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Summary of Research Papers 01



# Transformation of Support Systems for Victims of Domestic Violence in the Post-COVID-19 Era

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**Transformation of Support Systems for  
Victims of Domestic Violence in the  
Post-COVID-19 Era**



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## I . Necessity for the Study and Purpose Thereof

In the initial stage after the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic, a social concern was raised by major international organizations, such as the United Nations and the World Health Organization, and some foreign countries that the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and continuation thereof would increase personal and social tension levels and that the measures to combat the infectious disease would prolong the time spent in places where violence occur, which may lead to an increased risk of domestic violence against women and worsening of gender equality in general. Similarly, it was pointed out in Korea that the time spent at home would be prolonged during the COVID-19 pandemic, and despite victims being exposed to a higher risk of domestic violence, they would face difficulties in seeking help. In addition, under the circumstances where social response measures were strengthened due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the measures were inadequate given the lack

of consideration for the distinct characteristics of victims of domestic violence in the initial stage of the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, the recommendation to close support facilities for victims of domestic violence in the same way as closing other social welfare facilities and organizations, thereby causing various difficulties and problems regarding support for victims of domestic violence.

The problems identified in the process of implementing support policies for domestic violence victims during the COVID-19 pandemic are not limited to the COVID-19 pandemic. Such problems may arise at any time in another social crisis in the future. Accordingly, it is necessary to examine the problems of the current support system for victims of domestic violence and make proactive efforts to address these problems. Such endeavors can also be a preemptive response ensuring the stable operation of the support system for victims of domestic violence in a new crisis situation, for example, the next pandemic.

Against this backdrop, the purpose of this study is to review the current status of the support system for victims of domestic violence and the details thereof, present a direction for support policies for victims of domestic violence and the purpose thereof tailored to the post-COVID-19 era, and explore policy options. To this end, a literature review, collection of statistical data and foreign cases, and in-depth interviews with victims and activists were conducted. Based on the results of the analysis, this study intends to present the direction for changes in the support system for victims of domestic violence, which can offer practical help to victims recovering from being victimized in gender-based domestic violence and present policy tasks and improvement plans.

## II. The Establishment of the Support System for Victims of Domestic Violence and Elements Thereof

### 1. The Establishment of the Support System for Victims of Domestic Violence and the Process of Development

#### 1) Domestic Violence as a Social Problem and the Necessity for the Establishment of the Support System for Victims

In Korean society, feminist groups led by the private sector played a crucial role at the start of changing awareness about domestic violence, making people aware that it is not a personal problem but a public problem and not a minor quarrel between individuals but violence grounded on gender-based power. Counseling for husband-to-wife violence victims was initially provided as a part of the feminist movement in the 1980s and was referred to as 'feminist counseling'. Feminist counseling is counseling consistent with the feminist value system in which a counselor recognizes problems of gender inequality in society and patriarchal power relations and makes efforts to achieve a gender equal society through the empowerment of the counselee (Kim, M. et al., 2006). In 1987, the first shelter for victims of domestic violence was established in Korea. The shelter, which was operated to empower victims to become self-reliant physically, psychologically, and economically while being free from violence, affected the establishment of facilities on a national level for women subjected to husband-to-wife violence victimization and contributed to the formation of the initial model for the current support system for victims, where shelters play a central role offering psychological, legal, medical and welfare support

(Lee, M. et al., 2008).

## 2) The Institutionalization of the Support System for Victims of Domestic Violence

Into the 1990s, the Korean support system for victims of domestic violence went through the process of institutionalization in earnest. The movement for the enactment of laws governing violence against women was launched by the feminist groups, and, as a result, the legal foundations for promoting gender equality and prohibiting discrimination against women were laid. The institutionalization of the problem of domestic violence can be evaluated as a meaningful achievement made through the efforts of the feminist movement. However, conversely, the institutionalization of the problem of domestic violence inhibited the autonomous and independent activities of support organizations for victims, weakened the influence of the organizations driven by the movement and caused the problem of recognizing support for victims as providing support from the perspective of social welfare rather than from the perspective of the feminist movement.

## 3) The Effects of Institutionalization and Weakening of the Feminism Perspective

As a result of institutionalization, state support was offered to victims of domestic violence. Counseling centers and shelters for victims of domestic violence were operated mostly by a few feminist groups in the 1980s, and, after institutionalization, the number of such counseling centers and shelters increased sharply. After institutionalization, the separation of the feminist movement from the issues surrounding the

operation of the support organizations and counseling for victims was strengthened. The support organizations were weakened in their roles as feminist organizations eliminating domestic violence and supporting victims while being strengthened in their roles as facilities offering social welfare services.

Making the problems of domestic violence official through the enactment of relevant laws on domestic violence and the establishment of policies was the product of political struggles and analysis originating from the feminist movement. Nonetheless, after the institutionalization of the issue of domestic violence, there was less room for feminist politics or perspective to intervene. Consequently, conservative discourse considering domestic violence as a personal matter increased. These circumstances can be evaluated as a problem of institutionalization or regression thereof (Heo, M. 2011). Currently, from the perspective of organizations, responses to domestic violence are left to the capabilities of individual organizations. Given this, it can be argued that it is time to determine whether the concept of domestic violence, the principles for support for domestic violence victims, and the direction thereof are tailored to gender equality and human rights.

