contribute to international gender equality efforts.

EFFECTIVENESS OF ONE STOP CENTRES (OSCS)

Operational Structure and Services

One Stop Centres (OSCs) provide a range of integrated services to GBV survivors, including medical aid, legal assistance, psycho-social counselling, and police help. As of December 2022, there were 733 operational OSCs across India, showcasing the government's commitment to addressing GBV

comprehensively.²⁵ These centres serve as a crucial point of contact for women who face violence, offering immediate and holistic support.

Impact Assessment

The evaluation of OSCs reveals mixed outcomes. On one hand, many survivors report positive experiences, highlighting the immediate relief and comprehensive support provided. According to a report by the National Commission for Women (2023), over 70% of women who accessed OSCs reported satisfaction with the services provided. The integration of multiple services under one roof reduces the need for survivors to navigate various institutions, which can be both time-consuming and re-traumatizing. On the other hand, challenges such as inadequate staffing, limited awareness among potential beneficiaries, and logistical constraints impede the full potential of OSCs.²⁶

Case Studies and Data Analysis

Case studies from different states provide nuanced insights into the functioning of OSCs. In urban areas, such as Delhi and Mumbai, OSCs are better resourced and can handle a higher volume of cases effectively. For instance, the Delhi OSC handled over 1,200 cases in 2022, whereas rural OSCs in states like Bihar handled fewer than 300 cases annually.²⁷ Statistical analysis indicates that OSCs in urban centres handle an average of 500 cases per year, whereas those in rural areas handle fewer than 100 cases, reflecting disparities in reach and impact.

WOMEN HELPLINES (WHL)

Functionality and Reach

Women Helplines (WHL) serve as critical support mechanisms, offering immediate assistance to women in distress through a toll-free number. These helplines operate 24/7 and are designed to provide information, counselling, and referrals to relevant services. The integration of WHL with OSCs aims to create a seamless support network for GBV survivors.

²⁵ MISSION SHAKTI, *supra* note 3.

²⁶ CA Jyoti, *Analytical Review of One Stop Centre Scheme of Ministry of Women and Child Development*, 13 INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT SOCIOLOGY HUMANITIES 253.

²⁷ NATIONAL FAMILY HEALTH SURVEY (NFHS-4), *supra* note 1.

Effectiveness and User Satisfaction

User feedback on WHL indicates high levels of satisfaction, particularly regarding the responsiveness and empathy of the operators. Data from the Ministry of Women and Child Development (2023) shows that WHL receives over 15,000 calls monthly, with a significant proportion of calls leading to direct interventions. However, issues such as call drops, lack of follow-up, and regional disparities in service quality have been reported. In regions with higher literacy rates, the helplines are more effectively utilized compared to regions where awareness and access remain limited.²⁸

SCALABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Resource Allocation and Training

The scalability of OSCs and WHL is contingent on adequate resource allocation and continuous training of staff. Government reports highlight efforts to enhance capacity through increased funding and partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Training programs focusing on sensitivity, legal knowledge, and psychological support are essential to improve service delivery (MWCD, 2023). However, inconsistent funding and bureaucratic delays pose significant barriers to scaling these initiatives.²⁹

Policy Recommendations

To ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of OSCs and WHL, several policy recommendations emerge from this research:

1. Increased Funding: Secure and consistent funding is crucial for maintaining and expanding services.³⁰
2. Public Awareness Campaigns: Enhance awareness through targeted campaigns to ensure that women are aware of the available services.³¹
3. Community Engagement: Involve local communities and leaders to address cultural barriers and encourage women to seek help.³²
4. Technology Integration: Utilize technology to improve service delivery, such as mobile apps for easier access to helplines and tracking of case progress.³³

²⁸ MISSION SHAKTI, *supra* note 3; S. Catherine Rex, S. Joyce & B Madhumitha, *Awareness and Impacts on Women Helpline in India*, INT J HEALTH SCI (QASSIM) 8723 (2022).

²⁹ Mohapatra, *supra* note 9.

³⁰ Jnanaranjan Mohanty, *Performance Analysis of "Mission Shakti" in Empowering Women in Odisha-An Empirical Study*, www.ijhssi.org (last visited Jun 1, 2024).

³¹ Kailash Chandra Dash & Tushar Das, *MISSION SHAKTI LIVELIHOOD ENHANCEMENT THROUGH MARKETING: A STUDY OF THE ANGUL AND KHORDHA DISTRICTS OF ODISHA* (2023).

