**BRIEFING PAPER AND PRESENTATION**

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# 1. Purpose of policy brief

The policy briefs are considered to be distinctive from research paper in communicating practical research implications to the specific audience. In the current policy brief, the focus is made on an increasing number of domestic violence in Australia, which is affecting especially children as well as spouses of the family. Young women, pregnant women and Indigenous women of Australia are at high risk of domestic violence in present days. The purpose of the present policy brief is to highlight domestic violence issue of Australia. In addition to this, policy brief sheds light on different policies set up by Australian Government for mitigating the mentioned issue.

The issue of domestic violence is highlighted in the current policy brief for emphasizing the condition of Australian people, especially women. It is noted that domestic violence mostly occurs at a greater rate for the Indigenous Australians communities as compared to non-Indigenous Australian. As per the record of 2014-2015, it is found that Indigenous women were hospitalised to about 32 times because of family violence as compared to women of non-Indigenous family (AIHW, 2018). Moreover, the hospitalisation record of  Indigenous men was about 23 times than non-indigenous communities due to domestic violence (AIHW, 2018). It is seen that domestic violence issue is a great matter of concern, which needs to be reduced for maximising social advantage of Australia. Hence, the main purpose of the policy brief is to demonstrate the need to change the current approach of policy or form a new one for reducing domestic violence to a greater extent.

# 2. Concise summary of issue

Domestic violence stands as the violence that exists between spouses in the domestic settings, which includes illegal acts such as emotional, sexual, psychological and physical abuse. Based on the viewpoint of Pahl (2016),  domestic violence destroys the safety of people at their own home or in the community, which destroys the peace of society. Domestic or family violence cuts across economic and social boundaries, besides having numerous risk factors that are associated with it. Fitzgerald & Graham (2016) stated that drug use and alcohol stand as the mostly noticed cause of domestic violence, which hampers the peace of the people living at home. The drinking habits, aggression levels are associated with the partner’s physical violence behaviour. In the indigenous communities, 41% of domestic violence cases are associated with alcohol and drug usage (Parliament of Australia, 2016). In addition to this, it is also found that separation and pregnancy are the other causes of domestic violence in Australia, which also needs to be focused while implementing policy by decision-makers.

Separation and pregnancy stand vulnerable to family or domestic violence due to differences found in the beliefs and attitudes of partners. As mentioned by Pearlman et al., (2016), violence follows the separation or even the decision of separating is taken because of violence in a relationship. It is considered as the stressful act as it destroys the peace of the domestic settings and community. It is noted that indigenous women experience violence from the partner during the time of pregnancy and are even separated. Moreover, it is also found that the effects of low employment status, income, homelessness and education are the cause of increasing domestic violence issue in the country. Postmus et al., (2018) commented that unemployed and uneducated indigenous women are more likely to experience domestic violence as compared to educated and employed ones. It is found that unemployed spouse suffers more from domestic violence, which has a negative impact on their children well-being.



**Figure 1: Pro-violence attitude is more in younger age**

(Source: Parliament of Australia, 2016)

It is analysed from the figure that indigenous young people holds pro-violence attitudes, which gradually decreases with age. The reason for the increasing domestic violence among indigenous community is the distrust and fear of police, governmental agencies and justice system. Fitzgerald & Graham (2016) opined that indigenous people mostly experience anxiety when they get engaged with any welfare agencies and police. It is noted that improper support provided by NGOs or Governmental policies is increasing the rate of domestic violence in recent days. Improper accessibility to the support services and lack of proper awareness are making indigenous community experience violence at a rapid rate. Therefore, the change in the policy is important for improving the social condition of Australian communities.

# 3. Identification of available options of policy

The law highlights non-governmental as well as governmental agencies as the support system for improving the social condition of the country. According to Walklate & Fitz-Gibbon (2018), implementation of Governmental policies aims at controlling the behavioural patterns of an individual for minimising inequality in the country. It is found that pro-arrest and pro-charge policies are set by the Australian Government for improving the support services of indigenous people in Australia. The mentioned policies are used in the Australian court for fast-tracking it and providing justice to the case. The pro-arrest, as well as pro-charge policy, integrate different activities of police so that they take the right actions or providing proper assistance to the sufferers.