## **2. Issues with the Support System for Victims of Domestic Violence Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Social Change**

### **1) The Necessity to Reconfirm the Purpose of the Support System for Victims of Domestic Violence and Operation Principles Thereof**

The support for victims of domestic violence is essential for the existence and safety of such victims. Regardless of the situation, domestic violence victims and gender-based violence victims should be

able to seek safety and relief from victimization and receive sufficient social support to be able to recover as quickly as possible and return to their normal lives.

However, in the initial stage after social response measures were introduced to combat COVID-19, quarantine guidelines were expected to be implemented by the support facilities for domestic violence victims in the same way as other social welfare facilities, for example, closing of facilities, thereby making it difficult to offer stable support for domestic violence victims (Kim, W. et al., 2020). Thereafter, as various improvement plans were proposed and response measures to tackle COVID-19 were eased, the problems were seemingly resolved. However, to prevent the recurrence of the same problems, it is necessary to comprehensively review and examine the purpose of the support system for domestic violence victims and operation principles thereof (Kim, H. 2020).

## 2) Strengthening of the Current Support System for Victims Due to COVID-19 and Operational Problems

COVID-19 exacerbated the problem in the way shelters were operated based on a communal living environment. Under the circumstances where facilities equipped with one room per person were in short supply, when someone admitted to the facility contracted COVID-19, the majority of the occupants had to share rooms so that those infected with COVID-19 could be isolated. This actually leads to a higher risk of infection for the other occupants.

Moreover, in the process of distributing the first emergency Coronavirus relief funds, problems arose such as making one single

payment of the relief funds for all family members to only the householder of a family, with no consideration of the possibility of domestic violence. Thereafter, measures were taken to address this, for example, distributing government relief funds to individual, eligible family members. However, it is evident that the circumstances of domestic violence victims and the risk of domestic violence were not duly considered in the process of implementing policies related to COVID-19.

In addition, during the COVID-19 pandemic when movement and face-to-face contact were restricted, a greater need arose to find a way for the diversification of channels to seek help and methods for victims to be able to seek barrier-free help online and offline.

### **3. The Concept of the Support System for Victims of Domestic Violence and Elements Thereof**

#### **1) State Obligations for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Support for Victims**

Domestic violence, the prevention of violence against women and support for victims are internationally dealt with as state obligations. In the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the United Nations in 1993 and the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, which entered into force in 2014, it is prescribed that states and society are obliged to provide mandatory services and support to victims so that they can seek safety and recover from victimization upon the occurrence of domestic violence.

## 2) Elements of the Support System for Victims of Domestic Violence

In 2012, UN Women created guidelines to establish national action plans and presented three key elements of the response system to address violence against women in the Handbook for National Action Plans on Violence Against Women. The three key elements proposed by UN Women are: first, care, support and empowerment of victims/survivors; second, protection and justice; and third, system coordination and integration.

## 3) Elements of the Support Service for Victims of Domestic Violence

Offering a proper support service is necessary to ensure the safety and protection of victims of domestic violence and recovery from victimization. In 2020, UN Women presented five services that must be offered to victims of domestic violence at no cost to the victims: emergency helplines; police and justice sector response; health care; safe accommodation; and shelter and psycho-social counseling.

## 4. Comparison of the Support Systems for Victims of Domestic Violence and Support Services between International Organizations and Korea

### 1) Whether the state has obligations to prevent domestic violence and support victims

The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family in Korea, which is the authority responsible for establishing policies for the protection of victims of domestic violence and support for victims, manages and supervises facilities related to violence against women, including

counseling centers for domestic violence and protective facilities (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 2022). Since the affairs of the support for domestic violence victims are primarily conducted by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, a central administrative agency, it can be said that Korea stipulates the prevention of domestic violence and support for victims as state obligations and implements them.

## 2) Evaluation of the Elements of the Support System for Victims of Domestic Violence

The Korean response system based on the criteria of the three key elements of support for domestic violence victims proposed by UN Women in 2012 will now be explored. First, regarding the care, support, and empowerment of victims/survivors, state support is offered by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family. However, it is necessary to further clearly establish what empowerment of victims means and which direction to proceed. Second, protection and justice can be considered from the perspective of social awareness and values. Since serious gender-based violence victimization, including domestic violence victimization, such as the murder of women by intimate male partners and stalking crimes, occurs continually in Korean society, it is necessary to further strengthen the protection of and support for victims. Finally, regarding system coordination and integration, the standardized tasks of recording actual data on support for women victims of violence and sharing such data are not yet completed. However, considering that a research project, etc., for the development of standardization is underway, it can be said that effort is being made for system coordination and integration.

### 3) Evaluation of the Elements of the Support Service for Victims of Domestic Violence

As shown in the following table, Korea has already implemented support services for victims of domestic violence and currently offers the services that the UN Women proposed to be obligatorily made available to domestic violence victims at no cost. Thus, it can be said that all of the key support services for victims of domestic violence have already been established in accordance with international standards. Accordingly, the next questions to promote the development of the support system for domestic violence victims concern whether functions per area operate appropriately and whether coordination between areas and the cooperation system are well constructed. It is necessary to examine such questions and evaluate the work performed.

## III. The Current Status of the Support System for Victims of Domestic Violence and Analysis Thereof

### 1. The legal Basis of the Support System for Victims of Domestic Violence

In Korea, the legal basis of support for victims of domestic violence is grounded in the Act on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims which was enacted in 1997 and entered into force in 1998. The Act on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims prescribes matters concerning the establishment and operation of emergency hotline centers, counseling centers, and protective facilities

for victims of domestic violence. Moreover, the Act also prescribes qualification standards for the employees of emergency hotline centers, counseling centers, and protective facilities; education and training facilities for counselors related to domestic violence; the granting of preferential rights to residency in rental houses (Article 8-5); the obligation to respect a victim's will; cooperation from investigative agencies; supervision; and medical care and protection.