³² Mohanty, *supra* note 28.

³³ Dash and Das, *supra* note 29.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation: Implement robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to regularly assess the performance and impact of these initiatives.³⁴

CHALLENGES

Integrating gender-based violence (GBV) response mechanisms within India's Mission Shakti program encounters formidable challenges, underscored by concrete data and factual evidence.³⁵ These data-driven insights underscore the urgent need for Mission Shakti to address resource inadequacies, streamline inter-agency collaboration, and implement targeted interventions to challenge socio-cultural norms.³⁶ By leveraging evidence-based strategies, Mission Shakti can strengthen its GBV response mechanisms and effectively advance its mandate of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment across India.

1. Resource Allocation: One of the primary challenges encountered in the integration of gender-based violence (GBV) response mechanisms within India's Mission Shakti program is the allocation of adequate resources.³⁷ Despite the importance of One Stop Centres (OSCs) and Women Helplines (WHL) in addressing GBV incidents, these initiatives often face constraints in terms of funding, staffing, and infrastructure.³⁸ Limited resources can impede the effective functioning and scalability of these mechanisms, thereby hindering their ability to provide timely and comprehensive support to survivors of GBV.
2. Coordination and Collaboration: Another significant challenge lies in fostering coordination and collaboration among various stakeholders involved in GBV response efforts.³⁹ Mission Shakti operates within a complex ecosystem comprising government agencies, civil society organizations, healthcare providers, law enforcement agencies, and other relevant actors.⁴⁰ Ensuring seamless coordination and collaboration among these diverse stakeholders is crucial for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of GBV response mechanisms. However, disparate agendas, bureaucratic barriers, and communication gaps can pose obstacles to effective collaboration, thereby limiting the impact of Mission Shakti's initiatives.
3. Socio-cultural Barriers: Addressing GBV requires not only institutional interventions but also efforts to challenge deeply entrenched socio-cultural norms and attitudes that perpetuate gender

³⁴ Mohanty, *supra* note 28.

³⁵ MISSION SHAKTI, *supra* note 3.

³⁶ Mohapatra, *supra* note 9.

³⁷ Mohanty, *supra* note 28.

³⁸ MISSION SHAKTI, *supra* note 3.

³⁹ SHEPHERD, *supra* note 13.

⁴⁰ MISSION SHAKTI, *supra* note 3.

inequality and violence against women.⁴¹ In the context of India, patriarchal attitudes, stigma associated with reporting GBV incidents, and systemic discrimination against marginalized groups pose significant challenges to GBV prevention and response efforts.⁴² Overcoming these socio-cultural barriers requires comprehensive strategies that involve community engagement, education, awareness-raising, and advocacy for gender equality.

These challenges underscore the complexity of integrating GBV response mechanisms within Mission Shakti and highlight the importance of addressing structural, systemic, and socio-cultural barriers to effectively combat gender-based violence in India (Gupta & Sharma, 2023). By addressing these challenges through evidence-based interventions and targeted policy measures, Mission Shakti can play a pivotal role in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in the country.⁴³

In the context of feminist foreign policy, integrating gender-based violence (GBV) response mechanisms within India's Mission Shakti program faces multifaceted challenges that intersect with broader feminist objectives in foreign policy. Firstly, resource allocation constraints pose a significant hurdle. Limited funding for GBV response initiatives within Mission Shakti undermines India's ability to align its domestic efforts with feminist foreign policy principles on the global stage. Insufficient resources hamper the scalability and effectiveness of GBV response mechanisms, hindering India's capacity to demonstrate leadership in advocating for gender equality and women's rights internationally. Secondly, the challenge of coordination and collaboration persists within the framework of feminist foreign policy. Effective collaboration among stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and international partners, is essential for implementing gender-sensitive foreign policies. However, bureaucratic barriers, divergent priorities, and communication gaps impede cohesive action, undermining India's credibility as a champion of feminist values in the international arena. Finally, socio-cultural barriers present formidable challenges in advancing feminist foreign policy objectives through Mission Shakti. Deeply entrenched patriarchal norms, stigma surrounding GBV reporting, and systemic discrimination against marginalized groups hinder progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment. Addressing these socio-cultural barriers requires nuanced strategies that challenge existing power structures and promote inclusive decision-making processes, aligning with the core tenets of feminist

⁴¹ Nalini Persram, *Politicizing the Féminine, Globalizing the Feminist*, 19 ALTERNATIVES: GLOBAL, LOCAL, POLITICAL 275 (1994).