Apart from this, the Governmental policies (pro-charge and pro-arrest) even integrates activities of courts, prosecutions, besides creating coordination and corrections with different agencies, like advocacy services of domestic violence. As commented by Vallins (2017), pro-arrest policy showed an increase in the rate of arrest due to domestic violence in Australia. The safety of the victim taken as paramount by the Government of Australia for ensuring their safety at home and in the entire community. The pro-arrest policy helped in improving legal recognition for family violence for reducing the violence rate in Australia. Furthermore, people experiencing domestic violence also gets the option to easily contact the agency, like counsellors, shelter as well as a crisis centre.

The response of police is not only considered as providing immediate safety to the victim, but also convey an essential social message regarding the after-effect of domestic violence in the society. Segrave, Wilson & Fitz-Gibbon (2018) noted that pro-charge policy set-up by the Australian Government is aimed towards improving the response of police towards domestic or family violence. The mentioned policy has increased the clarity of police procedures, making the police confidence in their responsibilities and roles in the situations of domestic violence. It is also noted that Governmental policies against domestic violence are increasing over time in Australia. In the earlier days, it is found that the earlier policies lacked enhanced support for the victims, improper cooperation between agencies and policies, which is currently improved. The policies of Australia needs further improvement in preventing domestic violence from the country.

# 4. Recommendations

***Policy for increasing public awareness***

It is essential for the Australian Government to make the public aware of the fact that domestic violence is a crime. As influenced by the view of Montesanti & Thurston (2015), raising awareness helps in improving the knowledge of indigenous men and women based on domestic violence. Implementing a policy for increasing public awareness can, therefore, reduce domestic violence, besides making the sufferer take help of social agencies; like NGO, shelters.

***Policy for funding the National Initiatives***

It can help in setting a new awareness program for reducing domestic violence by bringing change in attitudes, culture as well as behaviours of people in the community. Influenced by Pahl (2016), funding national initiatives can be done for tackling domestic violence in cooperation with the territory and state Government. Moreover, the policy needs to be focused towards bringing gender equality, economic empowerment, safety, opportunity and leadership.

# Presentation

**1. Purpose of policy brief**

* purpose of the present policy brief is to highlight domestic violence issue
* an issue of domestic violence
* domestic violence mostly occurs at a greater rate for the Indigenous Australians communities
* hospitalisation record of  Indigenous men were about 23 times than non-indigenous communities  (AIHW, 2018)
* policy brief aims to demonstrate the need to change the current approach of policy

The current policy brief focus on highlighting the most prevalent issue of Australia, which is domestic violence, besides highlighting the existing policies associated with it. The main purpose of the policy brief is to change the existing policy or forming a new one for eradicating domestic violence issue.

**2. Concise summary of issue**

* drug use and alcohol stand as the mostly noticed cause of domestic violence
* unemployed and uneducated indigenous women are more likely to experience domestic violence
* Improper accessibility to the support services
* lack of proper awareness regarding domestic violence (Segrave, Wilson & Fitz-Gibbon, 2018)

Domestic violence is rapidly increasing in Australia, mostly in case of indigenous people. It is because of improper support provided by the police or social agencies.

**3. Identification of available options of policy**

* pro-arrest policy
* pro-charge policy (Vallins, 2017)

The policies are designed by the Governmental bodies for reducing violence in society by improving help services. In Australia, pro-arrest and pr-charge policy are designed for improving police response.

**4. Recommendations**

* Policy for increasing public awareness
* Policy for funding the National Initiatives (Walklate & Fitz-Gibbon, 2018)

Policy for increasing public awareness can help in reducing domestic violence as people will become aware of the act that it is a crime. Furthermore, policy for funding national initiatives can help in bringing gender inequality, safety and economic empowerment, thereby reducing domestic violence issue.

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