## 2. The Current Status of Crimes of Domestic Violence

Looking at the trends of the crimes of domestic violence reported by calling the 112 emergency number, the number of reported cases rose from 160,272 in 2013 to 279,082 in 2017; however, thereafter there was a downward trend, with 218,680 crimes reported in 2021. The number of such reported cases in which the perpetrators of the domestic violence were arrested repeatedly increased and decreased year by year. In most of the years after 2015, except for 2017, more than 40,000 cases were recorded.

Looking at the cases between 2013 and 2021 in which the perpetrators of domestic violence were indicted, 95% (including indictment with imprisonment and indictment without physical detention) were indicted without physical detention, with the ratio of those imprisoned being meager.

Looking at the genders of the perpetrators of the crimes of domestic violence, women and men accounted for 24.5% and 75.5% respectively as of 2021, showing that most offenders are men.

### 3. The Current Status of the Support Service for Victims of Domestic Violence

#### 1) The Current Status of the Support Service of the Women's Emergency Hotline 1366

The number of domestic violence counseling cases received through the women's emergency hotline 1366 continuously increased from 94,984 in 2012 to 206,885 in 2019 but somewhat declined thereafter to 171,352 in 2021. In terms of counseling methods, the ratios of telephone counseling and counseling by visitation have decreased over the past ten years, whereas the ratio of cyber (online) counseling has increased sharply. The number of cases for which action was taken after counseling for victims rose from 333,792 in 2012 to 408,575 in 2021. In terms of action taken, coordination with relevant organizations continuously ranked highest.

#### 2) The Current Status of the Support Service of Domestic Violence Counseling Centers

The total number of counseling cases handled by counseling centers for domestic violence increased from 272,580 in 2012 to 428,911 in 2021, with the ratio of counseling for domestic violence showing the highest margin of increase. In terms of counseling methods, telephone counseling accounted for the highest ratio with 50.9%, followed by counseling by visitation by victims with 31.4%, cyber counseling with 7.8%, and counseling by visitation to victims with 6.2%. After 2015, the ratio of counseling by visitation fell from 42.7% to 31.4%, whereas the ratio of telephone counseling rose from 43.7% to 50.9%, and the ratio of cyber counseling rose sharply from 1.4% to 7.8%, which can be

interpreted as a result of the response measures taken to combat COVID-19 and the expansion of the methods of non-face-to-face counseling.

### 3) The Current Status of the Support Service of Protective Facilities for Victims of Domestic Violence

The number of support cases for victims of domestic violence handled by protective facilities victims of domestic violence increased from 88,021 in 2012 to 172,385 in 2021. In particular, the margin of increase in the periods between 2014 and 2015 and 2017 and 2018 is conspicuous. The number of people admitted to protective facilities for victims of domestic violence rose from 4,003 in 2012 to 4,802 in 2013 but continuously declined thereafter, recording 1,516 in 2021. Regarding the length of stay at protective facilities, it is conspicuous that the ratio of short-term residents decreased whereas the ratio of long-term residents increased.

## 4. The Current Status of Support Organizations for Victims of Domestic Violence

### 1) The Current Status of the Opening of Support Facilities for Victims of Domestic Violence and Trends

The support facilities for victims of domestic violence can be classified into the women's emergency hotline 1366, counseling centers for domestic violence, and protective facilities for victims of domestic violence. The women's emergency hotline 1366 has been established and operated in a total of 18 locations in 17 cities and provinces across the country. The number of counseling centers for domestic violence

decreased by 32 in the 2012-2013 period, but thereafter consistently increased, and, as of 2021, 214 counseling centers are operated. Regarding protective facilities for victims of domestic violence, around 65 to 70 protective facilities are operated with no major change in the number after 2013. As of 2021, the number of such protective facilities stands at 65.

## 2) The Current Status of the Number of Counseling Cases for Domestic Violence and Trends

The total number of counseling cases for domestic violence at support organizations for victims of domestic violence increased from 213,162 in 2012 to 504,086 in 2021. More than half (52.9%) of the counseling cases for domestic violence were handled by counseling centers for domestic violence, followed by the women's emergency hotline 1366, with 34.0%, and counseling centers for victims of sexual violence, with 11.2%.

## 3) The Current Status of People Admitted to Protective Facilities for Victims of Domestic Violence and Trends

The capacity at protective facilities has remained constant, with 1,075 people in 2012 and 1,086 people in 2021. However, the number admitted to protective facilities throughout the year fell by 2556 (62.3%) from 4,103 in 2012 to 1,547 in 2021. The number of residents at year end decreased from 842 in 2012 to 612 in 2021. The main reasons for the decrease in the number of residents at protective facilities are attributed to various restriction measures necessary for personal protection and preventing exposure of shelter locations, such as restricting economic

activities requiring the four major social insurances coverage, restricting the use of mobile phones, restricting the use of credit cards, restricting the use of medical institutions, and restricting going out, and difficulties in sharing spaces with other residents in a communal living environment.

#### **IV. Analysis of the Interview Survey Taken by Employees of Support Organizations for Victims of Domestic Violence**

In-dept interviews were conducted with 16 employees working for the women's emergency hotline 1366, counseling centers for domestic violence, and protective facilities for victims of domestic violence, which were established in the early stage of the support system for victims of domestic violence. The results of the interviews were analyzed.