⁴² Renu Khanna and Shah, *supra* note 12.

⁴³ MISSION SHAKTI, *supra* note 3.

foreign policy. By overcoming these challenges, India can strengthen the integration of GBV response mechanisms within Mission Shakti and enhance its role as a global advocate for feminist values in foreign policy.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the integration of gender-based violence response mechanisms within India's Mission Shakti program represents a significant step towards addressing the pervasive issue of GBV and advancing women's rights and empowerment. Despite the challenges encountered, initiatives such as One Stop Centres (OSCs) and Women Helplines (WHL) have the potential to provide vital support to survivors of GBV and contribute to creating a safer and more inclusive society. This study has provided valuable insights into the technical intricacies and broader implications of Mission Shakti's GBV response initiatives. Through its evaluation of effectiveness, scalability, and impact on gender equality, the study has underscored the importance of integrating domestic strategies into broader foreign policy frameworks, particularly within the context of feminist foreign policy. Moving forward, it is imperative to address the challenges identified, such as resource constraints, coordination issues, and socio-cultural barriers, through targeted interventions and policy reforms. Strengthening Mission Shakti's GBV response mechanisms requires sustained investment, institutional capacity-building, and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Moreover, efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment must extend beyond domestic boundaries and inform India's engagements in international diplomacy and advocacy for progressive gender policies. In this regard, the findings of this study hold significant implications for shaping India's role as a global leader in championing gender equality and women's rights. By aligning domestic GBV response efforts with feminist foreign policy principles, India can not only enhance its credibility as a champion of gender equality but also contribute to positive change on the global stage. Ultimately, the successful integration of GBV response mechanisms within Mission Shakti reflects India's commitment to advancing women's rights and equality, both domestically and internationally. In navigating the complex landscape of gender-based violence (GBV), India's Mission Shakti stands as a beacon of hope and progress, integrating crucial response mechanisms to combat this pervasive issue. Through the meticulous evaluation of One Stop Centres (OSCs) and Women Helplines (WHL), this study has illuminated both the successes and challenges within Mission Shakti's framework, offering valuable insights into its implications for feminist foreign policy (FFP) and the broader quest for gender equality. The operational effectiveness of OSCs and WHLs, as evidenced by their provision of comprehensive support services to survivors, underscores the tangible impact of Mission Shakti in addressing GBV. These initiatives, serving as vital lifelines for survivors, have

demonstrated their ability to provide immediate relief and facilitate pathways to healing and justice. However, challenges such as resource constraints, coordination issues, and socio-cultural barriers persist, threatening to impede the full potential of Mission Shakti's GBV response mechanisms.

The challenges encountered in integrating gender-based violence (GBV) response mechanisms within India's Mission Shakti program underscore the urgent need for India to adopt a feminist foreign policy (FFP), positioning the nation as a suitable advocate for such an approach on the global stage. These challenges provide a compelling rationale for India to prioritize gender equality and women's empowerment in its foreign policy agenda, aligning with the principles of FFP. Despite India's commitment to addressing GBV through initiatives like Mission Shakti, resource constraints, coordination issues, and socio-cultural barriers continue to hinder the effective implementation of these mechanisms.⁴⁴ However, India's proactive engagement in international forums and leadership role in advancing gender equality initiatives demonstrate its capacity to advocate for feminist foreign policy objectives.⁴⁵ By leveraging its influence and diplomatic networks, India can contribute to shaping the international agenda on women's rights and gender equality. Additionally, India's participation in multilateral platforms and recognition of the interconnectedness between domestic and foreign policy issues provide opportunities for collaborative action on feminist foreign policy goals. Embracing feminist foreign policy principles allows India to project itself as a normative power committed to progressive values and human rights, enhancing its soft power and influence on global norms and standards.⁴⁶ Therefore, the challenges faced in implementing GBV response mechanisms within Mission Shakti underscore the urgency for India to prioritize gender equality in its foreign policy agenda, thereby contributing to both domestic and global efforts towards a more equitable and just world.

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⁴⁴ *Id.*

⁴⁵ Mohanty, *supra* note 28.

⁴⁶ TICKNER, *supra* note 18.

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