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Name of Department: Social Work Topic of Research: Violence in matrimonial family in the context of Kashmir's protracted conflict exploring the survivors journey of seeking redressal within the private and public domain.

Findings of the Study

The study reveals that women's decision-making in reporting domestic violence is a complex, multi-layered process shaped by the intersection of family, social norms, political context, and institutional practices. The findings are organized under three stages of decision-making: *when to report*, *who to report to*, and *what to report*.

Victim-survivors often delayed reporting violence, engaging first in a phase of negotiation and self-blame before seeking help. The decision of *whom* to report to reflected a complex negotiation between distrust of state institutions and reliance on familial and community structures. Women's choices were influenced by patriarchal family dynamics, community control, and the militarized context of Kashmir. The decision of *what* to report was often determined by those who mediated the complaint. Families frequently dictated the narrative, deciding which aspects of abuse to disclose, thereby silencing the survivor's voice. Women rarely had control over how their stories were represented in petitions or police reports.

Most complaints focused narrowly on **physical violence**, while **psychological and emotional abuse** were minimized or omitted due to limited understanding of what constitutes violence. Even educated or financially independent survivors found themselves constrained by family expectations and social judgment. A significant barrier was the **lack of legal awareness**. Across formal and informal systems, survivors encountered **patriarchal biases, insensitivity, and victim-blaming**. Police often advised women to "adjust" or reconcile with their husbands; some even suggested subservience as a way to restore peace. Judicial interactions were equally traumatic, marked by dismissive attitudes, moral judgments, and public humiliation.