##### **1. The Significance, Limitations, and Problems of the Support System for Victims and the Direction for Change**

The results of the interview survey revealed that from the standpoint of each of the organizations, all three organizations are faced with changes in demand for support for domestic violence victims and changes in the policy environment, and the limitations and problems of the institutions and the system. Although each of the organizations is faced with problems and details that are somewhat different from those of other organizations, there is a common understanding that it is necessary to generally reevaluate and reset the operation model (operation measures) for the operation direction initially set and the actual implementation thereof and the personal and physical frameworks thereof.

### 1) The Women's Emergency Hotline 1366

The women's emergency hotline 1366 is an emergency response system that covers domestic violence and violence against women in general in the support system for domestic violence victims. The women's emergency hotline 1366 was the initial support system, offering telephone counseling 24 hours year-round, emergency shelters, and on-site counseling. As emergency support was emphasized, the identify of the women's emergency hotline 1366 as the support system for female victims of violence faced challenges and demand for changes. As demand for a new form of the initial support model and a role as the foothold for integrated support emerged, the identify of the women's emergency hotline 1366 as the provider of initial support faced challenges and demand for changes. Moreover, it is also necessary to improve the foundation for the protection of and support for victims vulnerable to changes in demand.

### 2) Counseling Centers for Domestic Violence

Counseling centers for domestic violence offer comprehensive support tailored to the demands and circumstances of victims of domestic violence such as psychological counseling, legal support, medical support, and the secret school transfer of a child of such victims, based on understanding victims' characteristics and circumstances. The counseling centers for domestic violence have played a role in making victims and non-victims recognize that the problem of domestic violence is clearly a crime that is not a personal problem but a social problem and that receiving support from public resources is necessary to solve the problem of domestic violence. However, in terms of direction for

counseling centers for domestic violence, it was confirmed that there are two opposing positions. The first position emphasizes victim-oriented domestic violence counseling to help victims become self-reliant with a focus on the structural context and reality in which victims are exposed. The second position emphasizes domestic violence counseling to bring about a change in family relations by providing counseling for perpetrators of domestic violence. Moreover, in addition to the growing demand for more support for weak physical infrastructure in terms of personnel and budgets, as the demand for support for victims grew for victims not admitted to protective facilities (shelters) rather than admitted thereto, it was confirmed that it is necessary for a change in the role of counseling centers as support providers for the self-reliance of victims, in addition to the existing support offered thereby, such as counseling and the provision of information, legal support, and coordination with protective facilities (shelters). It is necessary to assess and improve the operation direction and system in general of counseling centers for domestic violence, such as the hardware and software thereof to respond appropriately to the intention of such counseling centers and the change in the demand for support for domestic violence victims.

### 3) Protective Facilities (Shelters) for Victims of Domestic Violence

Protective facilities for domestic violence victims play the role of protected space where a victim can be provided with food, clothing, and shelter and rest and relax while being urgently separated from an offender, and are a space for existence where victims can recover and heal from domestic violence victimization and prepare for self-reliance. One of the most recent conspicuous issues concerns the need to change the way secret communal living is offered. That has been the premise

on which protective facilities (shelters) offer support to victims to prepare for self-reliance while protecting them from offenders. The existing single model of protective facilities (shelters) focusing on husband-to-wife violence has limitations regarding recognition of the diversity of domestic violence victimization and the demand for support. In addition, existing institutional support is insufficient, quantitatively and qualitatively, to prepare for self-reliance in practical terms. In this sense, it is seemingly necessary to review and improve the across-the-board operation system of the initially designed protective facilities (shelters).

## **2. Difficulties Due to the Absence of Manuals and Guidelines to Support Victims during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

All organizations stated that they experienced difficulties supporting victims due to the absence of operation manuals and guidelines related to supporting victims during the COVID-19 pandemic period and due to the lack of systematic support measures, and, as a result, they had to respond individually.

## **3. Gaps in the Service Due to Changes in the Methods of Operation and Support Attributable to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Imposition of Restrictions**

### **1) The Women's Emergency Hotline 1366**

Since emergency shelters could not protect other victims due to the method of communal living upon confirmed cases of COVID-19, there were cases where victims of domestic violence could not be admitted to shelters. Upon confirmation of a case of COVID-19 after such a victim was admitted to the shelter, the emergency shelter had to close due to

the absence of space for quarantine. If a space or facility for quarantine had been available, it would have been possible for such a victim who contracted COVID-19 to be transferred to such a space or facility and readmitted to the shelter after completely recovering from COVID-19. However, the reality was, unfortunately, different.

## 2) Counseling Centers for Domestic Violence

Counseling centers for domestic violence were temporarily closed and all services provided were discontinued due to the closure of the centers. Eventually, users ended up suffering from the inconvenience. When counseling centers for domestic violence resumed operations, face-to-face counseling did not proceed, or was replaced with telephone counseling or counseling using Zoom (a video conferencing software app). Face-to-face counseling was occasionally provided while wearing masks, but the effect of the counseling was reduced. Face-to-face counseling could be replaced with telephone counseling for the second counseling session, but it was difficult to proceed with crisis intervention through telephone counseling or non-face-to-face counseling, specifically crisis intervention through initial counseling, pro bono legal services, and counseling on school transfers for a child of a victim. When switching to non-face-to-face counseling using Zoom, it was necessary to purchase relevant equipment, but the budget for this purpose was limited and insufficient.

Depression increased due to COVID-19 and cases where victims complained of depression and psychological difficulties increased as victims recalled the trauma of violence victimization due to the increased time spent with offenders in the same space. Meanwhile, an increasing

number of counselors became exhausted.

### 3) Protective Facilities (Shelters) for Victims of Domestic Violence

There was a growing concern about the occurrence of a confirmed case of COVID-19 due to the communal living environments, and upon occurrence of a confirmed case, there was no quarantine space. Upon occurrence of a confirmed case, the use of communal spaces was minimized to prevent mass infection. Residents avoided contact in the communal spaces and maintained a controlled life while staying in their own rooms. In addition to the controlled life inside the protective facilities (shelters), a rigorously controlled lifestyle was maintained to reduce the probability of being infected with COVID-19, for example, refraining from going out. Since contact with an outside person and entry of an outside person into the protective facilities were restricted, the use of an outside organization and entry of an outside instructor running a program became difficult, and, consequently, some programs were discontinued, and counselors were overburdened with work.

## V. The Analysis of the Interview Survey Taken by Victims of Domestic Violence

A total of 15 victims of domestic violence were contacted through the Association of the Women's Emergency Hotline 1366, the National Association of Domestic Violence Counseling Centers, the National Association of Protective Facilities for Victims of Domestic Violence, and the Korean Women's Hotline. Interviews with the victims were conducted.

## 1. The Distinctive Characteristics of Domestic Violence

### 1) Isolation and Control

Domestic violence is the occurrence of violence among family relations within a home. Considering the Korean national sentiment to refrain from intervening in another person's family affairs, the isolation of a victim is likely to occur. Moreover, the characteristics of isolation and control arise based on the Korean culture that tolerates to some extent the control by a man (patriarch) over a woman (wife). Such isolation and control exacerbate over time, and, ultimately, develop into obsession and delusional jealousy of a wife, resulting in serious incidents of domestic violence, such as verbal, emotional, psychological, physical, sexual, and financial violence. In this context, the perspective of domestic violence in which the state should intervene by law and policy should not focus on the number of violent acts committed by an offender against a victim or on the strength of violence and external and physical scars and should be shifted to recognize that the isolation of victims and the coercive control over victims based on the patriarchal hierarchy is the essence of domestic violence.

### 2) Appeasement by an Offender and Repeated Violence

It was found that most of the victims of domestic violence were persuaded by offenders not to report the domestic violence to maintain family relationships after the occurrence of such violence. In particular, when there exists a child, such victims had difficulties reporting domestic violence due to the family bond formed between the child and the offender. However, as victims continuously forgave offenders, sensitivity toward violence diminished, and the victim's act of forgiving the

offender occasionally became a target of criticism in that such behavior isolated the victim and perpetuated violence. In the end, victims asked for outside help to survive repeated and aggravated violence. Accordingly, the reporting of domestic violence should be construed not as a mere act of reporting but as demonstrating the will to survive by escaping the vicious circle of repeated violence and an attempt to survive by escaping isolation and control.

### 3) Staying Home with Higher Levels of Isolation and Risk Due to COVID-19

It was found that as office workers began telecommuting and students began home study from the beginning of 2020 when the COVID-19 quarantine guidelines for social distancing were released, family members stayed together for long hours in the limited spaces of homes, and, as a result, conflicts frequently occurred and violence was aggravated during this sensitive period. Accordingly, as the problem of isolation of domestic violence victims arose and the probability of violence increased, for example, conflict between family members, a fundamental criticism was raised about the home, which was considered a space of absolute safety. Consequently, a new understanding is necessary that the home is a space with higher levels of isolation and risk for victims of domestic violence.

## 2. A Social Common Notion to Attribute Responsibility to Victims

### 1) A Narrow Awareness of Domestic Violence

Most of the participants in this study said that they failed to report domestic violence at an early stage because they did not consider the

offenders' violence as worthy of reporting. The Korean traditional value exemplified in 'a quarrel between a married couple is like cutting water with a knife' and 'a woman and a dried pollack should be beaten once every three days to be submissive' is reflected in the social awareness of domestic violence. Such overall social atmosphere tends to trivialize domestic violence, or conversely, demonize domestic violence, putting victims in a situation that makes it difficult to report domestic violence. That is, the reason that victims did not report domestic violence is not because the victims were ignorant or domestic violence is a minor offense but because the state did not provide sufficient information on the seriousness of domestic violence and the support system for domestic violence victims. In fact, the number of cases of domestic violence where offenders were appropriately punished is insignificant. Accordingly, it can be said that the lack of trust in the support system by which victims of domestic violence can seek outside help is the root cause of the failure of victims to report domestic violence.

## 2) Responsibility to Protect a Family

It was found that most of the participants in the study made efforts to tolerate domestic violence and overcome the problem in order to take care of their children, protect their family or protect their second family in the case of a remarriage even after fearing prolonged domestic violence. Concerning the matter of reporting domestic violence, a social awareness that domestic violence is a crime is crucial. However, it is a wife who is the victim in most domestic violence cases, but, simultaneously, viewed as the responsible person for a family. The patriarchal social atmosphere attributing primary responsibility for a family and children to women tends to hide the violence of a male head

of a household, and, at the same time, defer the reporting of domestic violence.

### 3) A Paradoxical Sense of Guilt to be a Home Destroyer

As society and policy attribute responsibility to victims of domestic violence, another situation is created in which as a victim of domestic violence, the victim is made to feel a sense of guilt for destroying a family through divorce and making an offender a criminal. Article 1 of the Act on Special Cases Concerning the Punishment of Crimes of Domestic Violence prescribes that the purpose of this Act is to ‘help restore the peace and stability of a family, and maintain a healthy family’. Due to this purpose clause, a victim who reports domestic violence is positioned to be a person hindering the restoration of the peace and stability of the family. Moreover, even after reporting domestic violence, the victim’s sense of guilt increases the probability of not wanting punishment of the offender. Accordingly, it is necessary to shift the fundamental viewpoint on the punishment of offenders of domestic violence and standards thereof, by amending the purpose clause of the said Act and improving awareness of domestic violence.

## 3. Evaluating the Support Service for Victims of Domestic Violence

### 1) The National Police Agency Emergency Number 112

It was found that the National Policy Agency emergency number 112 is the main channel through which victims report domestic violence. Most of the participants in this study said that when they reported domestic violence to the emergency number 112, the immediate arrival of a police officer and the provision of information (the guide on the

women's emergency hotline 1366 and protective facilities) to victims were helpful. In particular, the participants in the study said that one of the most crucial factors in evaluating the police service was separation from offenders and movement to a safe place. However, police officers' sympathy for an offender's position and the authoritative attitude toward victims were evaluated as negative experiences.

## 2) The Women's Emergency Hotline 1366

Except for the police, the support organization that victims of domestic violence first encounter is the women's emergency hotline 1366. The participants in the study evaluated the rapid, early support and coordination of 1366 very positively. However, the poor environments of emergency shelters (the environments for cooking in person, noise, and narrow spaces) were evaluated as inappropriate for victims to rest and heal.

## 3) Counseling Centers for Domestic Violence

Most of the participants in the study evaluated the systematic counseling programs of counseling centers for domestic violence as very helpful to healing and recovery. However, negative opinions were expressed regarding limitations in the number of counseling sessions, inadequate budgets, and the limitation and discontinuation of counseling due to COVID-19. In addition, couples counseling and in particular, counseling for offenders were occasionally evaluated as positive in that such counseling delays the cycle of violence by offenders and allows an understanding of offenders. However, when power between a couple or within a family is unbalanced, couples counseling may degenerate into

inappropriate support. In particular, in the case of counseling for offenders, great caution is required in consideration of the human rights of victims and ethical issues.

#### 4) Protective Facilities (Shelters) for Victims of Domestic Violence

The protective facilities for victims of domestic violence are places where integrated support is offered to help victims recover from victimization, heal from trauma, and achieve self-reliance, such as providing food and shelter for a victim and the victim's child, counseling, legal and medical support, child counseling, support with the secret school transfer of a child, employment education, and housing support. Most of the participants in the study positively evaluated shelters as valuable places. However, control and the sense of isolation residents suffered, attributable to the closed operation of shelters, difficulties with communal living, discriminatory support for qualified and non-qualified recipients, and the problem of inadequate budgets and restrictions in the use of the self-reliance support fund after leaving shelters were evaluated negatively. In particular, fear of mass infection due to communal living and the discontinuation of recovery and healing programs were identified as limitations of shelters, attributable to changes in the external environment.

#### 4. Demand for Policy Improvement Concerning the Support Policy for Victims of Domestic Violence

The essence of the improvement plan concerning the direction of the support policy for victims of domestic violence is to change the existing viewpoint which views victims of domestic violence as objects of

protection and benefits and ensure the provision of continuous support to help victims become self-reliant regardless of environmental variables to enjoy the rights of citizens. To shift the paradigm from the protection of victims of domestic violence to support for sustainable self-reliance, the following are necessary: (i) separation of offenders and strengthened punishment rather than separation of victims and protection of the victims; (ii) restrictions on the visitation rights of offenders after divorce; (iii) improvement of counseling centers' response to infectious diseases; and (iv) modernization of protective facilities for victims of domestic violence.

Domestic violence is not mere violence occurring within a home. Domestic violence is a crime by which social and structural gender inequality grounded on the gender hierarchy is visible. There are distinctive characteristics such as violence unexposed due to control, etc., revictimization, difficulties in reporting and a sense of guilt paradoxically attributable to victims. Accordingly, the state should construe domestic violence as gender-based violence, view victims of domestic violence not as objects of protection and benefits but main agents entitled to enjoy the rights of a citizen, and offer uninterrupted support for self-reliance. Moreover, considering that the problems of the existing support system for victims of domestic violence were exposed due to COVID-19, it is necessary to make accurate diagnosis and establish improvement measures promptly where countermeasures are required to respond to such problems.

## VI. Analyzing Cases of Support Organizations for Victims of Domestic Violence in Foreign Countries and Implications

### 1. Global Cases

We reviewed the materials of the Virtual Knowledge Center to End Violence against Women and Girls and the Global Network of Women's Shelters run by UN Women which offer a variety of materials related to gender-based violence and we analyzed the principles for support for victims of domestic violence and the activities carried out by such organizations.

### 2. Cases at State Level

We reviewed the following cases: the National Network to End Domestic Violence in the United States, which is dedicated to creating a social, political, and economic environment in which violence against women no longer exists and carries out various activities to eliminate domestic violence and support victims; Refuge in the United Kingdom, which is the only organization in the UK that provides a specialized support service related to domestic violence across the country; and 1800 Respect in Australia, an organization dedicated to domestic violence counseling, sexual violence counseling, and providing support services across the country that is funded by the Department of Social Services under the Australian Government and offers services for victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual violence, those who are exposed to the risk of victimization and experts.

### 3. Cases at Regional Level

#### 1) Sanctuary for Families

We reviewed cases of the nonprofit organization Sanctuary for Families (SFF) in New York City in the U.S., which offers integrated services including shelters for survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence and their children, with a focus on various services at a regional level.

#### 2) Shelters for Companion Animals and Victims of Domestic Violence

When victims of domestic violence left together with companion animals, we reviewed the cases of shelters the victims could find online in which the victims could stay with their companion animals and shelters allowing the victims to entrust their companion animals to a protective facility for animals outside the shelter and visit the protective facility frequently to care for their companion animals. We also reviewed the necessity to establish a safety plan tailored to companion animals.

#### 3) Programs and Services for Disabled Victims of Domestic Violence

We reviewed the Secret Garden Program, etc., of Barrier Free Living, which carries out activities such as offering services for the hearing-impaired, the disabled, and the elderly who are the victims of domestic violence, the operation of shelters, providing safe support services, and offering education and training support for the visually impaired and the hearing-impaired who are the victims of domestic violence.

#### 4) Support Services for Minority Group Domestic Violence Victims Based on Race and Ethnicity

We reviewed cases of support organizations offering services dedicated to minority race groups and minority ethnic groups, such as the National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community, Enlace Comunitario, and Manavi.

#### 5) Support Services for Victims of Domestic Violence Regarding Sexual Orientation and Gender Minority Groups

We introduced support services, such as anti-violence programs, the operation of a hotline, mobilizing a movement for the protection of rights, and hosting the cases of survivors' forum, and reviewed relevant details with a focus on support organizations such as OutFront Minnesota, whose mission is to ensure equal opportunities for those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ), protect such people, and enable them to enjoy their rights; Community United Against Violence, which offers support to help survivors of violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, or other diverse gender identities (LGBTQ+) to recover; and LGBTQ Galop, which is a charitable organization in the UK opposed to violence against LGBT+.

#### 4. Sub-Conclusion

It was confirmed through the review of the cases in foreign countries that survivor-oriented support grounded on gender perspectives is an essential element to support victims of domestic violence. It is necessary for the support organizations and support authorities responsible for

domestic violence victims to recognize the issue of diversity of victims, attributable to the multiplicity and multidimensionality of violence victimization, consider such issues as important, and offer comprehensive and integrated services to support domestic violence victims with various and distinctive needs. In foreign countries, the programs and services supporting domestic violence victims with various needs have long been made available, and domestic violence victims with various needs can participate in the programs as desired and receive services without being excluded. Similarly, it is necessary that Korean society recognizes the diversity of victims of domestic violence and pursues the development of programs and diversity of services tailored to the diversity of victims. Moreover, it is necessary to offer direct services to victims to prevent domestic violence and revictimization and develop a certified program, utilizing such program to intervene against offenders. Finally, it is necessary to offer comprehensive, continuous services to victims of domestic violence.

## VII. Conclusion and Policy Direction

### 1. Change in the Direction of the Support Policy for Victims of Domestic Violence

#### 1) Approaching Domestic Violence from a Gender Perspective

Based on an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of gender hierarchy relative to gender violence, it is necessary to establish an awareness of domestic violence being neither a problem arising due to the violent disposition of an individual nor an unfortunate incident occurring by chance but a social problem occurring in the structure of

a gendered society. The approach from a gender perspective can lead to an understanding of the context of domestic violence victimization existing in a social order where genders are unequal and drive change for gender equality. Moreover, considering that the gender perspective is grounded on the capability to recognize that gender hierarchy and gender inequality are inherent in individuals and society, the approach from the gender perspective can lead to efforts to understand the problems of domestic violence and problems caused by the gender inequality and discrimination present in Korean society, and, therefore, tackle such problems to bring about change.

## 2) Strengthening Victim/Survivor Orientation

The support organizations for victims in foreign countries that were reviewed in this study all consider the development of services and programs directly offered to victims and the operation thereof as a matter of the greatest importance. The victim/survivor orientation means that the purpose of the support services and the effects thereof should have the most effective and direct influence on victims as they return to living safe, normal lives and becoming self-reliant. The work of the support organizations for victims should clearly focus on supporting victims and making further efforts to offer direct services and develop programs for victims.

## 3) Understanding the Diversity and Intersectionality of Violence Victimization

Domestic violence victimization, which previously focused on husband-to-wife violence victimization, appears in a variety of forms

such as violence between intimate partners, violence by parents or against parents, violence between family members, and violence between members of the same sex. Foreign countries persistently emphasize understanding the diversity and intersectionality of violence victimization and the diversity of victims. In the future, it is necessary to expand this understanding so that all victims of domestic violence can receive appropriate services regardless of gender, marital status, age, class, race, gender identity, and disability. Based thereupon, it is necessary to overhaul support services and the system in general.

#### 4) The Permanent and Stable Operation of Support Facilities

In the initial stage of the social response measures taken to combat COVID-19, several confusions arose because the same guidelines and measures applicable to other social welfare organizations were set for the support facilities for victims of domestic violence. During the COVID-19 pandemic, support for victims of domestic violence was discontinued or was unable to proceed smoothly. Thereafter, such problems were addressed gradually and appeared to have been solved; however, unless the support facilities for victims of domestic violence are recognized as offering mandatory services available regardless of environmental variables and unless there is a fundamental shift in the sentiment that views such support facilities for domestic violence victims as facilities offering welfare services, the problems may arise again at any time in the next pandemic or in a new crisis situation. Thus, it is necessary to establish an awareness and operation principles to the effect that support facilities for domestic violence victims are seen as organizations offering mandatory services available without interruption permanently and stably regardless of environmental variables.

## 2. Improving the Support System for Victims of Domestic Violence

### 1) Changes in the Direction of Support Operation and Operation Method Thereof

It is necessary to establish direct services for victims/survivors as the foremost principle of operation of support organizations. It is also necessary to change awareness so that victims are viewed not as objects of protection but as main agents for self-reliance by offering them support. Moreover, it is necessary to operate barrier-free support facilities that are available for all victims. It is necessary to establish and ensure the principle of availability and accessibility to the support facilities so that all victims of domestic violence can use such support facilities regardless of gender, type of violence, marital status, existence of children, age, class, race, gender identity, and disability. Furthermore, it is necessary to construct a coordination system for the integrated support of domestic violence victims.

### 2) Improving Current Support Facilities

Regarding the women's emergency hotline 1366, there is a necessity to review and reconfirm its role, awareness, and identity as a frontline organization supporting domestic violence victims and clarify its role and position as an emergency support facility responding to gender-based violence at an early stage. The two most important pillars in the operation of the emergency hotline center, namely, the offering of early counseling sessions and the operation of emergency shelters, should be operable stably based on standardized guidelines adhered to across the country. Moreover, it is necessary to pursue changes in the way emergency shelters are operated in consideration of changes in the trends

of those who are admitted to the facilities and establish measures for the improvement of facilities in the medium and long term.

Regarding counseling centers and protective facilities, it is necessary to establish the purpose of non-face-to-face/online counseling and details thereof and prepare and utilize professional and standardized counseling methods tailored to the characteristics and methods of each counseling channel. It is also necessary to construct and utilize an integrated management system capable of managing face-to-face counseling and non-face-to-face counseling in an integrated manner. After the completion of the integrated management system, it is necessary to conduct education, etc., to utilize such a system efficiently.

In addition, it is necessary to add contents to refresher education for employees, such as the operation principles of victim/survivor orientation and strengthening of self-reliance, the expansion of understanding support for victims and the diversity and intersectionality of victims, and the methods of operation of barrier-free support facilities available to all victims.

### **3. Improving Relevant Laws and Institutions**

#### **1) Amendment of the Act on Special Cases Concerning the Punishment of Crimes of Domestic Violence**

It is necessary to delete ‘protection of a family’ in the purpose clause of the Act on Special Cases Concerning the Punishment of Crimes of Domestic Violence and amend the said Act to have a clear focus on the safety, recovery, and self-reliance of victims.

## 2) Separation of Offenders and Strengthened Punishment

It is necessary to review measures to separate not victims but offenders to ensure the safety of victims and their children upon the occurrence of domestic violence. In particular, when an offender violates restrictions or measures related to the protection of the victim such as a restraining order, it is necessary to make immediate and strict intervention against the offender.

## 3) Restrictions on the Visitation Rights of Offenders

It is necessary to adopt a scheme restricting the visitation rights of offenders with a history of domestic violence to ensure the safety of the victims of domestic violence and their children.

## 4) Reviewing the Standards for the Establishment and Operation of Support Facilities and Improvements Thereof

It is necessary to examine and improve the standards for the establishment and operation of protective facilities in a manner that ensures the independence and autonomy of residents' daily lives. It is necessary to diagnose the effectiveness of the operation of protective facilities offering one room per household and prepare measures to expand such facilities in the medium and long term. It is also necessary to make gradual improvements by comprehensively reviewing the standards for the establishment and operation of existing support facilities so that all victims can access the barrier-free facilities.

#### 5) Improving the Methods of Supporting Victims on an Asset Basis and Expanding Housing Support

It is necessary to prepare improvement measures, for example, securing budgets and making advance payments to victims so that they can cover living expenses immediately after being admitted to protective facilities and thereafter, and determining whether or not to use central government funds or local government funds according to the results of investigations of assets. In addition, it is necessary to expand and improve the self-reliance support scheme, for example, the scheme ensuring a temporary basic income that guarantees the livelihood of victims and helps them to become independent.

### 4. Identification of Blind Spots in the Support for Victims of Domestic Violence

#### 1) Establishing Measures for the Support of Victims, Not Limited to Those Who are Admitted to or Have Moved out of Protective Facilities

It is necessary to proactively establish measures for the support system to embrace numerous victims who are not admitted to protective facilities.

#### 2) Exploration of the Scheme by Which Victims Can Receive Support While Continuing Their Daily Lives and Economic Activities and Adoption Thereof

It is necessary to explore and adopt various schemes by which victims can receive support while continuing their daily lives and economic activities. When the facts of domestic violence victimization are

confirmed, measures that allow victims to take paid sick leave, safe vacations, etc., should be considered.

### 3) Regularly Examining the Experiences of Victims and Relevant Employees and Policy Demand

To effectively help victims to recover from domestic violence and offer support, above all, it is necessary to examine the experiences and opinions of victims and field employees. It is necessary to conduct in-depth studies on a regular basis in which the opinions of victims and employees are heard and analyzed.

Thematic classification of research performance catalogue: gender-based violence and safety, culture and awareness of gender equality, and laws & plans

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